

# Capital District



## Sports Women of the Year



2024

Capital District Sports Women of the Year Awards Gala

August 12, 2024 • GE Theatre at Proctors • 7:00 PM



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IFC	Miller Printing	25	Meet Talia Spenziero
1	Contents and Credits / Carol Confections	26	Stevens Family / Super Jermaine / What's Poppin'
2	Goldilocks Promos	27	Meet Amy Stevens
3	Welcome Letter from CDSWOY / The Eric Idea Agency	28	Swedick Family
4	Ackerman Family	29	Meet Kennedy Swedick
5	Meet Kate Ackerman	30	Siena College
6	Dingley Family	31	Tonight's Performer – Angelina Valente
7	Meet Ariana Dingley	32	Russell Sage College
8	Griffin Family / Shaker Booster Club	33	Tonight's Speaker – Lisa Bluder
9	Meet Leonni Griffin	34	Averill Park High School
10	Holohan Family / East Greenbush Bowling Center	35	Past CDSWOY Recipients
11	Meet Taylor Holohan	36	Fonda-Fultonville High School
12	ADK Field Hockey Club	37	CDSWOY Board / Maple Hill Boosters / Guilderland High School
13	Meet Carly King	38	Carol's Confections / The Albany Academies
14	Kolpakas Family / Galway High School	39	Cristina Plimero Photography
15	Meet Amber Kokpakas	40	2023 Awards Gala Photo Gallery
16	McClement Family / Waterford-Halfmoon High School	IBC	CDSWOY Women's Golf Classic
17	Meet Cassidy McClement	OBC	The Healthy Café Catering Company
18	Miller Family		
19	Meet Isabella Miller		
20	University at Albany / Homestead Funding		
21	Meet Katie Pascale		
22	Trustco Bank		
23	Meet MacKenna Roberson		
24	Spenziero Family		

*The 2024 Capital District Sports Women of the Year Awards Program was edited by Eric McDowell. Feature stories written by Harrison Huntley. Printing services provided by Miller Printing of Amsterdam, NY. Cover design by Alex Jarvis of Goldilocks Promos of Latham, NY. Photographs provided by family members of the honorees, Angelina Valente, Lauren Hull Photography and University of Iowa Athletics Strategic Communications. Special thanks to our generous sponsors, advertisers, and donors for their support of CDSWOY.*



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It was five short years ago, when an idea led to meetings with local media friends for a discussion. The thought was to provide female student-athletes in the area, from high schools and colleges, with recognition. Not just for athletics mind you, but also for academics and community service. Early in my career in athletics communications, I saw first hand that female student-athletes didn't get the respect they so richly deserved. Could it work? No question! There are so many amazing young women in our area, and they deserve the recognition.

We started with a summer press conference in front of historic Proctors in 2019. Our first induction took place during the pandemic year of 2020, and the fine folks at The Desmond opened their doors for us, during a renovation as well as during Covid, one of their first events back. Our honorees were recognized with two guests each. We moved to the GE Theatre at Proctors in 2021, cultivated by the fabulous staff at this historic venue, and now features musical entertainment. The music continues tonight with multi-award winning artist Angelina Valente, who received honors of her own here at Proctors earlier this year.

Tonight, our CDSWOY Awards Family will increase to 64 stars. Only 10 high school and three college student-athletes are selected for these awards each year. There are over 100 scholastic institutions in Section 2 and 15 colleges in our region. Each Athletic Director can only nominate one individual. Tonight, we bring together remarkable young women who are role models to us all. They accomplish stunning academic achievements. They shine in the playing arena. They serve their communities with dignity and pride. Their stories come to light tonight under the lights of historic Proctors.

March Madness came to Albany in 2024 with some of the best Division I women's basketball teams in the country, and future WNBA players.

Iowa Coach Lisa Bluder brought Caitlin Clark, who wowed the crowds with her talents. As the Press Conference Moderator, I met Caitlin and she was as impressive a person as she was on the court. She has surely helped elevate women's sports to where it belongs. Coach Bluder is a fan of CDSWOY, as she took time after announcing her retirement to be interviewed by our MC, Ashley Miller.

Thank you to Harrison Huntley for his enjoyable feature stories on our recipients. Thanks to Ashley, to New York State Senator James Tedisco for providing proclamations, and to our CDSWOY Board, Alissa Collins, Morgan Farnan, Clare Howard, Jennifer McDowell, and Brendon Phillips. Last but not least, thanks to all our sponsors who believe in the mission of CDSWOY.

How far have women's sports come? Look at Caitlin Clark. Listen to the remarks of her coach, Lisa Bluder, and the congratulations and inspiration she provides to our recipients. Enjoy your evening, members of the CDSWOY Class of 2024. You make us all so very proud.

Sincerely,



Eric McDowell  
President  
Capital District Sports Women of the Year, Inc.



## The Eric Idea Agency



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# *Kate*

When we look at all you have accomplished in 17 short years, we are amazed!

When we look to the future, we are excited to see all that you will achieve!

Go Kate!

Love,  
Mom, Dad, Kevin  
and Toby



## **Kate Ackerman** **Maple Hill High School**



Kate Ackerman had a decision to make. While still mourning the sudden loss of her brother the day before, Ackerman had to decide if she would compete in the state bowling championship just three days later. It was an understandably difficult time for Ackerman and her family in the wake of her brother's suicide. No one would blame her if she decided to stay home from competition.

"People were surprised I even went to school," Ackerman said. "But I wanted to be with my friends, being around them helped. My coach, Mrs. Golden, said 'we'll support you no matter what.'"

But in that moment, Ackerman said there was only one option for her. "I decided I wanted to go compete because I made a commitment to my team," she said. "I felt like I wanted to go and compete at states."

The fact that Ackerman even have had the chance to compete at the state championship was special. She had came up six pins short of making the team but she was called to fill in on the squad after another athlete dropped out.

Given the opportunity and her unique circumstance, Ackerman made the most of the moment. She bowled a total of 1487 to take the first place medal. She accomplished this averaging 248 pins over 6 games at the State Tournament, 37 pins above her average. She etched her name in the state record book by placing second for 6 game high series with a total of 1487 pins at the state tournament and a third place slot for 3 game high series.

"There is a saying, 'When thrown to the wolves. Come out the pack leader.' That is how I describe grit and determination to my athletes," Maple Hill Athletic Director April Hill said. "Kate proved that she has more grit than anyone this bowling season."

Ackerman added that gold medal to her already long list of accolades from her career. In addition to being named to the USA Today national top 25 list, she was the Times Union Girls Bowling Athlete of the Year and earned the Hal Bieber scholarship from the Albany chapter of the United States Bowling Congress.

It may be hard to believe that bowling wasn't even Ackerman's top sport until later in high school. She was a strong pitcher on the softball diamond, making the varsity team in eighth grade. Though she was getting some interest from college softball coaches, she decided to reach out to collegiate bowling coaches to see if they had any interest as well.

"I told my parents on Christmas day that I was going to reach out to bowling coaches, just to see if I get any responses," she said. "Surprisingly, I got a ton of responses." Ackerman would go on to sign her National Letter of Intent to bowl at Niagara.

"Kate has demonstrated a willingness to learn, work hard and strive for success," Maple Hill head coach Sheila Golden said. "Kate embraced the personal commitment and drive required to succeed in bowling and as a result, practiced with enthusiasm and diligence each day. There is no doubt in my mind that Kate will continue with the same determination and work ethic as she continues her bowling career at Niagara.

A scholar athlete and high honor role member, Ackerman also found success in the classroom. She was chosen by her teachers and peers as the recipient of the Outstanding Senior award.

Ackerman was also chosen by the staff at Maple Hill to mentor middle school students that will soon be making the jump to high school. With her success in the alley and in the classroom, Ackerman is an easy role model for aspiring Wildcats.

