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November 16, 2017

2017 Annual Dinner

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Tuesday, November 14th - 5:30 pm.

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Large Business of the Year: Metz Culinary Management
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Emerging Business of the Year: MCR Productions
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Charitable Organization of the Year: Candy's Place, a Cancer Wellness Center
Sponsored by Sordoni Construction

Pride of Place Awards: Wilkes University, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, and Marriott Fairfield Inn and Suites Wilkes-Barre Scranton
Sponsored by Geisinger Health Plan and Geisinger Health System

Healthy Workplace Award: InterMetro Industries
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Lifetime Achievement Award:
Greg Collins
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Metz Culinary Management

Established in 1994 by John C. Metz, Metz Culinary Management was created as a custom dining service management company that could serve a large variety of industries. Metz believed in a guest-first philosophy, providing food to healthcare, education, corporate industries and beyond. Located in Dallas, the family-owned business continues to grow with an evolving society, offering locally-sourced, nutritious-yet-enjoyable foods to satisfy the needs of their customers.

Today, Metz’s son and current CEO, Jeff Mentz, has assisted in the company’s expansion within the food service industry. Currently, Metz Culinary Management ranks 14th out of the top 50 management companies for 2017 in the U.S., according to Food Management Magazine.

Besides cooking up everything from cage-free eggs to vegan delights, Metz Culinary Management has also created a two-fold business platform: the company also offers environmental services to their customers. Some of their services include housekeeping, linen and laundry and grounds maintenance.

The company continues to strive to meet ethical and environmental responsibilities through a series of efforts and programs. Water and energy conservation, biodegradable, earth-friendly products and a farm-to-fork outlook are just some of the ways the company has sought to better the lives of their clientele and reduce their carbon footprint.

Metz Culinary Management not only wants their customers to enjoy the food they prepare, but be able to make healthy, long-lasting life changes based around nutrition.

The company offers a “LiveWell” nutrition program through their website, boasting a three-step nutrition and wellness program designed to work around the client’s individual budget. Through application, education and motivation, the food service company is taking the initiative to create a healthier Northeastern Pennsylvania.

— Marcella Kester
**Candy’s Place**

There’s nothing else in Northeast Pennsylvania quite like Candy’s Place.

The nonprofit cancer wellness and resource center was founded by Penny Cunningham in 1998 in honor of her sister, Candice Vincent-Mamary. Mamary was a local social worker, and, although she never smoked, was diagnosed with end-stage lung cancer in 1997. She died just six months later, with a final wish to “make something good come out of her disease.”

Within a year’s time, Candy’s Place was formed. Today, Candy’s Place offers cancer patients and their families a safe, loving place to interact with one another, find support groups, participate in programs and find resources and education for the disease. The center also offers support services and an oncology nurse and works alongside the American Cancer Society for a “Look Good, Feel Better” program.

The organization started at Cunningham’s kitchen table, but quickly grew. From her home, Candy’s Place relocated to the Kirby Health Center in Wilkes-Barre before receiving a generous donation — its “forever home” — in Forty-Fort in 2005, where they remain to this day. While the organization applies for state and federal funding, they rely heavily on the support of the community to continue serving the needs of the area.

Candy’s Place has assisted hundreds through physical, emotional and social support in an effort to better the quality of life for cancer patients.

— Marcella Kester

**MCR Productions**

Back in 2011, John Phillips saw a need to better serve the local concert and entertainment industry. From there, MCR Productions has grown into a multi-platform company that offers full production, rental and design for various types of events.

Basically, MCR Productions can act as your one-stop-shop for a venue, lighting, decor, floral design, entertainment and more. Currently, the company plays host to two venue options: The Atrium at the Neet Center and The Room at 900.

On a local level, MCR Productions has been a leader in setting new trends and ideas for the entertainment industry — including the very idea of being a one-stop-shop — and allowing clients the opportunity (and ease of mind) to continue their planning with just one company instead of several.

MCR Productions has won past awards, including The Knot’s Hall of Fame. They have been listed in Wedding Wire’s “Best of” from 2012 to present day. If that isn’t enough, the company also works with numerous charities, including The American Heart Association, The American Cancer Society and Dinner by Design, to name a few.

— Marcella Kester
Elkins University
What started as a Junior College for Bucknell University in 1933 before becoming its own college in 1947 and later earning university status in 1990, Wilkes University has grown in tremendous proportions throughout the last century, even acting as a centerpiece for downtown Wilkes-Barre.

The university spans 35 acres with eight academic centers, 20 residence halls and welcomes 2,500 students to its campus each year.

With the start of the G.I. Bill in 1944, mixed with an increasing amount of prospective students eager to take advantage of a higher education and the support of a college cemented at a local level, Bucknell University Junior College moved to establish a four-year college after the war ended in 1945. As both the student population and school's acreage saw rapid growth, Wilke's College was born in 1947.

