



A T H E N A
Awards Program of Greater Pittsburgh



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2024 FINALISTS

ATHENA AWARD



**Cathy
Battle**



**Joyce
Bender**



**Beverly
Block**



**Shanicka
Kennedy**



**Staceylyn
Machi**

ATHENA YOUNG PROFESSIONAL AWARD



**Sarah
Bell**



**Madison
Campbell**



**Gina
Govojdean**



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Cathy Battle

Co-Founder and Executive Director
Western Pennsylvania Diaper Bank

Cathy Battle is a compassionate non-profit leader with over a decade of experience serving the Greater Pittsburgh community. She started the Western Pennsylvania Diaper Bank (WPADB) with her husband, Rev. Phillip Battle, in 2012. They were called to serve when their congregation brought diaper need to their attention. After learning about the one in three families struggling to afford this basic necessity, Cathy and Pastor Phillip knew something had to be done. As servant leaders, they formed the WPADB and started the completely volunteer-run bank while working full-time jobs.

While growing the WPADB, Cathy earned a degree in Business Management and took advantage of numerous educational opportunities offered to her. She was invited to join the Bayer Center's 3S program for non-profit leaders and Social Venture Partners of Pittsburgh, which prepared her to present to the foundation community.

Her efforts have resulted in continued growth of the WPADB. What started as a one-time project to help members of Cathy's church and community has turned into a vibrant non-profit organization that serves eight counties in Western Pennsylvania by providing diapers, period products, and incontinence supplies through over 70 partner organizations and 25 schools.

Cathy holds a Bachelor's Degree of Ministry from the Whitorn University of Theology, Marshfield, MO, and an Associate's Degree in Business Management from CCAC, Pittsburgh, PA. Additionally, Cathy serves the community in numerous ways:

Board of Directors: Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Westmoreland County, 2021-present
Board of Directors: New Light Temple Baptist Church & Head of Women's Ministries, 2011-present
Academy Cause Community Engagement Leadership, 2021
PACE Capacity Building Program, 2014-2018



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Joyce Bender

Founder & CEO

Bender Consulting Services, Inc./Bender Leadership Academy

As Founder & CEO for both Pittsburgh-based organizations, Joyce's focus is employment for people with disabilities. As a woman living with epilepsy and hard of hearing, she dedicated her life to a crusade for youth and adults to gain the dream of competitive employment. She works tirelessly to break down the barriers and stigma that exist for people with disabilities.

In 1985, Joyce had a life-threatening accident due to epilepsy that caused a cerebral hemorrhage requiring subsequent brain surgery. Against all odds, Joyce recovered from this accident that left her with a 70% hearing loss in one ear and a realization that she had epilepsy. This accident changed the trajectory of her life and led to the founding of Bender Consulting Services, Inc., in 1995.

She serves as the Chair of the Epilepsy Association of Western and Central PA, the Vice-Chair of the American Association of People with Disabilities, on the President's Advisory Board for Carlow University, as a Trustee for The Bazelon Center on Mental Health Law, World Institute on Disability (WID), Homeless Children's Education Fund, Variety the Children's Charity, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera (CLO), Disability Rights of PA, and the Advisory Board of the FDR Memorial Legacy Committee.

Joyce has served as a disability employment expert for the U.S. State Department in Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Panama, Kazakhstan, Tunisia, Libya, and Nigeria. She conducted training for female entrepreneurs in business for Austria. She has been featured in periodicals including Reader's Digest, New York Times, Investor's Business Daily, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, and Chicago Tribune. She holds a Bachelor of Science in psychology from Geneva College, and has hosted the radio show, Disability Matters with Joyce Bender, on voiceamerica.com for over twenty years.

Joyce has received numerous awards and recognitions, including: 2024 Henry Viscardi Award Winner; 2024 Women of Influence, Pittsburgh Business Times; 2016 USBLN, Supplier of the Year Award; 2015 Susan M. Daniels Mentoring Hall of Fame; 2014 Catherine Variety Sheridan Humanitarian Award – Variety the Children's Charity; 2013 AAPD Justice for All Corporate Award; 2011 Epilepsy Foundation Hero of Epilepsy Award; 2003 Bush Administration's New Freedom Initiative Award; 1999 President's Award, received from President Clinton at the White House.