"I tell them I've been in your shoes, I'm not just going to tell you it's hard," she said. "I have experience, I want to make every underclassman feel welcome and supported. Especially during sports since we compete as a small school, those young players can help the team a lot."

Ackerman donated seven formal dresses, two prom dresses, and three pairs of formal heels to Cinderella's Closet, which allows students in need to pick out free dresses for their proms. Giving back to the community was important to Ackerman but it is even more important after the support she received after her family's loss.

"I wanted to give back to the community especially since my brother's passing," she said. "They've supported me and have done so much for me and everyone around me. I want to be there for them. Receiving this award confirms all of the sacrifices my family and I have made to make sure I have every tool to succeed academically and athletically," she said. "I am grateful for my parents allowing me the opportunity to play the sports that I enjoy."

"Receiving this award confirms all of the sacrifices my family and I have made to make sure I have every tool to succeed academically and athletically," she said. "I am grateful for my parents allowing me the opportunity to play the sports that I enjoy."



# Ariana

We are amazingly proud of all your accomplishments thus far.  
We know how hard you have worked and we are  
excited to see what the future holds!

*Love, Mom, Dad and Emma!*

**Ariana Dingley**  
**Lansingburgh High School**



Ariana Dingley started playing soccer because she liked doing whatever her older sister was doing. But as she progressed in her career, soccer became something she enjoyed in her own right. Dingley began playing soccer at just five years old and never stopped working on her craft. She would go on to star for Lansingburgh and was twice named Section 2 Class B Colonial Council All-Stars First Team and was honorable mention two more times in four years with the Knights.

Dingley was also recognized for her defense in 2022 when she was named Colonial Council Girls Soccer Co-Defensive Player of the Year. She remembers that as her most meaningful award she received in her career. "That award was when I was coming off an injury," Dingley said. "I felt down, unsure if I was able to get back into it. And we didn't have the best record that year, but it felt really good to be recognized for my hard work that year."

Dingley started her high school career spending her spring running track to prepare for soccer season. But after suffering an injury that kept her off the track, a friend asked her to come out for the softball team the next year.

"Playing other sports helped, but it was all so new," Dingley said of her early softball career. "I definitely wasn't the best, but I put a lot of work into it."

Her work paid off and Dingley was named captain in her second year on the team. "I'm not the most outgoing person, but when it came down to it in the huddles, I was able to channel something with everyone," Dingley said. "I had my own connection with each player and find the right words. Make sure we were focused."

Michael Robbins, Dingley's athletic director at Lansingburgh, said she truly earned such a position. "Her competitiveness, work ethic and passion for sports have allowed her to not only be a successful athlete, but to also be seen as a leader in the eyes of her teammates," he said. "Ariana is a kind hearted young woman who will always do the right thing, even when no one is watching."

Lansingburgh head coach James Swab agrees. "She is an excellent role model for younger members of the team," he said. "She is a leader on and off the field."

In addition to her athletic prowess, Dingley excelled in the classroom. She was named her school's valedictorian after achieving high honor roll in each marking period. Dingley was also involved in her community, including with the Lansingburgh Veteran's Club.

The Veteran's Club was a cause close to her heart since both of her parents are veterans. Being able to support the other veterans in the community offered her a rewarding way to give back. "It was rewarding because people would be excited to see young faces at the Veterans Club," Dingley said.

With all that time spent in school, sports, and volunteering, it's natural to wonder how Ariana Dingley made time for all these things.

"I didn't have much of a social life," Dingley said only half joking. "But at the same time, I made so many connections through all the sports and clubs. I was around my friends all the time."

A native of San Diego, Dingley is set to return home for college. She's headed to study at the University of San Diego in the fall in a bit of a homecoming. "I have some family still out there," she said. "And of course, the weather makes for a nice environment."

"I'm very honored to be recognized for this achievement," she said. "I'm appreciative of those who supported me in my journey and that my hard work and dedication is being noticed."



●  
FROM THE  
GRIFFIN FAMILY

# CONGRATULATIONS LEONNI



## *Congratulations Leonni!*

*Shaker All Sport Booster Club  
&  
Girls Track and Field*

## **Leonni Griffin** **Shaker High School**



Leonni Griffin's running career started early. From the time she could run, she remembers joining her dad as he jogged laps around the neighborhood. Little did either of them know that it was the start of a long and successful career in running.

At the time, Griffin would have described herself as a soccer player. But as time went on, it became clear that she had the greatest potential in running.

"I would run the turkey trot every year with my family," Griffin said. "When I was 10, I wanted to run the race with my dad. With a mile to go, I sprinted off ahead of him. I ended up with a pretty good 5K time."

After her successful turkey trot performance, Griffin ran in some track meets when she was in elementary school. That caught the attention of the Shaker High School cross country coach, who sent a letter to Griffin's sixth grade teacher. The letter, which was read aloud to her whole sixth grade class, was a formal invitation for Griffin to compete on the varsity cross country team the next year in seventh grade.

Now a member of the Shaker Bison varsity team, Griffin worked to find best event.

"I thought I was more of a sprinter," she said. "But I naturally trained with the distance team at first when I ran cross country."

While her 2020 season was cancelled because of COVID-19, Griffin said she hit the gym to get stronger. That strength and lifting pushed her towards shorter distances, where Griffin went from a good runner to one of the nation's best.

Griffin won the New York State championship in the indoor 600 meters and owns 11 school records between indoor and outdoor. This success earned her two invites to the Millrose Games, an elite indoor track meet in New York City. In 2023 she competed with her 4x800 meter relay team and in 2024, she returned by herself to compete in the 600 meters. At the end of her high school career, Griffin announced she would continue her track career at Boston University.

Amidst all of this success on the track, Griffin held on to her love of soccer. She started playing when she was just four years old and did not stop playing competitively until her senior year of high school.

"It was difficult for me and my parents," she said. "At first, my parents thought watching track was boring. But now they love it. They haven't missed a single one of my races."

Along with her exceptional athletic ability, Griffin spent the latter part of her high school taking college classes. She averaged a 95 GPA while earning 14 college credits from the State University of New York.

"I'll have almost a full semester of credits," Griffin said. "Balancing academics and athletics was very important to me and my family. They always said you need both to be successful."

Track may be known as an individual sport, but Griffin sees it differently. She consistently took advantage of opportunities to lead within the track program and support other athletes. This work earned her the award she says she's most proud of, the Capital District Leadership Award for her school.

"When I was the seventh grader with seniors, they were great mentors and built me up with confidence," Griffin said. "Now I want my teammates to recognize that that one performance doesn't define them. I always say learning is the most important process to growth."

"Her positive attitude, exceptional work ethic, and willingness to mentor and support her teammates highlight her role as a true team player and inspiration to others," Shaker Athletic Director Sean Colfer said.

The Capital District Sports Women of the Year award brings together everything that Griffin has done during her time in high school.

"It means a lot," she said. "Being recognized for that shows that all the work and hours I've put in has paid off. It's just a great honor, the other awards are great, but this brings together all three aspects combined."

*Congratulations*

Taylor Holohan

Love your commitment to academics, basketball, and your community!



We are so proud of you!

Love you! Mom, Dad, Keston and Morgan



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*Congratulations Kate!*

We're so proud of your hard work and determination.

Best wishes for more success in the future!

## HS - Basketball

2024

### **Taylor Holohan** **Averill Park High School**



Back in the third grade, Taylor Holohan wasn't sure what her favorite sport was.

"I played every sport," she said. "If you name a sport, I probably played it."

But fast forward about a decade, and Holohan is now on a full basketball scholarship at Northeastern University after bringing a state championship and three regional titles home to Averill Park. What happened in between was the result of strong friendships and a commitment to improving Averill Park basketball.

