

## RACF director receives Athena Award

By [SMRITI JACOB](#) - 1/21/2010 1:24:25 PM

Rochester Area Community Foundation's Jennifer Leonard has been named the 2010 Athena Award recipient.

Leonard, president and executive director of the Community Foundation, was honored Thursday at a luncheon at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center.

Maggie Wilderotter, president and CEO of Frontier Communications Corp., delivered the keynote address, stressing the importance of networking and mutual support among women.

"An individual woman's success is our collective success. A woman is resourceful but women are a resource," she said.

Sponsored by the Women's Council of the Rochester Business Alliance Inc., the Athena Award recognizes women of achievement for their professional excellence, community service and for actively assisting women in their attainment of professional excellence and leadership skills. For this year's award, 22 women were chosen as finalists. The 24th Athena Award finalists came from a mix of backgrounds including business, law, education and medicine.

Leonard, who is the second full-time president of the Community Foundation, has been instrumental to the organization's growth. The foundation has grown from \$32 million to \$200 million during her tenure. The number of philanthropic funds established to benefit greater Rochester has risen from 289 to more than 1,000, documents filed with her nomination for the award show.

Leonard's guiding vision: "Always do your best."

"Both people and organizations do better with the right encouragement, education, incentives and evaluation in a team atmosphere that respects individual contributions and sets high expectations, with the plans and tools to reach them," she wrote in her response to questionnaire for the Rochester Business Journal's Athena Award supplement.

Through collaboration with community partners, taking leadership in applying for funds and personal fundraising required for local matches, Leonard has leveraged millions of dollars in external grants.

She also has lent a hand to help organizations in need. In 1994, when the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra Inc. Geva Theatre Center Inc. and Garth Fagan Dance were facing deficits, Leonard spearheaded the move to develop a \$1.5 million ArtsTomorrow Initiative to build support and strengthen marketing and management at these organizations.

She has shown her leadership in other tough times as well. After the recent recession hit, the Community Foundation assets were affected and donors scaled back contributions. Determined to keep her 21 full-and part-time staff intact, Leonard took a 14.5 percent pay cut, trimmed non-essential items from the budget and helped staff work efficiently with fewer resources, the nomination form states.

Leonard's community involvement also includes her role as trustee at the Center for Governmental Research Inc.; member of Rochester Education and Literacy Commission and the first female treasurer of the Genesee Valley Club.

She is married to Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist David Cay Johnston.



In her acceptance speech, Leonard pronounced herself “honored to join the ranks of women I admire and respect most in this county,” but closed expressing her hope for a future in which “women will see the end of the need to recognize women separately.”

The other finalists for the Athena Award:

Celeste Amaral, finance director and vice president, corporate finance group, Eastman Kodak Co.

Rachel Baker August, executive director, Seneca Park Zoo Society

Nancy Bennett M.D., professor of medicine, director, Center for Community Health; associate vice president, University of Rochester Medical Center

Lydia Boddie-Rice, manager, public affairs, Rochester Gas and Electric Corp.

Ellen Brenner-Boutillier, co-owner, vice president and chief financial officer, Fleet Feet Sports Inc. and YellowJacket Racing LLC

Laurie Broccolo, CEO, Broccolo Tree and Lawn Care Inc.

Kelley Ross Brown, partner, real estate and finance department, Woods Oviatt Gilman LLP

Antonia Carfagna, manager, global applications operations, worldwide information systems, Eastman Kodak Co.

Catherine Cerulli, director, Laboratory of Interpersonal Violence and Victimization, department of psychiatry, the University of Rochester

Bernadette Durman, acting vice president of marketing, Eastern Sales Ops, Xerox Corp.

Angella Luyk, CEO, Midnight Janitorial Inc.

Monica Mattioli, associate dean, Genesee Community College

Dianne Newhouse, president and CEO, Volunteers of America, Western New York

Christine Peters, president and CEO, Family First Federal Credit Union

Nancy Plews, worldwide director, prepress solutions, Eastman Kodak Co.

Susan Salvador, vice president, student services, Monroe Community College

Rev. Susan Shafer, pastor, Asbury First United Methodist Church

Kristin Skarie, president, Teamworks

Sharon Stiller, partner, chairwoman of the employment law group, Boylan, Brown, Code, Vigdor & Wilson LLP

Fran Weisberg, executive director, Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency

Laurie Zaucha, senior vice president, human resources, Paetec Holding Corp.

The Rochester Business Journal is founding sponsor of the Athena Award program.