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For Immediate Release

**QUEENS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HOSTS THE**

**2024 BUSINESS PERSONS OF THE YEAR AWARDS GALA**

***High-profile event honored business leaders from an array of industries***

***For Photos,*** [***Click Here***](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/hiixgbnqdvfr8u3nmvlow/AJYC7OYdxpZKpLvxXVlaTa4?rlkey=z0v60zd92p09zwe7gxh4j2nsj&st=toklqk09&dl=0) ***(Photo Credit: Ralph DePas)***

***QUEENS, NY***(December 6, 2024) *—* On the evening of Wednesday, December 4, nearly 400 businesses and government and community leaders from throughout Queens gathered at Terrace on the Park in Flushing Meadows–Corona Park for the Queens Chamber of Commerce’s annual Business Persons of the Year Awards Dinner. The evening recognized **Jennifer Aument**, CEO of The New Terminal One at John F. Kennedy International Airport; **Saeeda Lesley Dunston**, CEO of Elmcor Youth & Adult Activities, Inc.; **Thomas K. Rudzewick**, President and CEO of Maspeth Federal Savings and Loan Association; **Seth Bornstein**, Executive Director of the Queens Economic Development Corporation; **Shahed Islam**, Co- Founder and CEO of SJ Innovation LLC; and **Brendan Leavy**, Vice President of Development at the Queens Chamber of Commerce.

"Every year, the Queens Chamber of Commerce proudly celebrates exceptional leaders who have made a profound impact on the borough’s economic and social vitality,” said **Tom Grech, President and CEO of the Queens Chamber of Commerce**. “This year’s honorees, Jennifer Aument, Saeeda Lesley Dunston, Thomas K. Rudzewick, Seth Bornstein, Shahed Islam, and Brendan Leavy,exemplify what it means to drive progress and inspire change through vision, determination, and commitment to excellence and we are thrilled to shine a spotlight on their remarkable achievements.”

“I'm thrilled that the Queens Chamber of Commerce is honoring an outstanding group of local leaders who have contributed so much to our borough's prosperity and vitality,” said Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr. “Congratulations to Jennifer Aument, Saeeda Lesley Dunston, Thomas K. Rudzewick, Seth Bornstein, Shahed Islam, and Brendan Leavy. They have truly gone above and beyond in showing their commitment to the betterment of our community,” said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.**

Each honoree at the event was presented with their award by an esteemed member of the Queens community. Most notably, the award for Thomas K. Rudzewick was presented by Stephanie Diller, wife of slain NYPD officer Jonathan Diller. In March, [the 31-year-old police officer was shot and killed during a traffic stop in Rockaway.](https://www.masslive.com/news/2024/11/police-officer-jonathan-diller-was-killed-in-ny-his-photo-is-being-used-in-a-scam.html) Rudzewick, along with the board and team at Maspeth Bank paid off the family’s mortgage and established a 529 College Savings plan for their son Ryan.

In an effort to bring holiday cheer to those who are less fortunate, the Chamber also hosted its 2024 Toy Drive at the event. Many new, unwrapped toy donations were collected from attendees.

**The 2024 Business Persons of the Year honorees include:**

**Jennifer Aument, CEO of The New Terminal One at** [**John F. Kennedy International Airport**](https://metroairportnews.com/jfk-airport/); *Award presented by Hersh Parekh of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and Queens Chamber of Commerce Board Member*

*Jennifer Aument is Chief Executive Officer of The New Terminal One, a private consortium developing a world-class international terminal that will anchor the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey’s $19 billion redevelopment of John F. Kennedy Airport. The New Terminal One’s $9.5 billion first phase, scheduled to open in 2026, is the largest single-asset project financing in US history and the nation’s largest public-private partnership. Jennifer brings more than 25 years of experience in developing and delivering major infrastructure projects across the highway, rail, airport and port sectors, with a focus on public-private partnerships. She has a strong track record of advancing complex infrastructure and megaprojects efficiently and safely on behalf of leading equity investors and developers, for both the private and public sectors.*

**Saeeda Lesley Dunston, CEO of Elmcor Youth & Adult Activities, Inc.;** *Award presented by Mike “Sully” Sullivan, Chief of Staff to Steve Cohen of the New York Mets and Queens Chamber of Commerce Board Member*

*Saeeda Lesley Dunston is the Chief Executive Officer at Elmcor Youth & Adult Activities,*

