



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lea Webb

## Senator Lea Webb Honors Lost Dog Cafe & Lounge with the New York State Senate Empire Award

LEA WEBB November 12, 2024

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**BINGHAMTON, NY** – Today, Senator Lea Webb presented the New York State Senate's Empire Award to Lost Dog Cafe & Lounge, recognizing the beloved establishment for its outstanding contributions to Binghamton's community, culture, and economy. The Empire Award is the Senate's highest honor for businesses that demonstrate excellence in fostering community, supporting local arts, and creating spaces that feel like home.

Founded by Binghamton natives Marie McKenna and Elizabeth Hughes, Lost Dog Cafe & Lounge began as a dream of bringing a unique café atmosphere back to their hometown after spending years in the vibrant arts and café scene of New York City. Inspired by their favorite NYC haunts and infused with creativity from their experience as members of an all-female band, The Derangelles, Marie and Liz created an inviting space in 1994 that quickly became a cultural landmark. Their vision was clear: to offer a welcoming space where people could gather, share, and connect. Since its inception 30 years ago, Lost Dog has become known for its delicious cuisine, warm ambiance, and dedication to supporting local artists, musicians, and community events.

"Lost Dog Cafe & Lounge has been a cornerstone of Binghamton's downtown revitalization and a true gathering place for residents and visitors alike," **said Senator Lea Webb.** "As Chair of the Women's Issues Committee in the New York State Senate, I am especially proud to honor this women-owned business. Marie and Liz's commitment to building a space that celebrates community, arts, and inclusivity reflects the values we cherish in New York. They have not only succeeded in creating a beloved business but have woven a vibrant, enduring story into the fabric of Binghamton's cultural landscape."

"We moved back to our hometown from NYC with the dream of creating a cafe that embodied a love of good food with a strong sense of community where everyone would feel welcome.

We are deeply grateful for the warmth and support we have received over the past 30 years. From the inspiring, talented people we have been lucky enough to work with to the wonderful customers we have met over the years, Binghamton has truly welcomed us in the most generous ways," **said Elizabeth Hughes and Marie McKenna.**

## **BACKGROUND:**

Originally opening its doors in an old garage on Main Street in 1994, Lost Dog Café soon outgrew its cozy space due to overwhelming community support. By 1997, the café relocated to an expansive, iconic location in an old cigar factory on Water Street, which provided room for live music, art, and gatherings, evolving the café into a full-fledged restaurant and lounge. The move downtown contributed significantly to Binghamton's downtown revival, bringing people back to the area and inspiring a wave of new businesses and events.

As Lost Dog Cafe & Lounge celebrates its 30th year, it continues to hold a special place in the hearts of Binghamton residents and remains a testament to the power of local vision, resilience, and the unifying spirit of community.

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**[Video from the Announcement \(LINK\)](#) | [Photos from the Announcement \(LINK\)](#)**