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Beverly A. Block

Founder & Managing Member
Block & Associates, LLC

Bev is a tireless advocate, mentor, and sponsor for women and girls throughout Western Pennsylvania. After practicing law as an associate and partner in local law firms for almost 15 years, Bev founded Block & Associates, LLC, in 2018—a women-owned and women-managed law firm—with a mission to advance women in the legal profession.

Block & Associates is unlike any other local law firm, as its attorneys enjoy work-life balance and flexibility in an office environment that inspires collaboration and compassion. The firm counsels professionals and small businesses as outside general counsel offering corporate, tax, litigation, employment, real estate, and non-profit legal services. Bev's expertise focuses on business litigation and employment law.

In the past three years, Bev has taken two cases to trial, winning unanimous jury verdicts for her clients in both cases. Bev has been named a Pennsylvania Super Lawyer, a peer-based award, from 2019-2024, and was named a Pennsylvania Rising Star in the legal profession from 2012-2018. In 2019, Bev was honored as a Woman of Influence by the Pittsburgh Business Times.

Bev is active in the Allegheny Bar Association, having served on its Board of Governors for two terms, on its Judiciary Committee, and as Co-Chair for the Gender Equality Committee. As a champion of gender equity, Bev co-founded the Women's Institute for Leadership in the Law, the first-of-its-kind, nationally award-winning leadership academy for women lawyers to assist attorneys in building resiliency, negotiation, and leadership skills, while creating a career-long network of mentors and sponsors. Outside the legal community, Bev sits on the Board of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh, where she focuses her Board service on making early childhood education more accessible and affordable to working women. Bev is also the Executive Vice President of the Pittsburgh Section of the National Council of Jewish Women, where she Co-Chairs the Board's Governance Committee. Bev is a recent breast cancer survivor and thriver, and she resides in Squirrel Hill with her husband, Zack, and their three children, Jordan, Talia, and Benny.



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Shanicka L. Kennedy

Lead Counsel
Federal Express Corporation

Shanicka serves as Lead Counsel in the Business Model Litigation group at FedEx, where she assesses legal risk, mitigation efforts, and provides guidance and counsel to ensure protection of FedEx's rights and operations in business disputes and joint employment lawsuits in federal and state courts across the country. She serves as co-lead of the legal division's DE&I Council and provides pro bono services through the Best Interest and Pennsylvania Innocence projects. She serves as a mentor to women attorneys and interns at FedEx and in the community. Through her participation with FedEx's Women's Attorney Forum, she collaborates with the Duquesne Kline Women's Law Association on programming.

She recently served as a program advisor in the Executive Women of Influence Program at Florida International University.

Prior to joining FedEx, she served as an AUSA in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of PA. She prosecuted significant federal criminal cases involving Title III Wiretap investigations, child exploitation, and violent crimes. Shanicka also represented the Office in the BRIDGES diversionary court and as a team member of the RISE reentry court—programs focused on reducing recidivism and assisting participants struggling with mental health and substance use disorders.

She previously served as Chief Deputy Director of the Allegheny County Public Defender's Office and was responsible for all areas of the office, including financial management and employee supervision. She started her career in the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office, prosecuting homicides, sexual and physical abuse of children and other crimes. She then entered private practice representing corporate clients and defending white-collar crimes.

Shanicka is as an adjunct professor at Duquesne Kline where she teaches a federal criminal law simulation course. She previously served as an adjunct professor at Carlow University and the University of Pittsburgh's Upward Bound Program.

She is a member of the Allegheny County Bar Association's Judiciary Committee. She currently serves on the boards of Catholic Charities, Macedonia FACE, PAAR, and the Duquesne Kline Law School's Advisory Board. She regularly volunteers in the community and has been appointed to numerous boards, including as previous chair of the City of Pittsburgh's Ethics Hearing Board.

She earned a B.A. from Howard University and J.D. from Duquesne Kline Law School. Previous recognitions include Duquesne Kline Law School's Outstanding Achievement Award; Pittsburgh Magazine 40 under 40; and New Pittsburgh Courier's Women of Excellence.



