



# RENSCOCONNECT

WHERE BUSINESS + COMMUNITY CONVERGE

MESSAGE FROM OUR OUTGOING BOARD CHAIR

## Unforgettable Challenges, Resilience & Hope



**It's hard to believe the end of 2020 is almost here, a year that represents one of the most difficult in our lifetimes.** If you are like me, you are looking back and wondering how the time has passed so quickly, especially in the midst of many difficulties and hardships. While

many of these challenges continue to confront us, the amazing resilience and strength of our business community, leaders and workforce fortifies my belief that we and our families can look ahead with hope to the future and the coming of a new year. As I finish my term as 2020's Chair of the Board of Directors, let me say a few things about the past year and the Chamber's unwavering efforts to assist, encourage and advocate for our membership.

### COVID-19 Response

Throughout the long months of coronavirus, we have been continuing to reach out to our members in creative and tangible ways, breaking through the isolation. The Chamber worked to bring the latest updates, news and assistance to our members through an online Coronavirus Resource Guide and timely CARES Act Assistance webinars. Staff consistently pursue touchpoints with individual members and conducted a survey to target specific needs and challenges. We have increased our digital communication platforms, including eNewsletters, social media and monthly newsletters to keep members informed in the constantly evolving environment.

### Pivot to Virtual

We presented virtual events, such as Networking Plus to keep members connected, training sessions on technology and working from home, Digital Dialogues and Ask the Experts programs on topics that helped members adapt and meet challenges. More than 400 members have attended these virtual programs, a number that increases

every week. Marquee events, including the Annual Dinner and Van Rensselaer Awards, both successfully went virtual and our Golf Classic and The Leadership Class of 2021 have been able to meet safely in person. Also, we doubled the frequency of our virtual CEO Roundtables to twice monthly in response to the needs of businesses and are welcoming new leaders who have never participated before. They bring fresh ideas and perspectives for dynamic conversations.

### Chamber of the Year Award

In 2020, the Chamber received the prestigious "Chuck Steiner Memorial Chamber of the Year Award" from The Business Council of New York State, Inc. The award honors the Chamber's exceptional commitment to serving its membership and the business community through leadership, resources and advocacy, making our region a better place to live, work and succeed. We're extremely proud of Kate Manley and her staff for their tremendous work during this very challenging year.

I'd also like to thank our Board of Directors for their tireless efforts on behalf of our members. These individuals stayed committed and involved throughout the year, even while handling their own business challenges. We are grateful for this award and the validation of our organization's ongoing mission. As I make way for incoming Chair Ed Anker, I know our mission is in good hands.

### A Resilient Business Community

The pandemic made us adjust in numerous ways, tested our resilience and disrupted plans for economic activity and growth. Certainly, some members have been hit harder than others. It has also highlighted the strength of our business community and the power that can be achieved by uniting to work together. The Chamber strives to earn the distinction of being one of those leaders by focusing on our individual members and what they need most. Please reach out to us and stay connected now and through 2021, whatever it may bring. We are here for you.

Wishing you a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year,

**"Staying connected and useful to our members is our priority, as well as connecting people to each other."**

John Millet, CPA, President  
Bouchey & Clarke Benefits,  
Inc. and 2020 Chair of the  
Board of Directors

ASK A BOARD MEMBER:

## Membership & Involvement

**Meghan R. Keenholts is a founding partner at E. Stewart Jones Hacker Murphy, LLP, where she focuses her legal practice on the representation of individuals who have been seriously injured, with an emphasis on medical malpractice law. She has earned the respect of clients, colleagues, adversaries and courts for her legal acumen, work ethic, advocacy skills and passion.**



### Q » What perspective do you bring to the Chamber's Board of Directors?

**A »** As a partner at E. Stewart Jones Hacker Murphy, I bring the perspectives of both an attorney and small business owner to the Chamber's board of directors. During COVID, this legal perspective has been particularly relevant and useful in assessing and limiting liability and risk associated with various Chamber events. I also bring the perspectives of a working mother and lifelong resident of Rensselaer County to the board. I believe these various perspectives are shared by many of the Chamber's members, enabling me to make meaningful contributions to our strategic growth, planning and programming as we strive to serve the unique needs of all of our members.

### Q » As a 2012 graduate of The Leadership Institute, how has the program assisted in your personal or professional growth?

**A »** I enrolled in The Leadership Institute six years into my legal career, when I was ready and eager to grow into a leadership role at my firm. The skills I honed through Leadership contributed to my role in spearheading the discussions that led to the merger of the E. Stewart Jones and Hacker Murphy law firms and to my being named the new firm's first female partner. On a personal note, I am grateful for the lasting friendships that I developed with classmates who have become some of my closest confidantes and trusted sounding boards, both personally and professionally. The Leadership Institute is a must for our region's up-and-coming leaders and I strongly encourage employers to offer this as a benefit of employment.

### Q » What is the value of Chamber membership to yourself and to your law firm?

**A »** My firm has been an active member of the Chamber since 1964. Through our membership and sponsorships we are committed to supporting the Chamber's mission to promote business and community growth and development. The value to our firm is multi-faceted. We benefit from the Chamber's marketing and business development opportunities, attracting new clients and referral sources. We also benefit from business relationships with other Chamber members. In addition, the Chamber's efforts to promote and support strong, vibrant communities assists us to attract employees at our flagship office in the City of Troy. Our firm, and other businesses across all industries, are better positioned for growth and success with the resources and support of a strong Chamber and local business community behind us.

Market. Develop. Connect.

RENSCOCHAMBER.COM

90 FOURTH STREET, STE. 200 | TROY, N.Y. 12180



Presorted  
First-Class Mail  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
ALBANY, NY  
PERMIT NO. 164