Holohan grew up playing basketball with the same girls that would eventually lead their high school to a championship. It was those girls and the relationship they built early on that would entice Holohan to stick with basketball and bring them success down the road.

"The girls I played with were the ones I started with in third grade," she said. "My best friends were on the team. They made it 40 times better than it would have been with anyone else."

As a sophomore, Holohan led the Warriors to a Class A state championship and was named a tournament all-star. She also helped Averill Park win sectional championships every full season along with three regional championships. In her final season, Holohan and her teammates accomplished a perfect 20-0 regular season record.

"I've seen growth in myself from both a mental and physical standpoint," she said. "I grew a lot and contributed to my team everything I could. I gave them everything I had."

"The past two seasons Taylor was the leader of the team, and a leader in every sense of the word," said Averill Park Athletic Director Mark Bubniak. "She was an encouraging, demanding and supportive teammate doing anything that was needed for the team to be successful. She handled everything that was thrown at her, from opposing defenses to media requests."

Holohan said she found motivation from local kids who were just like her. As a coach with Averill Park youth basketball, she had the chance to mentor young players in her community in the same way the high school players did when she was in the youth program.

"One of the things that pushed me the most this season were the younger girls that watched me," she said. "I remember when I was in second grade - I wanted to be just like the girls on the team. To see these kids before and after games, the energy they brought, they have no idea what they gave us. It's an honor to be a part of this program."

"As a coach, Taylor worked with the children to improve their fundamentals, provided them with a sense of self-worth, and set a good example for her players to follow," Averill Park head coach Sean Organ said. "Taylor's wonderful personality has made her very popular among the youngsters who participated on the teams she has coached."

From her time in the youth program, Taylor Holohan has dreamed of growing up and representing Averill Park on the basketball court. After five years in the program, she's represented the team well and will continue to do so at the collegiate level and beyond.

"Taylor leaves Averill Park as arguably the greatest basketball player in school history," Bubniak added. "She is a terrific leader and a tremendous basketball player."

"This award is another boost going into college," she said. "It gives me the confidence to be able to continue in life and accomplish even more. You're never done, you always have something more. A lot of the girls I looked up to and still do have won this award and it's cool to see me in their footsteps. There are younger girls in the program that will hopefully get this award too."



## **Carly King**

has been a member of the **ADK Field Hockey Club** for 7 years and we could not be more proud of her for being named as one of the **Capital Region Sports Women of the Year**. Carly has always been a tremendous leader by example and will excel in college both academically and athletically.

*Congratulations  
Carly!*

Sincerely,

**Coach Jen Sykes**

Owner of the

**ADK Field Hockey Club**



**Carly King**  
**Guilderland High School**



Field hockey is a family affair for Carly King. She credits her older sister for introducing the sport to her back in seventh grade. Now, her younger sisters are taking part in the youth program as well. In between, King has stuck with field hockey to numerous high school awards and even to the collegiate level.

Though she played other sports in her time at Guilderland High School, field hockey has always been her favorite. After field hockey ended for the winter, King would take up indoor track as a way to cross train for field hockey. A middle distance runner, King competed in the 600 meters as well as the 4x800 meter relay.

“I liked doing track,” she said. “It helps with endurance and the motivation and hard work transferred over to field hockey.”

King said lacrosse offered her a similar opportunity to stay in field hockey shape. But while in field hockey she mostly played defense, King said she had a different role on the lacrosse team.

“I liked that I got to play a different position in lacrosse,” she said. “I had more of an offensive role in lacrosse. While it also has the team dynamic, I liked that it’s a different culture.”

But King garnered most of her accolades on the field hockey pitch. She helped the Dutchmen post the best record in program history and a Section 2 championship in her senior season. She was also named All-State and First Team Suburban Council All Star.

“I’ve found success when I’ve kept practicing, improving, and learning more,” King said. “We were all super close as a team this season – we were all striving for the same goal.”

Along with her athletic award, King was also recognized for her academic excellence in leadership by the Suburban Council. Each school in the council selects one female and one male student that excels in leadership.

King was selected because of her involvement with the Guilderland Field Hockey youth program. As the lead coach, King has been involved in coaching younger players in her area through regular practices, camps,

and free playdays that offer a free way for any youth in the area who would like to try field hockey.

She also helped the program raise money to purchase equipment that’s offered to any player who wants to try the sport. To do this, King helped write a grant with the Albany County Legislators Office. The program helps grow the field hockey participation numbers in the area while also offering those already playing field hockey opportunities to improve their skills.

“I volunteer with the youth program because I want to help improve the Guilderland program in the future,” she said. “Seeing the kids get along and learn teamwork – that’s a skillset they’ll have for the rest of their career.”

Off the field, King also tutors her peers through her school’s National Honor Society. Just like with coaching, she enjoys helping her fellow students build long lasting skills.

“Coaching is similar to tutoring for me,” King said, “Watching it ‘click’ is just as rewarding for the students I’m tutoring as it is for me. It makes a difference that lasts a lifetime.”

King’s commitment to field hockey will continue into college. She will join the team at Salve Regina University in Rhode Island this fall. King says just like in high school, she’ll have to manage her time wisely as a collegiate player.

“If we have practice at 4 with school over at 2:30, I know I need to use that time wisely to do homework so I have the evening for my other things,” she said.

King said she’s honored to receive the Capital District Sports Women of the Year award since it highlights the hard work she’s put in at an often-overlooked position.

“This award means a lot to me,” she said. “I am very honored to receive this award especially as a defender because a lot of the time accolades go to the people scoring the points, or the goalies making the saves.”



Congratulations Amber! You accomplish things by the love of something and achieve to do your best. Through this love, whether it's sports, academics or volunteering, you have developed inspiration amongst your teammates, teachers and younger classmates as well as your parents. We are proud of you, best of luck in your new journey.  
Love Mom and Dad



GALWAY HIGH SCHOOL • HOME OF THE GOLDEN EAGLES

# Congratulations Amber!



Amber has been a member of the Varsity volleyball team since Seventh grade. Since Amber's first day on varsity with our volleyball program, she has demonstrated great skills and traits consistently. Amber was a true leader on the court by doing it all for the team this past season, and she received many accolades for her accomplishments. She was named New York State First Team All-State and New York State Final Four All-Tournament Team. Also within our league, the Western Athletic Conference (WAC), Amber was voted WAC Division MVP, WAC Overall League MVP, and WAC First Team All-Star. She finished her season with 365 Kills and 219 digs. Amber broke the school record this past season for Career Kills with 1,578, and she also reached with 1,000 dig plateau finishing with 1,028 digs. Amber has been a 3x NYS 1st Team All-Star, a 2x WAC MVP, a 4x WAC 1st Team League All-Star, and a 2x WAC Offensive Player of the Year.

## **Amber Kolpakas Galway High School**



Amber Kolpakas has led the Golden Eagles on the volleyball court since she was in eighth grade. “I had always been interested in volleyball,” Kolpakas said. “I joined my school’s team in sixth grade and was asked to play JV the next year. By the end of seventh grade, I was pulled up to varsity for sectionals.”

The following year, even though she was still in eighth grade, Kolpakas led Galway to a state championship appearance while averaging 15 kills in her postseason matches. It was just the beginning of a stellar career on the court. Kolpakas went on to be a three-time First Team All-State selection in volleyball with two league MVPs and Offensive MVPs. She was selected to the Section 2 First Team four times and was selected to the Albany Times Union Section 2 All-Star team, the only player selected from a small school. Kolpakas ended her career with two All-State First Team selections along with a Second Team selection and three appearances on the New York State All-Tournament Team. She set the Galway record with 1,578 career kills and added 1,028 career digs.

