



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeremy Cooney

## Senator Cooney Honors Exceptional Businesses and Individuals with NYS Senate Empire and Commendation Awards

JEREMY COONEY December 20, 2022

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**SENATOR JEREMY COONEY HONORS EXCEPTIONAL BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS WITH NYS SENATE EMPIRE AND COMMENDATION AWARDS**

**(ROCHESTER, NY)** - Yesterday, **Senator Jeremy Cooney (D-Rochester)** honored **nine local businesses** with a New York State Empire Awards and **eight exceptional individuals** with New York State Commendation Awards.

The NYS Senate Empire Award is presented to businesses in recognition of their lasting contributions to their communities. Each recipient of this award represents excellence throughout the Greater Rochester Region. The following businesses were honored: **Amita's Xpress spa, Bergmann, Great Lakes Gaming, GP Flooring Solutions, Indotronix Avani, Java's Café, The Arnett Café, VisualDx, and Vuzix.** The honorees specialize in an array of services including medicine, technology, construction and hospitality. The businesses honored have acted as a catalyst to the growth, success, and enhancement of Greater Rochester.

The New York State Senate Commendation Award is bestowed upon individuals who have provided remarkable work to the community. Individuals who receive this award serve their neighborhoods through volunteer and community service efforts. Through their endeavors, honorees have distinguished themselves as true community servants, and have been presented with a Commendation Award: **Nicole Antonini, Simeon Banister, Theresa Lou Bowick, Santos Cruz, Katelyn Plonczynski-Cruz, Jermayne and Jamarr Myers, and Sister Christine Wagner.**

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The businesses and individuals recognized represent the best of Rochester," Said **Senator Jeremy Cooney**. "I am proud to showcase these model Rochestarians for their contributions to our community, across the 56th Senate District. We know that the success of Rochester is dependent on the citizens and businesses that go above and beyond to give back, and invest in the people that call our region home. It is an honor to recognize today's recipients and their achievements as a testament to the work they've done to improve our city, county, and state."

"I was so surprised to receive senator Jeremy Cooney's letter announcing I'm a recipient of the Commendation award," Said **Nicole Antonini**, *Owner of Ritual Salon and 2022 NYS Senate Commendation awardee*. "My mother raised me to find small ways to give back to others and through my business I've been able to do that here in Rochester. My favorite quote that inspires me is "Every day may not be good, but there's good in every day." It pushes me to keep working for something greater than myself or my business."

"Kudos to Senator Cooney for the wonderfully diverse array of 2022 awardees," said **Simeon Banister**, *President and CEO of Rochester Area Community Foundation, and 2022 NYS Senate Commendation*

awardee. "I humbly accept this award as a reflection of the work of thousands of volunteers, donors, community partners and staff that make up the Community Foundation."

"I am grateful to Senator Cooney for this honor," Said **Jamarr Myers**, *Co-Founder of Black Men Achieve of Greater Rochester and 2022 NYS Senate Commendation awardee*. "I thank all the special people in my life who have supported, cultivated and inspired in me a strong passion for giving back to a community that I have received so much from! This award emblemizes the personal time, energy, creativity, and value I place on youth workforce development and the importance of stabilizing and uplifting every child and family."

"My brother Jamarr and I are humbled and honored to be recognized for this award among a group of outstanding community leaders," Said **Jermayne Myers**, *President/CEO of Black Men Achieve of Greater Rochester and 2022 NYS Senate Commendation awardee*. "We are very thankful of NYS Senator Jeremy Cooney for recognizing our commitment and work to change and meaningfully impact the lives of young people in our community. We would like to also thank our teams and colleagues at Black Men Achieve and Future Ready for their hard work, dedication and commitment to our organizations. This award would not be possible without them or the support from our funders, and those that believed in us like Senator Cooney. Thank you Senator Cooney for motivating us to push onward and improve our work so that we can better and genuinely continue to serve our community!"

"I want to thank Senator Cooney for choosing my business as a recipient of this award," said **Amita Vyas**, *Owner of Amit's Xpress Spa and 2022 NYS Senate Empire awardee*. "I am so blessed to receive this honor! I feel proud that I introduced this unique eyebrow threading service to the Rochester community 20 years ago. During this period I have employed and trained so many people and empowered them to live successful lives here in Rochester. I want to thank the Rochester community for their continued support."

"Bergmann is honored to receive the Empire Award today from our State Senator Jeremy Cooney," Said **Andy Raus**, *Senior Vice President Bergmann and 2022 NYS Senate Empire awardee*. "For more than 43 years, we have planned and designed many of the iconic buildings, public spaces, and infrastructure in our City and region. Just as importantly, we pride ourselves on building capacity within the community through partnerships with organizations like the ACE Mentorship program and the Center for Youth. We are humbled and appreciative of the Empire Award and look forward to helping Rochester achieve its vision of being a progressive and inclusive community."

"It was an incredible surprise to receive a letter from Jeremy Cooney recognizing the effort our small team has put in the past year opening the first GLG Gaming Lounge in the heart of downtown," Said **Ben Garvey**, *Founder of Great Lakes Gaming and 2022 NYS Senate Empire awardee*. "As RIT students we saw the need for entertainment and a community oriented business to create a reason for our student talent to stay here in Rochester post graduation. It's an absolute pleasure to receive this award and it will be the first one we can hang up in our new office!"

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