



May 30, 2025
9:00 A.M.-1:15 P.M.
University at Buffalo-Alumni Arena

MORNING ITINERARY

8:15 AM:

Registration Opens

9:00 AM:

Summit Begins

9:07 AM:

Opening Session with Barbara Annis
Better Together: *Understanding the Science of Gender Dynamics for Workplace Success*

9:40 AM:

P.O.W.E.R Seal Awards

SPEAKER



Barbara Annis

Join Barbara Annis, CEO of Gender Intelligence™, as she opens the Summit with powerful insights on how understanding gender differences drives better communication, decision-making, and team performance. Discover research-based strategies to build inclusive, high-performing teams through balanced representation and leadership.



May 30, 2025
9:00 A.M.-1:15 P.M.
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LEADERSHIP ALLY PATHWAY SESSIONS

SESSION ITINERARY

10:00 AM:
Session One

Why Make Room for Women:
*Redefining Leadership Through
Allyship*

11:10 AM:
Session Two

The Power of Winning Together:
A Conversation with Barbara Annis

12:20 PM:
Session Three

Power Lunch:
Moving Allyship Forward

SESSION ONE

Why Make Room for Women: Redefining Leadership Through Allyship

What does it really look like when men lead with equity in mind?

In this powerful panel, male leaders who walk the talk will share how they champion women in the workplace—not just in words, but in action.

Join this candid conversation to hear what allyship looks like at the top, why it matters, and how making room for women strengthens teams, culture, and results.

HOST



Gretchen Geitter

Gretchen Geitter retired in 2024 after a 30-year career with the Buffalo Bills, where she served as Vice President of Community Relations and President of the Buffalo Bills Foundation. She led key initiatives including Play 60, WNY Girls in Sports, and the Billie Campaign. Under her leadership, the Foundation focused on child hunger and healthy eating. Gretchen represented the Bills at the UN and helped launch the HeartBEAT CPR/AED program. She's served on numerous nonprofit boards, earned national recognition, and completed leadership programs at Harvard, Stanford, and Leadership Buffalo. A SUNY Fredonia and Boston University alum, she's an Alden native.

SESSION ONE

Why Make Room for Women: Redefining Leadership Through Allyship

HOST



Joliegh Wylucki

Joliegh Wylucki is a seasoned entrepreneur with over 16 years of experience across HVAC, trash and recycling, compressed natural gas vehicle inspections, and legal cannabis. She co-founded Blue Ribbon Heating and Air Conditioning, CNG Inspections of Buffalo, Love Nug Cannabis Dispensary, and other ventures. Joliegh excels in operations, compliance, and strategic growth. A passionate community advocate, she serves on the board of the Western New York Women's Foundation, supporting women's empowerment and economic equity. Focused on innovation and sustainability, Joliegh builds forward-thinking businesses that make a lasting community impact in evolving markets.

MODERATOR



Michael Ball

Michael Ball is Vice President of Community Affairs at Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, overseeing corporate grants, sponsorships, and programs addressing health disparities. He leads the Blue Fund, awarding major grants to local health initiatives. Previously, Ball was regional director at Empire State Development and executive director of the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council. He also directed planning at Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. Ball holds a master's in urban planning from the University at Buffalo and a bachelor's from Canisius University. A Buffalo native, he serves on boards including Buffalo Urban League and Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy.

SESSION ONE

Why Make Room for Women: Redefining Leadership Through Allyship

PANELIST



Andrew Davis

Andrew L. Davis, MBA, is President and COO of Erie County Medical Center Corporation with over 20 years in healthcare administration and financial management. He has held senior leadership roles across multiple states and excels in hospital operations and strategic collaborations, including Great Lakes Health of Western New York. Since joining ECMC in 2016, he has driven major capital improvements, including the KeyBank Trauma Center. Andy serves on boards including the Amherst Chamber of Commerce and Shea's Performing Arts Center. Recognized as a 2022 Buffalo Business First C-Level Executive Honoree, he is known for fostering teamwork and advancing patient care quality.

PANELIST



David Rust

Since accepting the Say Yes Buffalo role over thirteen years ago, David Rust has built a strong coalition of staff and partners dedicated to one of the region's largest community renewal efforts. Through the free tuition scholarship program, Say Yes Buffalo scholars can attend more than 150 public and private institutions nationwide. Under his leadership, the organization has become both an economic development driver and a nationally recognized nonprofit education partnership model. David holds both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Business Administration with a focus on Marketing and Management from St. Bonaventure University.