“In all my years, I have known other students with talents equivalent to Amber’s. However, most of them lacked her good nature and humility, and even fewer demonstrated the genuine intellectual curiosity that Amber has exhibited over and over,” said Galway Athletic Director and Volleyball coach Michael Glenn. “It’s a curiosity that is often accompanied by her excitement or enthusiasm for an idea, an experiment or the lead role in a challenging operatic performance.”

It was curiosity that would lead Kolpakas to take up basketball during her junior year. She says she always wanted to play, and finally was able to when she got her driver’s license and was able to drive herself to practice.

“It was hard,” Kolpakas said of her early basketball career. “I wasn’t particularly good at first. But I kept working to get better every day.” Her hard work paid off and by the end of her first season, she was part of the starting five. She began her senior year being chosen as the team captain and went on to lead the Golden Eagles in rebounds and blocks. As team

captain, Kolpakas encouraged the team on and off the court including organizing a gift basket for a teammate who missed a few weeks due to an illness.

“Amber’s height and athletic ability led her to be a good rebounder,” said Galway Basketball Coach Phillip Meashaw. “Amber had the courage and motivation to attempt a new sport. Her attitude was always positive and she knew she had a lot to learn and a short period of time to do it.”

That positivity was also evident on the diamond. Kolpakas represented Galway as a three-time Section 2 all-star and was named the league MVP. But her positivity went beyond the spring seasons. Kolpakas has been a part of a local softball camp helping young players in her area to hone their skills.

“I’ve played softball since I was eight years old,” Kolpakas said. “A lot of these girls have dreams of being good and playing here in the future. They look up to me and it’s rewarding to help them.”

In addition to being a three-sport standout at Galway, Kolpakas also excelled in the classroom as she ranked ninth in the class of 2024. She also spent her spare time making personal hygiene packages for a backpack program and making blankets for a dog shelter. She also assisted a teacher by organizing musical performances for a service project.

“I feel she is a wonderful role model for other young women”, Meashaw said. “I am proud to have coached her.”

“Receiving this award is such an amazing honor for me and I am so grateful for the recognition,” Kolpakas said. “I feel like it helps bring attention to our small school and show that there are so many amazing athletes out there. I definitely couldn’t have done it without the support from my parents or coaches, but I am so grateful for them believing in me and giving me that support.”



# Cassidy,

Congratulations! This recognition is the icing on the cake of a tremendous high school career. We are so proud of all your accomplishments on the field and in the classroom. Most importantly, we are proud of the young woman you have become. Your future looks bright, and remember; "Kid, you can do anything you put your mind to!"

Love,  
*Mom and Dad*



Congratulations  
Cassidy!



The Waterford-Halfmoon community is proud of you and all your accomplishments—best of luck in your future endeavors.

**Cassidy McClement**  
**Waterford-Halfmoon High School**



Cassidy McClement is fast. As one of the fastest runners at Waterford-Halfmoon for the last six years, McClement has made a name for herself with her speed. Beginning in seventh grade, McClement found herself competitive against varsity runners at a high level.

"She immediately made a huge impact on our program," Waterford-Halfmoon track coach Allie Hornung said "She placed in the top six at both league and sectionals that year against very tough upperclassmen competition."

McClement was set up for an even better eighth grade season, but the season was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When she returned for her first season as a high schooler, she was second at League Championships in the 100 meters and became Sectional Champion in the 100 and 200. She also anchored the Fordians 4x100 team that took third place. The next year, McClement again anchored the team that improved to a second place finish. In her junior year, she would lead the team to their first league championship in the 4x100 with a school record time of 54.2.

But coach Hornung says McClement's character is the most impressive thing about her. "Most importantly, Cassidy is a good person, through and through," Hornung said. "She is one of the kindest athletes I have ever had the pleasure of coaching. I have never ever heard her boast about her talent, choosing instead to let her hard work and success do the talking."

Even though track is often thought of as an individual sport, McClement says being on the relay team is her favorite part of track. "I love the long jump, but I also love my 4x100 meter team," McClement said. "Winning leagues in the 4x100, our first hardware, was the highlight of my career. I just remember how hard we worked and how bad the four of us wanted to win."

Her speed translated well to the soccer pitch as well. A lifelong soccer player, McClement made the varsity team as an eighth grader and spent

time at different positions around the field. Her speed and versatility helped her lead the Fordians to back-to-back Class C Girls Soccer State Championships.

Even with all her speed, being a part of the Waterford-Halfmoon teams was even more meaningful to McClement because of the time she spent slowing down with the community she had on and off track or field. McClement said that most of her classmates had grown up going to the same elementary and middle schools, creating a long-lasting bond that made these championships that much sweeter.

"Our class grew up together, we're all really close," she said. "Our teachers have said we had the best proms because we get along together, everyone was included."

Coach Hornung said McClement always made time for those around her. She is supportive of her teammates, always encouraging them to do their best and picking them up when they are struggling," Hornung said. "She is also very involved in her community, somehow finding time to volunteer at Town of Waterford food drives and the annual Dragon Boat festival to benefit To Life! Breast Cancer Support, Resources, & Education."

In addition to all these accolades, McClement was the valedictorian of Waterford-Halfmoon, the President of her school's National Honor Society, and the class Treasurer. So how did she manage to make time for school, sports, clubs, and other things? "I had to prioritize what was important," McClement said. "And set a lot of reminders on my phone."

"I am honored to have had the opportunity to witness her success, Hornung said. "I cannot wait to see where her hard work takes her after high school."

"It's an honor to receive such a special recognition," McClement said. "I'm proud of all the hard work I've put in over the years and I'm especially grateful for all the support I've had from my family, coaches, teachers and teammates over the years."



## *Isabella,*

We are so incredibly proud of your athletic and academic success, but we are even more proud of the person you are. You lead by example and have always been a mentor to younger athletes or students. You are always kind and compassionate and willing to help. If someone is having a bad day, you build them up. If someone needs help, you always step in to help and support. We love that you always give 100% to everything you do, you have integrity and never take the short cut. You have had your share of obstacles, even a few extra and instead of giving up, you dust yourself off, get back up and try again. Your tenacity and dedication will bring you success always. You always ask, how can I be better? You are coachable, and always willing to learn how to improve. Never stop asking, this is how you will continue to learn and grow. We are your biggest fans and are always here cheering you on. We cannot wait to see what the future brings for you. Our hope for you is you seize every opportunity, learn new things, and continue to be the strong and amazing person that you are. Continue to smile and shine, we are so proud of you. Enjoy your new adventure at college.

Love,

*Mom and Dad*



**Isabella Miller**  
**Fonda-Fultonville High School**



Isabella Miller knows what it means to run down a dream. Ever since she was a little girl, she has been running with her family.

“My whole family runs, especially my dad,” she said.

Even though Miller has been running 5Ks with her family for along as she can remember, she also grew up using her endurance and speed on the soccer field. Finally, in seventh grade, Miller’s father suggested she give cross country a try.

“That’s when I fell in love with it,” Miller said.

She eventually became a year-round athlete at Fonda-Fultonville competing in cross country in the fall, indoor track in the winter, and outdoor track in the spring.

Coming into her senior season, Miller set a goal of reaching the New York State meet in cross country. It was an ambitious goal for any runner, but for Miller specifically, it would mean overcoming years of disappointment.

“Year after year, injuries and untimely illnesses crept up and derailed her efforts to qualify,” said Fonda-Fultonville Cross Country coach Joseph Geniti. “To Isabella’s credit, she consistently demonstrated resilience, determination, and an unyielding commitment to success. Most impressive, she always found a way to stay positive and celebrate her teammates’ successes, despite her own individual disappointment.”

Miller committed to this goal with Geniti. She said he was integral in the planning and execution of her cross country season.

“Coach Geniti has been amazing,” she said. “I was coming off a hip injury, and he made sure to regulate my mileage and work me into the right training.”

After fighting through the hip injury, Miller would suffer an ankle injury while warming up for the Western Athletic Conference meet. However, she persisted through the injuries to race in sectionals and finally claim her spot in the state meet.