*Inc. since August 2014. She is recognized among her peers and human service providers*

*throughout New York State for developing and implementing culturally competent*

*programs and services that address the challenges encountered by marginalized*

*communities, in empowering individuals and families to become change agents and*

*engaged participants in their communities. Prior to Elmcor, Ms. Dunston served in senior management positions and served several boroughs and citywide advocacy and policy focused coalitions that address poverty, anti-racism, health care needs of marginalized populations and communities throughout New York City.*

**Thomas K. Rudzewick, President and CEO of Maspeth Federal Savings and Loan Association;** *Award presented by Stephanie Diller, wife of slain NYPD officer Jonathan Diller*

*​​Thomas K. Rudzewick is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Maspeth Federal Savings and Loan Association, a $2 billion, mutual-savings association based in Maspeth, NY, with seven retail locations, including one on Long Island. He joined Maspeth Federal Savings as Vice President and Chief Lending Officer in 2000 and became the President and CEO in 2016. Tom serves on the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency’s Mutual Savings Association Advisory Council. He is currently a Board Member of the Financial Services Core Processor. He is the past chair of the American Bankers Association (ABA) Membership Council and ABA’s Professional Development Group. He also participates in the ABA’s Government Relations and Membership Council. He is an active ambassador in other banking-industry associations, including the New York Bankers Association (NYBA) and the Independent Community Bankers Association (ICBA).*

**Seth Bornstein, Executive Director of the Queens Economic Development Corporation;** *Award presented by Michelle Stoddart, Senior Voce President of Community Development at Resorts World New York City, Former Director of Marketing and Tourism at the Queens Economic Development Corporation, and Queens Chamber of Commerce Board Member*

*As the Executive Director, Seth is responsible for the programming for the Queens Economic Development Corporation. With the staff and the board, he endeavors to develop services that will further the mission of the QEDC to create and retain jobs through programming that assists small businesses, encourages entrepreneurship, and promotes our community with an emphasis on supporting those of low-to-moderate income, women, minorities, and immigrants. Seth first joined the QEDC in 1979 where he helped coordinate the Borough’s first commercial revitalization programs which resulted in the development of many of our local development corporations and business improvement districts. Since being named Executive Director in 2009, Seth has transformed QEDC, significantly increasing the range of services, scope of work and expansion of staff. This has included the Entrepreneur Space, a food and business incubator in Long Island City; a proactive Queens Tourism Council; MiQ – Made in Queens to help market artisan businesses; Neighborhood Development in various communities and most recently programs to help the formerly incarcerated with entrepreneurial training.*

**Shahed Islam, Co-Founder and CEO of SJ Innovation LLC;** *Award presented by Neil Wagner, Vice President of Tech Initiatives at the Queens Chamber of Commerce*

*Shahed Islam is the Co-Founder and CEO of SJ Innovation LLC, which he established*

*alongside his wife, Shahera Choudhury. Together, they have built SJ Innovation into a global entity with teams in India, Bangladesh, Ukraine, and the USA, employing over 150 team members and generating over $4 million in annual revenue. For over 20 years, SJ Innovation has been delivering top-notch web development, AI integration, cloud solutions, and QA services to clients across the tri-state area and the USA, specializing in industries such as pharma, healthcare, finance, and startups.*

**Brendan Leavy, Vice President of Development at the Queens Chamber of Commerce;** *Award presented by Howard Graf, Chair of the Queens Chamber of Commerce*

*Brendan Leavy is the Vice President of Development at the Queens Chamber of Commerce, where he has been instrumental for the past eight years in expanding the chamber’s membership, securing vital sponsorships, and identifying grant opportunities that support the chamber’s mission. In his role, Brendan actively connects businesses with resources and opportunities, helping them grow and thrive. Whether presiding over ribbon-cutting ceremonies, hosting networking events, or guiding businesses through bids on major projects like JFK International Airport, LaGuardia Airport, NYC Football Club’s new stadium, and Resorts World Casino, Brendan is known for his ability to forge meaningful connections that drive success.*

**About the Queens Chamber of Commerce:**The Queens Chamber of Commerce is the oldest and largest business association in Queens, representing more than 1,400 businesses and more than 150,000 Queens-based employees. Its mission is to foster connections, educate for success, develop/implement programs and advocate for members’ interests. [www.queenschamber.org](http://www.queenschamber.org/)

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