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Staceyln Machi

Director Consulting Services, Executive Sponsor STEM,
President AccelHER8
CGI

Staceyln has been a dynamic leader at CGI for nearly five years, recognized as a go-to expert in agile transformation and change management. Her focus on executing with excellence has made her a trusted advisor to many, and she thrives on solving complex challenges that meet business needs. Throughout her tenure at CGI, Staceyln has held numerous leadership roles, including Agile Coach, Project Leader, Program Manager, and Engagement Manager.

She has successfully supported various initiatives across multiple industries such as banking, oil & gas, utilities, and retail, while also playing a key role in pursuing new opportunities.

In addition to her client-focused work, Staceyln is the STEM Executive Sponsor for the Great Lakes Business Unit, where she has integrated STEM into the BU Strategy with scalable execution of programs like the IT Girl Challenge and the Penguins Tech Academy. She is also the co-founder and President of AccelHER8, a business resource group dedicated to empowering women to drive change both within and outside the company. Staceyln is an advocate for many and supports many different DE&I initiatives. She is passionate about developing future leaders and is highly regarded by her direct reports for her transparency, support, and commitment to their career growth.

Before joining CGI, Staceyln had a distinguished career in the Oil & Gas industry, where she was instrumental in leading transformative projects and fostering innovation across the organization. Her leadership in Internal Innovation broke down silos and led the company to new heights, especially through the companywide Innovation Challenges. As Vice President of the Pride ERG, she was a catalyst for creating an inclusive environment, significantly increasing visibility and acceptance within the company.

Staceyln also has a rich background in education, having spent a decade as a classroom teacher and later as a leader in teacher development across Pennsylvania and the United States. She contributed to three federal innovation grants aimed at helping teachers and students break down complex tasks and refine their thinking processes.

Beyond her professional achievements, Staceyln is deeply committed to community service and volunteering. She is a proud aunt and actively mentors others. Based in Pittsburgh, she holds degrees from Pennsylvania State University and Duquesne Palumbo Donahue School of Business, specializing in Women's Leadership and Professional Coaching. Staceyln is also certified in multiple areas, including SAFe, Prosci Change Management, Women in Leadership (SHRM), and holds a Mastering Design Thinking Certification from MIT.



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Sarah Bell

Director of the Pathways Center
Waynesburg University

Sarah has worked at the Pathways Center for student support since 2015. In this role, she supervises a 10-person, all-female team while serving as the University's primary point of contact for career development and PHEAA's Act 101 Educational Enrichment Program for under-served students. Sarah is a National Certified Counselor (NCC) and Certified Career Services Provider (CCSP). In addition to her primary roles at Waynesburg University, Sarah serves as a mental health counselor for students. She is the University's Gilman and Boren scholarship advisor and The Washington Center Liaison.

Through her work at Waynesburg University, Sarah has served as a mentor, counselor, and educator for students—and primarily women—who are now leaders within the Pittsburgh region.

Sarah is passionate about service and leadership. She has engaged in various service opportunities including volunteering at the American Counseling Association's annual conference, working at annual Out of the Darkness Suicide Prevention walks, and participating in food and clothing distribution events in Greene County, PA. Sarah was the project manager for the creation and launch of Waynesburg University's Career Closet, which provides free professional clothing to University students. She was instrumental in establishing the University's Diversity & Belonging program. Sarah served as the advisor for the University's newspaper, *The Yellow Jacket*, and Society of Professional Journalists chapter, while advocating for the creation of on-campus organizations to represent diverse student groups.

Prior to her work as Director of the Pathways Center, Sarah held roles in career development, academic communication, and study abroad coordination. In 2021 and 2022, Sarah completed a clinical mental health counseling internship at Domestic Violence Services of Southwestern Pennsylvania (DVSSP), where she volunteered approximately 600 hours while serving at the regional organization. In her work at DVSSP, Sarah was able to support local survivors of domestic abuse.

Before working in higher education, Sarah worked as a copy editor at the Observer Publishing Company (OPC) in Washington, PA, and the Herald-Standard newspaper in Uniontown, PA. At the OPC, she served as the leader of the newspaper's Flipside youth journalism program.