“To accomplish this as a senior made the feat even more impressive, considering the meet is historically dominated by underclassmen,” Geniti said. “She finished 39th overall at the state meet, and impressively, was the sixth senior across the line in her race. It was the culminating moment to what had been an inspiring journey.”

As exhibited in her cross country career, Miller knows work hard towards a goal that matters to her. That’s why in school, Miller took some of the most challenging classes and excelled in them, earning the third-best GPA in her class and an internship at the Neural Stem Cell Institute in Rensselaer, New York.

“It was an amazing opportunity,” she said. “I got to create antibodies in the lab so that the lab techs could use them in their research.”

That research meant a lot to Miller, who said her family has had a lot of experience with cancer. It was that experience that got her interested in the field of oncology.

“My aunt passed away from cancer when I was eight years old,” Miller said. “That’s what made me want to go to medical school and eventually study oncology.”

While she made her way towards her goal of medical school, she spent time volunteering at her local Ronald McDonald House serving families of children that are in the hospital.

“I like to go in and cook meals for the families staying at the house or make baked goods,” she said.

Chasing down her goals is what Isabella Miller does best. Amongst all her achievements, she says earning the Capital District Sports Woman of the Year award is one of her most memorable achievements.

“I’m very honored to receive the prestigious Capital District Sports Women of the Year award,” Miller said. “It is such an accomplishment to be valued among these amazing young women. It was a defining moment in my high school career to receive this award and goes to show that all your hard work and dedication pays off.”

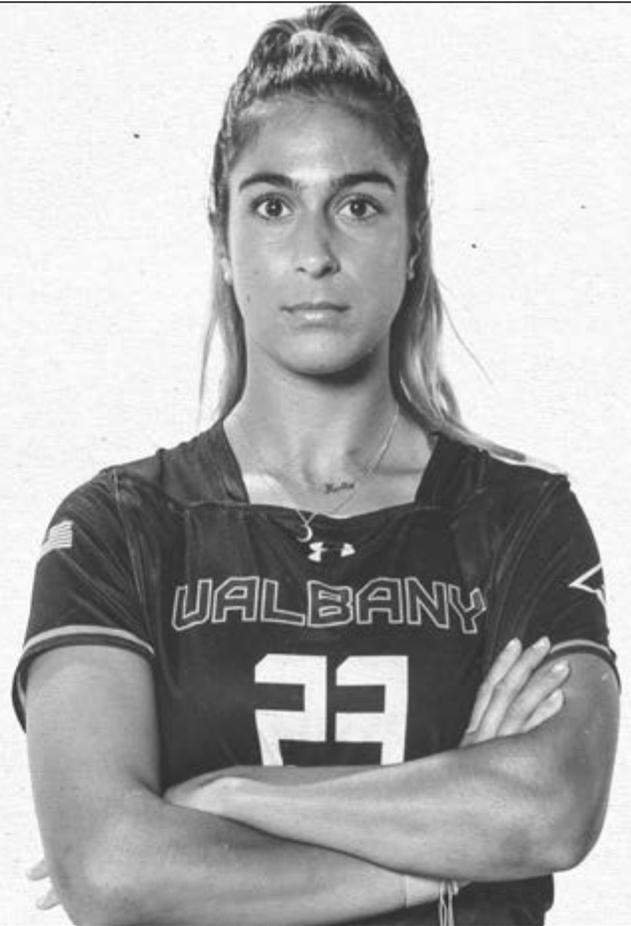


CAPITAL DISTRICT  
**SPORTS WOMEN  
OF THE YEAR**

*Katie Pascale*

*Congratulations, Katie!  
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## College - Lacrosse

2024

### **Katie Pascale** **University at Albany**



Most women's lacrosse sticks are between 3 and 3.5 feet tall. Katie Pascale says lacrosse has been a part of her life since her stick was taller than she was.

"When I was in kindergarten, I went to my first lacrosse camp," Pascale said. "The stick just never fell out of my hand."

In high school at Baldwinsville, Pascale was the MVP of the 2019 lacrosse team that won sectional and regional championships. But as several of Pascale's teammates all went their separate ways to play Division I lacrosse, she turned down Power Five offers to play at UAlbany.

"I saw plenty of ACC schools and bigger programs," Pascale said. "There was just something intimate and family-like about UAlbany. I knew on my first visit to UAlbany that it was where I wanted to be."

All Pascale did in college was rewrite the UAlbany record book. She is the only women's lacrosse player to ever score 300 career points at UAlbany and one of only five women in the America East Conference to do so. She holds program records in scoring, assists, and draw controls by wide margins.

"She was very highly recruited nationally with many top teams looking at her," UAlbany head coach Katie Thomson said. "She gave her all and took the program to new heights."

Pascale was recognized for her efforts as an Inside Lacrosse Preseason and Midseason All-American, a two-time inside Lacrosse All-America Honorable Mention, a four-time IWLCA All-Northeast Region selection, a two-time America East Midfielder of the Year, and a two-time consecutive America East Scholar-Athlete. The latter award recognizes her play on the field as well as academic achievements. She graduated with a 3.66 cumulative GPA and is the fourth player in program history to earn America East All-Academic honors three times and one of the three to have earned the conference's Scholar-Athlete honors twice.

When it comes to academics, Pascale credits her mother, a former Syracuse basketball player, and the faculty at UAlbany.

"My mom taught me how to keep my things super organized, which is important in accounting," Pascale said. "UAlbany also had great professors and a great athletic advising program."

And while her gaudy lacrosse statistics are undoubtedly the product of Pascale's hard work and determination, she says she couldn't have done it without her teammates.

"The career points record shows how great the team is," she said. "I was always an assist-first girl. I'm thankful to have been surrounded by a great team. They made my experience better from the time I was a freshman."

Pascale said UAlbany became a home away from home for her because of the closeness of her teammates along with the greater Albany community. She worked alongside her teammates to develop local youth lacrosse players through the CityLax program.

"Anything that involves younger kids is awesome," Pascale said. "I love seeing little kids look up to us and show up to our games. We want to be well known in the community."

"She's such a great role model and example for the young players," Coach Thomson said. "It takes a lot of time management, organization, and drive to be the best on the field and in the classroom. She is proof that you can balance being a student-athlete."

Even if Katie Pascale wasn't one of the most decorated student-athletes in UAlbany history, she would still be well known in the Albany community for her dedication to helped young lacrosse players like her. The fact that she did that while working to become one of the program's best makes her that much more special.

"This award is really an honor," Pascale said. "I've had such a great time at UAlbany. I'm so thankful for all the people around me. I'm going to stay here after graduation because it's become home. I'm so thankful for the community around me."

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## **MacKenna Roberson** **Hoosick Falls High School**



MacKenna Roberson is always willing to offer an assist. In her sports career, she became known as a team player that was willing to do anything it takes to win. But perhaps more importantly, Roberson does everything she can to help kids have the opportunity to do the things they love.

Roberson won the Triple Crown award at Hoosick Falls High School for playing a varsity sport each season. She competed in field hockey, basketball, and softball in her time with the Panthers.

"I didn't get a lot of off days," Roberson said. "The most important thing was to take the time I did have to relax or do mobility work and get sleep to be prepared to whatever is coming next."

Softball is the sport Roberson played the longest. Her experience was an asset to her team since she could play several different positions. As the only upperclassman on the team during both her junior and senior years, Roberson quickly found herself in a leadership role.

"I had to step up," she said. "The other players trusted me, it was easy to form a connection. I was the only one who knew everything in and out."

"MacKenna exemplifies the qualities that every coach hopes to find in their players," Hoosick Falls Head Softball Coach Nicole Martin said. "Beyond her athletic abilities, MacKenna is also a natural leader and a positive influence on her teammates."

