



National Association of Minority Contractors (NAMC) New York Tri-State chapter hosts annual Unity Gala

February 25, 2025 - Front Section



Shown (from left) are: Nayan Parikh, NAMC NY Tri-State chapter president; president at Ashnu International Inc.;

Cheryl McKissack Daniel, NAMC NY Tri-State chapter vice president; president and CEO at McKissack & McKissack;

Elyse Šanti?, real estate project executive with Google's NYC design & delivery team; and Mildred Tolentino, NAMC NY Tri-State chapter board; CEO at M-TO-PROS

Manhattan, NY The National Association of Minority Contractors (NAMC) New York Tri-State chapter hosted its annual Unity Gala bringing together top industry leaders, advocates, and

professionals committed to fostering diversity in the real estate and construction sectors. Under the theme “Building Unity, Building Legacy,” the gala honored influential executives whose work has reshaped industries and expanded opportunities for minority- and women-owned businesses.

The evening featured a performance by Grammy Award-winning artist Falu, remarks from senator Kirsten Gillibrand, and an address from New York City’s citywide chief business diversity officer, Michael Garner. Notable attendees included industry executives, public officials, and key stakeholders committed to advancing opportunities for minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBES).

“The Unity Gala is more than just a celebration; it is a testament to the power of diversity and the impact of collective advocacy,” said Nayan Parikh, NAMC New York Tri-State chapter president and gala co-chair. “Our honorees and attendees continue to pave the way for equitable growth, ensuring that minority businesses have a seat at the table in shaping the future of our industry.”

Recognizing the outstanding leadership and impact across business and industry, this year’s honorees include:

David Arena, head of global real estate at JP Morgan Chase, was recognized for his leadership in developing inclusive real estate strategies that promote diversity across one of the world’s largest financial institutions.

Steven Plate, as the chief of major capital projects for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, has been instrumental in overseeing significant infrastructure developments that have enhanced the region’s transportation and economic landscape. His leadership in projects such as the World Trade Center redevelopment exemplifies his commitment to building a more connected and inclusive community, aligning with the NAMC’s mission to promote unity and diversity in the construction industry.

Elyse Santic, real estate project executive at Google, was honored for her work in advancing real estate design and delivery at one of the most influential technology companies globally.

A highlight of the evening was the recognition of this year’s NAMC Scholarship Recipients, an initiative aimed at supporting the next generation of diverse professionals in engineering, architecture, and construction. Led by Nina Kubota, president and CEO of the New York City School Construction Authority (NYCSCA), the scholarship program underscores NAMC’s commitment to creating pathways for underrepresented students to excel in the industry. Made possible through the generous support of sponsors, the program reflects NAMC’s ongoing dedication to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion within the field.

“As we celebrate the achievements of our honorees and scholars, we are reminded that progress is built on collaboration, mentorship, and unwavering commitment.” said Cheryl McKissack, NAMC vice president and gala co-chair. “The work of NAMC is vital to fostering a more inclusive and innovative industry, and tonight is a reflection of that shared mission.”

Now in its eighth year, the NAMC Unity Gala continues to serve as a premier platform for advocacy, recognition, and networking within the New York Tri-State real estate and construction industries. As the organization moves forward, it remains dedicated to breaking barriers, promoting equity, and empowering diverse voices in the built environment.

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