SESSION ONE

Why Make Room for Women: Redefining Leadership Through Allyship

PANELIST



Scott Bieler

Scott R. Bieler began his career with West Herr Automotive Group in 1975 as a Sales Consultant, quickly advancing to Sales Management by 1980. Promoted to General Manager in 1981, he helped grow the single-dealership group into New York State's largest automotive group, now with 40 locations and over 3,000 employees. Since becoming majority owner in 2000, Scott has led the company to multiple awards for workplace excellence and ethics. A committed philanthropist, he and his wife Kathy founded the Scott Bieler Family Foundation supporting local healthcare and education. Scott serves on several nonprofit and community boards.

PANELIST



Mike Casciano

Michael Casciano is President and CEO of NOCO, a leading energy and environmental company in Upstate New York. Under his leadership, NOCO has expanded from fuels into diversified energy solutions for residential and commercial customers, emphasizing sustainability and innovation. Mike has overseen acquisitions of four businesses and launched seven new units, transforming NOCO's operations and growth strategy. With over 30 years of corporate experience, he excels in strategic execution and financial management. Before becoming CEO, he served as NOCO's COO and founded Casciano Consulting Group. Mike holds an MBA in Human Resources and Marketing from St. Bonaventure University.

SESSION ONE

Why Make Room for Women: Redefining Leadership Through Allyship

PANELIST



Joshua Howard

Joshua Howard, a member of the Turtle Clan of the Seneca Nation, is Director of Talent Development at Seneca Gaming Corporation. He manages talent programs for over 3,000 employees, focusing on career growth and internal mobility. Josh holds a Master's in Organizational Leadership from Medaille College and a Bachelor's in Business Administration from Jamestown Business College. A Certified Executive Coach from the University at Buffalo, he helps others overcome obstacles and build self-awareness. Josh chairs the Seneca Economic Development Company board and serves as Vice President of Pine Valley Central School's Board. He is a veteran of the Iraq War and a 40 Under 40 honoree.

PANELIST



Tom Beauford

Thomas Beauford Jr., a Brooklyn native, is President and CEO of the Buffalo Urban League, a historic civil rights and community empowerment organization. He brings over 20 years of strategic leadership in private industry and community service. Prior to his current role, he was Vice President at M&T Bank in Risk Management and previously held global leadership roles at HSBC, overseeing operations in New York City, Buffalo, China, India, and Malaysia. Thomas holds an Executive MBA and M.S. from the University at Buffalo, and degrees from Saint Peter's University and Kingsborough Community College. He lives in Buffalo with his wife and children.

SESSION ONE

Why Make Room for Women: Redefining Leadership Through Allyship

PANELIST



AJ Baynes

A.J. Baynes, Jr. has served as President and CEO of the Amherst Chamber of Commerce since January 2018, bringing a strong background in government, business operations, and community engagement. Previously, he was Chief of Staff to New York State Senator Patrick Gallivan, where he helped secure funding for WNY Women's Fund initiatives. A.J. also worked in his family's logistics business, managing clients along the East Coast. At the Chamber, he leads strategic initiatives that promote economic development and public policy. An active civic leader, he serves on numerous boards and has been recognized on Buffalo Business First's Power 250 and 40 Under 40 lists.

SESSION TWO

*The Power of Winning Together:
A Conversation with Barbara Annis*

This exclusive session offers men a unique opportunity to engage directly with gender intelligence expert Barbara Annis in an open, solutions-focused conversation.

Together, we'll explore how understanding gender differences strengthens leadership, fosters equity, and creates workplaces where everyone can thrive. Walk away with deeper insight and practical ways to lead as an intentional, effective ally.

MODERATOR



Pete Petrella

Pete Petrella serves as President of TalentRise, where he leads company strategy, drives growth initiatives, and enhances service offerings to meet evolving client needs. He heads the executive search practice, placing C-suite and executive talent in leadership roles, while also cultivating relationships with boards, investors, and senior leaders. With over 22 years of experience across sectors including sports, healthcare, startups, and technology, Pete brings deep expertise in sales, marketing, and strategy. He also serves as President of Viaduct, supporting emerging businesses, and is active in regional tech communities. Pete currently chairs the Amherst Chamber board and serves on several nonprofit boards.

SESSION TWO

*The Power of Winning Together:
A Conversation with Barbara Annis*

SPEAKER



Barbara Annis

Barbara Annis is a globally recognized expert in Gender Intelligence and organizational development. Founder of the Gender Intelligence Group, she has spent decades researching gender dynamics in the workplace and advising Fortune 500 companies, including Google, Microsoft, and Pfizer. A prolific author, her books—such as *Same Words, Different Language* and *Gender Intelligence*—highlight how understanding gender differences can drive performance and innovation. Barbara is a guest lecturer at top universities including Harvard and Stanford and has appeared in *Forbes*, CNN, and *The New York Times*. She also chairs Harvard's Women's Leadership Board and supports global causes through her philanthropic work.