That leadership was prevalent on the field hockey pitch as well. Though Roberson was a two-time first team All-Star and an All-State selection, she said she found her role on the team helping others score.

"In field hockey, I tried to be a helping hand," she said. "I enjoyed being more of the assist player on the team."

Yet, on the basketball court, Roberson helps her team out as one of the team's main scorers. With an inexperienced team, she had to step into more of a scoring role. Roberson was named Rookie of the Year in 2021 and MVP in 2022 and 2023.

"A lot of the people on the team were new to the sport," she said. "I had to step up and score, play defense, and do a lot."

While spending most of her high school days playing sports, Roberson also spent time so others could enjoy sports in the same way she did. Working with the EC Fund, Roberson helped raise money to provide scholarships for local youth to participate in extracurricular activities like sports, music, and arts. For Roberson, it's a cause that's close to her heart.

"I didn't have the easiest life growing up," she said. "The EC Fund was always there for me. I want them to know how grateful I am."

As a recipient of a scholarship from the EC Fund, Roberson knows exactly what this kind of support means. She now speaks on behalf of the organization to encourage others to donate if they can and use the Fund if they need it.

"I'm trying to let kids know it's ok to ask for help," she said. "Everyone is just looking for money these days with AAU teams and club sports. It's a lot of money to play, and there's not a lot of opportunities for free. I want people to be able to get better at things that matter to them."

If any young athlete in Hoosick Falls needed help finding a role model, MacKenna Roberson would be an excellent one. Her kindness and determination are evident in everything she does on and off the field.

"To me the award means more than just a trophy or medal I will receive," she said. "I couldn't imagine getting this award as my dream was to hold myself to the highest standard both in the classroom and on the field or court. I couldn't be more thankful for this award and it shows me that no matter where you come from or who you are, you can succeed and achieve your goals."



# Congratulations TALIA!

On such an extraordinary award!!! We have watched you grow from a shy young girl to a natural born leader. From your first dives at the town pool to being asked to try out for Shenendehowa's Varsity team in 7th grade and then continuing on to dive for Division 1 at Siena College.

You have worked so hard and have overcome many obstacles and challenges to get to this point. Your achievements in both your diving career and academic career are nothing short of amazing. In 2023 we watched you live out a dream and moment you'll remember for the rest of your life when you won the gold medal in the 1-meter springboard at the 2023 MAAC Women's Diving Championships after so many years of hard work, determination, and dedication. Academically you prevailed also. Aside from volunteering for multiple organizations in the community you graduated Siena Magna Cum Laude and plan to attain your Master's Degree to become a Physician's Assistant which will allow you to pursue your passion for helping others.

Above all the awards and accolades you won it's how you did it along the way that you should be most proud of. You showed sportsmanship, strength, courage and class. We can't wait to see what your future holds!

*Love,  
Mom, Jason, Joseph  
and Bunny*

## College - Swimming & Diving

2024

### **Talia Spenziero** **Siena College**



Talia Spenziero knows what it means to work hard. She certainly worked hard during her career at Siena College during which she was a five-time All-MAAC diver. But behind the scenes, Spenziero's unique work ethic and leadership helped her find success all over North America.

Spenziero chose Siena because she wanted to stay close to home. After six years of diving for Shenendehowa High School, she decided to compete at Siena to stay near her family in Clifton Park. But at the time, the Saints had just one diver on the team, who had only joined the team the year prior, and no diving coach.

"We would coach each other by taking videos," Spenziero said. "It brought out the strengths in both of us."

"Despite the challenges of not having a diving coach on staff, the two girls were positive, hard-working, and extremely successful," said former Siena Swimming and Diving Head Coach Brogan Barr.

Spenziero's success included capturing the MAAC Championship in the one-meter diving event, becoming the program's first individual champion since 2011, and she was named Co-Diver of the meet on her way to being just the fourth diver to represent Siena at the NCAA Diving Zone Regionals.

"She also dedicated herself to getting stronger in the weight room and to executing her dives to the best of her abilities," Barr said.

The hard work began in middle school for Spenziero. Just like her mom, she was a gymnast early on before moving to the diving board in middle school. She started competing on her high school's varsity diving team in seventh grade.

"I practiced day in and day out," she said. "I'd end school at 2:30, have varsity practice until 5:30, and then go to practice with my club team from 6-8 a couple days a week."

That schedule only filled up more when she reached college. While Spenziero admits she struggled at first, she found a way to work harder and find success in the classroom.

"I didn't have many study habits in high school," she said, "That doesn't work in college. But I started working really hard and I got at least a 3.8 every semester."

Spenziero had to bring her best effort to balance a courseload that included difficult health sciences classes. Even with a hard major, Spenziero still graduated Magna Cum Laude this past spring.

"Throughout her time at Siena, Talia continuously challenged herself with some of Siena's toughest science courses, as she wanted to prepare herself for the rigors of a physician assistant master's program," Barr said. "She handled the nuances of her academic, athletic, and work schedules seemingly flawlessly."

The summer before her senior year, Spenziero traveled to Oaxaca, Mexico as a Global Medical Volunteer. She visited the local clinics there for five hours, five days a week. She was able to help lower income residents in the city get much needed health care.

"It was one of the greatest experiences I've ever done," she said. "I got to work hand-in-hand with doctors down there to address the disparities in their healthcare system."

Whether she's high atop the pool looking down at a diving board or bending down to help a patient in need, Talia Spenziero's hard work is always on display to those around her.

"Receiving this award validates the countless hours of training and hard work I've put into not only my sport but my academics and extracurricular activities," she said. "It makes me grateful for all the challenges I've overcome over the years. It also inspires me to continue pushing myself to be the best that I can be in my future endeavors."

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## College - Field Hockey

2024

### **Amy Stevens** **Russell Sage College**



After four years playing field hockey at Lock Haven University, Amy Stevens transferred to Russell Sage College as a graduate for the 2023 season. Though playing for the Gators only for one year, everyone in and out of the program can agree that Stevens made an outsized impact on the Russell Sage field hockey team.

On the field, Stevens earned second-team All-American honors from the NFHCA, becoming the first All-American in program history. Stevens, a first-team NFCHA All-Region selection, was also voted the Empire 8 Conference Player of the Year after leading the conference with 49 points and 20 goals, both of which are school single-season records.

"Quite honestly, Amy had the single greatest season any athlete has had in the history of Russell Sage Athletics, bar none," said Russell Sage athletic director James Lyons.

Stevens credits the spectacular season to both hard work and the support she received from her team.

"I felt confident with the years of experience under my belt," she said. "But I was surrounded by a team of hard-working, friendly girls. They treated me with warmth and enthusiasm that motivated me to work even harder."

"Amy brought a 'know how to' approach to our team, which quickly rubbed off on the entire team's daily habits," Russell Sage head coach Nick Pontari said. "Amy would be the first one to practice not only putting extra shots on cage but bringing others along with her; working on dribbling, passing, and shooting with her teammate on the side before practice even began."

Although she was technically a newcomer in the program, Stevens was seen as a leader on the team almost instantly since she was so experienced. Her experience was valued by her teammates and coaches so much that Stevens stayed around the program as a volunteer coach in the spring of 2024.

"As a transfer in, she was the first person here helping welcome the new students on move-in day," Pontari said. "For six hours, she helped first-year students carry their belongings into their residence hall buildings and made sure they had a friendly welcome upon arriving to campus."

"Amy's work ethic is one of the greatest I have ever seen," Lyons said. "That work ethic allowed her instant credibility with her coaches and teammates as she got to know everyone early in the year."

During all her success on the field hockey pitch, Stevens was in school pursuing her doctorate in physical therapy. It wouldn't be easy, but Stevens said she got support from both her coach and teammates.