Sarah is a PhD candidate in Counselor Education and Supervision at Waynesburg University. She holds an M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Waynesburg University, an M.S. in Integrated Marketing Communication from West Virginia University, and a B.A. in Communication from Waynesburg University.



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Madison Campbell

CEO

Leda Health

Madison's company, Leda Health, is focused on revolutionizing sexual assault evidence collection and empowering survivors in the safe space of their own homes. She has paired Leda Health's evidence kits with counseling, courses, and 24/7 phone support staffed by licensed nurses. This unique paradigm is far less invasive of privacy, far less humiliating, and a cleaner chain of evidence—not to mention that there is a shortage of such kits at hospitals.

These services and kits have been distributed to many universities across the U.S., festivals, non-profits, and to Ukraine to help rape victims resulting from the war. Her passion as a survivor of abuse, combined with an entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to social impact, have contributed to a meaningful journey that stems from her own personal experiences and a steadfast dedication to addressing issues of abuse in society.

According to the World Health Organization, one in three women (736 million) experience abuse across their lifetimes; and, it starts early: one in four young women between the ages of 15 and 24 are abused. Abuse isn't always perpetrated by strangers: it can be boyfriends, husbands, partners, or family members. Madison is renowned for her devotion to combatting abuse and bullying of any kind, and she is employing her commitment and passion to helping others cope, heal, and achieve their full potential. Madison is an authentic activist: a strong advocate who is often sought out to assist others, most especially when they are not in a position to stand up for themselves. Madison listens closely and takes action that makes a difference.

As a frequent speaker, including TED, she has participated in addressing Congress on the very real and all-too-prevalent topic of sexual assault. She is not without her detractors, but that will never stop her. She is a force for good and always doing the right thing.

A native of Pittsburgh, she has also been named to the 30 Under 30 list for both Forbes and the Pittsburgh Business Times, and she has raised over \$9 million for Leda Health. Madison is currently Miss Pittsburgh 2024 and competed for Miss Pennsylvania in June 2024.



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Gina Govojdec
Vice President, Procurement
Howmet Aerospace

Gina is a 2012 graduate of Duquesne University and holds a B.A. in Business Administration with a dual major in Supply Chain Management and Legal Studies. Gina joined Howmet Aerospace (then Alcoa Inc.) in June 2012. Gina has a proven record of excellence early in her career, but what makes her exemplary is her commitment to advocating for women in manufacturing leadership.

Gina has built a career focused on shattering the glass ceiling in manufacturing—taking on operational leadership roles historically only held by men. Gina is a Field Director for the Horatio Alger Association, promoting the Horatio Alger Association Scholarship to low-income, college-bound students who have specifically faced and overcome great obstacles in their young lives. Gina is particularly passionate about this volunteer role as an alumnus of the Horatio Alger Association Scholarship program herself, in recognition for resilience in overcoming adversity. In 2023, Gina took on an interim Plant Manager role not typically held by a woman, leading a workforce of approximately 600 employees at a flagship unionized operating facility. In 2024, Gina became one of the youngest women leaders in a Vice President role at Howmet Aerospace. Gina currently leads a global procurement organization and is responsible for managing a portfolio of over \$200 million in spend. Gina is known for being an empathetic, motivational leader with a laser focus on disciplined execution who brings out the best performance in any team she manages.

Gina has focused on becoming a distinguished voice in the supply chain world, with three industry publications on supply chain risk, resilience, and talent retention. Gina received the Thomas NextGen for Industry award in 2020. The program recognizes the accomplishments of the next generation of industrial leaders who are driving industry into the future with innovative ideas, exceptional thought leadership, and meaningful contributions in their area of business. Gina was also named one of the Institute for Supply Management's 30 Under 30 Rising Supply Chain Stars in 2020. Gina was selected to receive the Duquesne University "Dukes from the Last Decade" award in June 2022. In 2024, Gina became a member of the Duquesne University Supply Chain Management advisory council to help shape the future curriculum of the university.

Gina is an advocate for women in manufacturing—one of her greatest passions is mentoring young women who desire to succeed in traditionally male-dominated environments.