Today, Wilkes University offers eight areas of study with over 70 degrees that range from business to the arts and continues to expand its downtown footprint. Most recently, the university absorbed the space of the former Bartikowsky Jeweler's on South Main Street, turning it into the Karambeles Media and Communication Center. That same center now houses the newly revamped $3 million, 7,000-square-foot Sordoni Art Gallery, with Wilkes University continuing to act as a front-runner for the revitalization of downtown Wilkes-Barre.

—— Marcella Kester

Penn State Wilkes-Barre
Penn State Wilkes-Barre's campus was formed in 1916 after two Penn State graduates saw a need for higher education where coal reigned king and engineers were needed to improve mining methods and worker safety.

Initially starting at the site of Coughlin High School, the campus and student population steadily grew, paving the way for additional programs and certifications. Under the name of The Pennsylvania State College Wilkes-Barre Technical Center, the school began offering tuition-free courses to train women and older gentlemen in an effort to counteract the loss of young men who were signing up for the World War II. By 1947 - and with veterans coming home and the G.I. Bill - the school began offering evening and daytime classes, which can be attributed to much of Penn State Wilkes-Barre's success.

By 1953 the campus had already gained accreditation and began offering associate degrees in engineering. In 1957, surveying was added to the list, and to this day the campus remains the only location in the state that offers a baccalaureate for the study. In 1960, Penn State Wilkes-Barre found its permanent home in Lehman Township after Richard and Helen Robinson donated the Hayfield House and surrounding farm property to the university. From there the university continued to grow and thrive, currently having nine buildings on its campus. Presently, Penn State Wilkes-Barre offers eight bachelor's and four associate degrees that can be fully completed at the Wilkes-Barre campus.

Students may also choose to begin at the campus for their first two years, and then transfer to Penn State's main campus in State College to complete their degrees.

—— Marcella Kester
Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott Wilkes-Barre/Scranton

Boasting a near-perfect average guest review with a 96 percent recommendation rate, it’s no wonder that the Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott were among those honored by the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce.

Located next to T.G.I. Friday’s on Kidder Street in Wilkes-Barre, the hotel has garnered itself a reputation as a premier provider of hospitality services in Wilkes-Barre.

With newly revamped guest rooms and amenities such as flat screen TVs, free Wi-Fi, a fitness center, indoor pool and more, the hotel offers plenty of on-site accommodations. If guests would prefer a night on the town, the centralized location is perfect for quick shopping trips, a relaxing meal and more. Many of the hotel’s 250 reviews also laud an caring, compassionate staff who care about their customers.

The hospitality and service provider offers four types of rooms to comfortably fit anyone’s needs (and budgets) from weekend getaways to corporate events and even weddings. Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott has even earned the trust of TripAdvisor, who bestowed their Certificate of Excellence to the hotel in 2016.
— Marcella Kester
InterMetro Industries

Founded in 1929, InterMetro Industries has provided clients from all over the globe with space and productivity solutions. With more than 30,000 products, the company envisions a more organized and efficient workforce worldwide. Headquartered on Washington Street in Wilkes-Barre, InterMetro has centers throughout North and South America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

InterMetro can provide storage solutions to those working in the food service, healthcare, industrial, laboratory and grocery industries, and even has a home line for the everyday consumer. Along with making their products customer-friendly, InterMetro is also focused on producing environmentally friendly products in an effort to preserve the Earth. The company also contributes to a variety of charitable causes both locally and nationally, including the United Way, Ruth’s Place, the Victims Resource Center and more.

InterMetro began by providing industry-standard wire shelving units, evolving into creating a wide variety of shelving, carts, cabinets, storage systems and more to satisfy their customer base. InterMetro believes they stand out with the durability, versatility and specialization that goes into the products they create — such as heated cabinets or corrosion resistant products — combined with a top-notch customer care service to make whatever you do as efficient it can be.

— Marcella Kester

Greg Collins

Kingston native Greg Collins spent more than 40 years in the banking industry, recently stepping down from his role Community Bank President of Welles Fargo in September. Collins’ role included working with more than 300 employees in 37 banks across nine counties to ensure that his customers needs were met, while ensuring phenomenal sales and service to the northeast region.

Starting at Wyoming National Bank, Collins began as a teller before working his way up to management. During this time, he also took advantage of the opportunity for higher education, attending (then) College Misericordia and earning his bachelor’s degree in Business Administration.

During his time with Welles Fargo, Collins received numerous honors for performance and productivity.

Both inside and out of the company he remained active within his community, participating in volunteer activities and assisting with numerous organizations. Collins is a Misericordia University Board of Trustees member as well as belonging to the boards of Leadership Wilkes-Barre, the Wilkes-Barre YMCA, the United Way of Wyoming Valley and more.

— Marcella Kester
Downtown Wilkes-Barre

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Wilkes University thanks the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce for honoring the new Sordoni Art Gallery and Clayton & Theresa Karambelas Media & Communication Center with the 2017 Pride of Place Award and congratulates all of the award recipients on their recognition!