"At first, it was incredibly daunting," she said. "My coach reached out and really put me at ease, especially after talking with multiple girls on the team who were also in the same program."

"Amy has maintained 'A' student status during her time in Albany," Lyons added. "She was a tremendous role model for her teammates when it came to juggling her academic endeavors with her pursuit of greatness on the field."

Stevens' love of field hockey began in fifth grade. She was a soccer player at the time but said field hockey was very popular in her area and a lot of her friends played. While attending Whitney Point High School, Stevens earned All-State honors and helped the program win five-straight field hockey titles. But high school was formative for Stevens in more than just field hockey. During her sophomore year, she tore her ACL while playing lacrosse. During the six months of physical therapy, Stevens realized her passion for the field of physical therapy.

"I immediately knew that's what I wanted to do," she said. "I know that it's everything for athletes to get back to their sport and I have so much enthusiasm to help them."

That enthusiasm was highly valued on the field hockey pitch and, according to her head coach, will be valuable wherever she goes in the future.

"There is no doubt in my mind that Amy will continue to and go on to do amazing things as a person in her time here at Russell Sage and beyond," said Pontari.

"I am beyond the words of being thankful and honored to receive this award," Stevens said. "When reflecting on the incredible accolades of each of the present and past honorees, it has truly been put into perspective how blessed I am to have been named among these decorated and accomplished women."



## Congratulations Kennedy

We know all of the hard work you have put into your studies and athletics. We are incredibly proud of all that you have accomplished. Looking forward to seeing what the future brings.

With all our love, Mom and Dad



## **Kennedy Swedick** **The Albany Academies**



Kennedy Swedick graduated as one of The Albany Academies' most decorated golfers in school history. In 2024, she won her third straight state championship as the perfect end to a high school career that Swedick spent working on her own game while also growing girls golf across the state of New York.

Swedick was the New York State Public High School Athletic Association's 2022, 2023, and 2024 high school state champion, helping her team to the team titles as well. She also won the New York State 2022 amateur championship. She is a three-time Albany Times Union prep golfer of the year for that region. Her high school team has won four consecutive Section 2 team titles.

This past fall, Swedick won the AJGA's Golf Performance Center Junior, was fifth at 2023 AJGA Girls Invitational and placed 15th in AJGA Invitational presented by PING. She tied for ninth at the 2023 U.S. Girls Junior Championship and was the medalist at the 96th Women's Western Junior Championship. She is a 2023 AJGA Rolex Scholastic Junior All-America selection.

On top of all these accomplishments, Swedick also graduated as her class salutatorian. She finished with a 4.24 GPA and is set to attend the University of Virginia in the fall, where she was selected to be an Echols Scholar, an honor given to only 5% of the incoming class.

"I'm just so blessed for all the support and to have a great support team," Swedick said. "The Albany Academies were just so incredible. I got so much support from my teachers."

"Kennedy always gives 100% here at the Academy, both as a student and as an athlete," said The Albany Academies athletic director Paul Gallucci. "Her time and effort that she has put in on the field, course, weight room, and classroom have proven to be very successful."

It took that 100% mindset for Swedick to even have the opportunity to play for a state championship. When she was in seventh grade, her first year competing as a scholastic golfer, Swedick had to play on the boys team since there was no section 2 girls golf team. In fact, the NYSPHSAA did not sponsor a girls golf championship until 2006 and did not crown a team champion until 2018.

In contrast, The Albany Academies sent three more golfers along with Swedick to the state championship as part of the section 2 team. Swedick says this growth is the result of a team effort.

"I was blessed to be surrounded by some amazing people," she said. "We worked hard to get girls golf to where it is today. I'm forever grateful for how much it's grown."

Swedick's stellar career started when she was eight years old. "My mom signed me up for a summer golf camp at my school," she said. "I fell in love with it. When I hit the ball for the first time, I realized I could picture myself doing this forever."

While competing and winning at the highest level, Swedick also spent her time helping other girls in her area learn to love golf as much as she does. She volunteers with the Special Olympics golf events in her area along Camp Abilities Saratoga where she worked with vision impaired youth golfers.

"The game has done so much for me and given me so many opportunities," she said. "It's amazing to have the opportunity to be the ambassador, I'm so blessed."

Swedick also has volunteered with Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, a World War II association that supports veterans who served. It's a cause that's close to her heart as her own Great-Grandfather was killed in action in the Battle.

Whether it's on the golf course or in the community, it's clear to those around her that she has a gift for helping others participate in the activities they love, especially if that includes golf.

"Kennedy has always been a hard worker and a great leader," Gallucci said.

"I am honored and feel deeply privileged to be the recipient of this incredible award and to be recognized with so many other talented women," Swedick said. "It is a testament to the unwavering support and guidance I have been blessed to receive over the years. This award means the world to me because I'm able to represent the Capital Region that has given me so much. I am so thankful for the recognition, and I can only hope that my story inspires others to work hard for their dreams."



CONGRATULATES

*Talia Spenziero*

2024 CAPITAL DISTRICT SPORTS WOMEN OF THE YEAR RECIPIENT

Angelina Valente, a multi-award-winning artist, is tonight's performer for the 2024 Capital District Sports Women of the Year Awards Gala at the GE Theatre at Proctors.

Angelina is a singer-songwriter from Saratoga Springs who creates music that moves you. With songs that feel like a warm summer breeze, Angelina's uninhibited voice and sincere lyrics draw you in and leave you feeling restored and inspired. Her unique blend of indie folk features piano, ukulele, and genuine storytelling influenced by her small-town roots and love of nature.

In the five years she has been performing, Angelina is now selling out shows around the Capital Region. She has released one full length album, two EP's and three singles, and has recorded at the esteemed Village Studios in Los Angeles, as well as the Atlantic Records Studio in New York City. After the release of her most recent album "Sing," in November 2023, Angelina has won the distinguished awards for Songwriter of the Year, Album of the Year, and Artist of the Year for the New York Capital Region. These awards were presented to her at the Sixth Annual Capital Region Thomas Edison Music Awards on April 21, 2024 at Proctors.

CDSWOY is honored to have Angelina join us to entertain our honorees, families, friends and audience members at our 2024 CDSWOY Awards Gala.

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Sports Women of the Year

**CLASS OF 2024**

#SAGENATION



Lisa Bluder, who recently retired as the Head Women's Basketball Coach at the University of Iowa, is tonight's virtual speaker at the 2024 Capital District Sports Women of the Year Awards Gala.

On May 13, Bluder announced her retirement from coaching after 40 years as a collegiate head coach, including 24 at the University of Iowa.

Among her many accolades, Bluder was named the Naismith Coach of the Year (2019), was a three-time Big Ten Coach of the Year (2001, 2008, 2010), four-time regional coach of the year (2001, 2008, 2018, 2019), and the Carol Eckman Award winner (2015) in addition to being an inductee into the Des Moines Register Hall of Fame (2016), the Quad City Times Hall of Fame (2012), the Linn-Mar Athletic Hall of Fame (2008) and the Northern Iowa Hall of Fame (2000). Bluder amassed 884 career wins, 10th most in NCAA women's basketball history.

Bluder was named head coach at the University of Iowa in 2000 and retires as the all-time winningest coach in Big Ten history with an overall record of 528-254 and a Big Ten record of 262-145. Under her leadership, the Hawkeyes advanced to the last two National Championship Games and made 22 postseason appearances overall (18 NCAA and 4 WNIT), including 14 of the last 16 NCAA Tournaments. Bluder led the Hawkeyes to five Big Ten Tournament titles, and two shared Big Ten regular season championships.

Under her tutelage, Hawkeye players were named the National Player of the Year three times with two others named consensus All-Americans. Three different players were named the Big Ten Player of the Year and also three different players recognized as Big Ten Freshman of the Year. Sixty-five Hawkeyes earned All-Big Ten honors. Seventeen former Hawkeyes went on to play professionally. In the classroom, her student-athletes were named Academic All-Big Ten more than 150 times, while Ally Disterhoft (2016, 2017) and Caitlin Clark (2023, 2024) were both recognized as the Academic All-American of the Year.

