



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara seeking nominations for the Senate's annual 'Women of Distinction' award

THOMAS F. O'MARA February 28, 2025

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Elmira, N.Y., February 26—State Senator Tom O'Mara today announced that he is seeking nominations for the Senate's 27th annual "Women of Distinction" program to honor local women making outstanding contributions to area communities.

O'Mara and his Senate colleagues annually select a "Woman of Distinction" honoree from their respective legislative districts.

The deadline for submitting a nomination for this year's recognition is Friday, March 14, 2025. Nominations can be submitted online [HERE](#).

An awards ceremony in Albany will be held in May.

"The 'Woman of Distinction' tribute is a meaningful recognition. I look forward to this annual opportunity to recognize an outstanding area citizen," said O'Mara, whose 58th Senate District encompasses all of Chemung, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga and Yates counties, and part of Allegany County (the towns of Alfred, Almond, Amity, Andover, Birdsall, Burns, Grove, Independence, Scio, Ward, Wellsville, and Willing). "We all know someone who makes an enormous difference to the community at large. Whether she is a service provider, a law enforcement officer going above and beyond the call of duty, a teacher, a nurse, a business leader, or simply a community resident known for her good deeds, I'd like to see her recognized."

O'Mara's past "Women of Distinction" honorees have included:

- > Carol Berry of Hornell, a longstanding regional library professional and director of the Dormann Library in Bath;

- > Virginia "Ginny" Houseknecht of Watkins Glen, a longtime area Cornell Cooperative Extension educator and leader, and founder of the Southern Tier Parkinson's Disease Support Group;

- > Beverly “Bev” Stamp, co-owner and operator of Lakewood Vineyards in Watkins Glen, a long-time and beloved ambassador of New York State’s nationally and internationally renowned wine and grape industry;
- > Lauren R. Snyder, a public health professional from Penn Yan who served as the Yates County Public Health Director for 28 years before retiring in 2009;
- > Linda Thomas, owner and operator of the Wellsburg Diner and recipient of a prestigious “Small Business Excellence Award” from the U.S. Small Business Administration;
- > Dawn R. Smith, Transition and Care Management (TCM) Program Manager at the Bath VA Medical Center and a well-known local veterans advocate;
- > Carmella Hoffmann, Owner and Operator of Sunset View Creamery in Odessa (Schuyler County);
- > Kathryn J. Boor, a native of Chemung County and the Ronald P. Lynch Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) at Cornell University;
- > Pauline “Polly” Holbrook, a longtime stalwart of civic affairs in the city of Hornell and the Canisteo Valley;
- > Natasha Thompson, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Food Bank of the Southern Tier;
- > Nancy Kirby, a longstanding advocate and leader for small businesses and entrepreneurship throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions; and
- > Melinda Marquart who has had a long and distinguished career in law enforcement in Seneca County and currently serves as Seneca County’s first female Undersheriff.