Bluder began her coaching career as head coach at St. Ambrose University for six seasons (1985-90) followed by a 10-year head coaching stint at Drake (1991-2000). Bluder and the Bulldogs won four Missouri Valley Conference Tournament championships (1995, 1997, 1998, 2000) and three regular season titles (1997, 1998, 2000).

"Lisa Bluder is one of the most decorated and successful collegiate women's basketball coaches in history, and we are so honored to have her serve as a speaker after her recent retirement," said Eric McDowell, President of CDSWOY, who served as the Press Conference Moderator at the NCAA Div. I Women's Basketball Sweet 16/Elite 8 in Albany. "I was fortunate to have met Coach Bluder in March. She embodies what CDSWOY stands for, and her development of talented and dedicated young women on and off the court, including the greatest scorer in men and women's college basketball history, is remarkable. Our honorees will be blessed to hear her passion and words of wisdom for their special evening."

Previous CDSWOY virtual guest speakers include Christine Plonsky of the University of Texas, Tara VanDerveer of Stanford University, Olympic Gold Medalist Lindsey Jacobellis, and Jessica Mendoza of ESPN.



# *Congratulations Taylor Holohan!*

- From Your Averill Park Basketball Family





**2020 Grand Recipients:** Lydia Ware of Averill Park High School and Morgan Burchardt of The College of Saint Rose



**2022 Grand Recipients:** Colleen Quaglia of The College of Saint Rose and Michelina Lombardi of Averill Park High School

**2020 GRAND COLLEGIATE WOMAN OF THE YEAR:**  
Morgan Burchardt, The College of Saint Rose

**2020 GRAND SCHOLASTIC WOMAN OF THE YEAR:**  
Lydia Ware, Averill Park High School

The other members of the CDSWOY Class of 2020:

- Liz Brady, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- MacKenzie Brown, Rensselaer HS
- Amelia Canetto, Taconic Hills HS
- Morgan Fish, Fort Edward HS
- Megan Flynn, The Sage Colleges
- Rachel Hunsicker, Lake George HS
- Brytney Moore, Northville HS
- Brooke Pickett, Stillwater HS
- Makenzie Terrell, Middleburgh HS
- Lauren Willis, South Glens Falls HS
- Rachel Wnuk, Galway HS

**2022 GRAND COLLEGIATE WOMAN OF THE YEAR:**  
Colleen Quaglia, The College of Saint Rose

**2022 GRAND SCHOLASTIC WOMAN OF THE YEAR:**  
Michelina Lombardi, Averill Park High School

The other members of the CDSWOY Class of 2022:

- Brigid Duffy, Queensbury HS
- Katie Falotico, University at Albany
- Rebecca Hall, Maple Hill HS
- Grace Heiting, Union College
- Kelsey Meca, Mayfield HS
- Zionna Perez-Tucker, Mohonasen HS
- Carlie Rzeszotarski, Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake HS
- Heather Schmidt, Niskayuna HS
- Cameryn Shultes, Middleburgh HS
- Ayaka Suesada, Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School
- Sadie Tavares, Schuylerville HS



**2021 Grand Recipients:** Clare Howard of Taconic Hills High School and Hallie Klosterman of Russell Sage College

**2021 GRAND COLLEGIATE WOMAN OF THE YEAR:**  
Hallie Klosterman, Russell Sage College

**2021 GRAND SCHOLASTIC WOMAN OF THE YEAR:**  
Clare Howard, Taconic Hills High School

The other members of the CDSWOY Class of 2021:

- Naseyah Dix, Bryant & Stratton College
- Phoebe Fox, Glens Falls HS
- Riley Gibbons, Germantown HS
- Jenna Hoffman, Maple Hill HS
- Beth Irwin, Guilderland HS
- Anna Jankovic, Averill Park HS
- Sara Langworthy, Warrensburg HS
- Isabella Mancini, Galway HS
- Madison Relyea, Mayfield HS
- Kate Sherman, Mohonasen HS



**2023 Grand Recipients:** Hannah Price of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Kara Bacon of Warrensburg High School

**2023 GRAND COLLEGIATE WOMAN OF THE YEAR:**  
Hannah Price, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

**2023 GRAND SCHOLASTIC WOMAN OF THE YEAR:**  
Kara Bacon, Warrensburg High School

The other members of the CDSWOY Class of 2023:

- Amanda Chambers, University at Albany
- Emma Crahan, Fonda-Fultonville HS
- Rylee Dunbar, Corinth HS
- Isabella Franchi, Colonie HS
- Rachael Frazier, Maple Hill HS
- Emily Frost, Tamarac HS
- Addyson Galuski, Waterford-Halfmoon HS
- Kayla Grant, Lake George HS
- Zoey Lints, Schoharie HS
- Olivia Lomascolo, Siena College
- Grace O'Brien, Galway HS

Read all about our all-time recipients at [cdswoy.com](http://cdswoy.com).



**Congratulations Isabella Miller!**  
– From Your Fonda-Fultonville  
Athletic Community



"On behalf of the Guilderland CSD athletic department, we congratulate

**Carly King**

for earning the prestigious,  
**Capital District Sports Women of the Year award.**

Carly is one of the best that Guilderland has to offer.

*You have made Guilderland proud!"*

The Capital District Sports Women of the Year Executive Board:



Alissa Collins



Morgan Farnan



Clare Howard



Eric McDowell



Jennifer McDowell



Brendon Phillips

**CONGRATULATIONS  
KATE!**



*The Maple Hill Booster Club  
is proud of you and your  
accomplishments.*

**IN BOWLING, EVERY FRAME IS A BLANK CANVAS  
FOR YOU TO PAINT YOUR MASTERPIECE.**

*Unknown*





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2024 Capital District  
Sports Women of the Year  
Recipient



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# 2023 CDSWOY Awards Photo Gallery



The CDSWOY Class of 2023: (Back row): Kara Bacon, Amanda Chambers, Emma Crahan, Rylee Dunbar, Isabella Franchi, Emily Frost, Rachael Frazier. (Front row): Addyson Galuski, Kayla Grant, Zoey Lints, Olivia Lomascolo, Grace O'Brien, Hannah Price.



Emma Crahan of Fonda-Fultonville HS.



Ashley Miller served as the M.C



Rachael Frazier of Maple Hill HS.



Zoey Lints of Schoharie HS with her family.



Emily Frost of Tamarac HS.



Rachel Dunbar of Corinth HS with her family.

See the entire gallery at [CDSWOY.COM](http://CDSWOY.COM).

# 2024 CDSWOY Women's Golf Classic

Hosted by the  
Capital District



Sports Women of the Year



**VAN PATTEN**  
GOLF CLUB

**Friday, October 11, 2024**

Van Patten Golf Club

924 Main Street

Clifton Park, New York 12065

8:00 a.m. Registration

9:00 a.m. Shotgun Tee Start

Nine teams of foursomes with a cost of \$600  
per team

Individuals looking to join a team, cost is \$150

## **ALL INCLUDED:**

Cart & Greens fees

Lunch at Turn

Buffet Dinner

CDSWOY Gift at Registration

Contests on Course

The Capital District Sports Women of the Year honors the best and brightest high school and college female student-athletes in our area.

These exceptional young women are honored for their excellence in academics, athletics and community service.

For more information, contact  
Eric McDowell at [cdswoy@gmail.com](mailto:cdswoy@gmail.com)  
or 518-588-8016

▶ Sign up at [CDSWOY.COM](http://CDSWOY.COM)





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**Congratulations to the Capital District  
Sports Women of the Year!**

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