

Rita Peyton

Hickory Tree Chorus

Singing in a chorus is beyond doubt a team sport. Musicianship is surely part of the game, but as team members, we are called on to provide administrative and musical leadership, fill a myriad of smaller “behind the scenes” planning and organizing tasks, and build team spirit and camaraderie that enhance our chorus experience. Our 2025 Hickory Tree Member of Note, Rita Peyton, embodies all those things.

Rita has been a member of Hickory Tree for over twenty years, singing lead in HTC and in several chapter quartets. Rita was a Management Team member for several years, most notably serving as the long-time chair of our Costume Committee. In that role, she kept us looking lovely for all of our public performances, from small community gigs to competitions, and she adeptly navigated us through the purchase of new competition costumes. Her fun, team-building spirit was also on full display for many years as a member of our Ways and Means committee, coordinating our semi-annual candy sale fundraisers – we always looked forward to her emails from her alter-ego, “The Candy-Ma’am”! With our Music and Performance team, she has assisted as a lead section ‘tape checker,’ she is part of our physical warm-up team, and she is one of our stalwart pitchpipe people.

As our chorus is more recently in the ‘small chorus’ category, Rita has embodied the idea of ‘lead from where you stand.’ Although she is no longer the Costume Committee chair, she is mentoring our new Costume chair and is now serving as our Engagements coordinator. She inspires members to sing in smaller groups, sending periodic emails saying, “I’m coming early if anyone wants to sing before rehearsal.” And on occasion when the director or section leads are giving PVI’s or voice placing guests prior to rehearsal, Rita will engage members with an additional physical or vocal warmup.

Outside of chorus, Rita finds time to pursue other activities including travel, theater, and her job as a School Crossing Guard. Rita and her husband, Ed, live in Berkeley Heights and have two grown sons.

Thank you, Rita, for all you do – we’re so very grateful to have you in our chorus family!

Congratulations, Rita!

Maryanne Friedlander

Island Hills Chorus

Maryanne has loved choral singing since high school when she was a member of the Glee Club. She continued singing in college until she graduated. The time and place for her to sing again presented itself 30+ years ago, serendipitously, then by word of mouth. She was vacationing in CA and ended up on a tour bus with members of IHC in 1978 when the chorus won at International! She traveled across the country to meet the women she would eventually spend the next 30+ years singing with! Since then, singing has been an integral part of her life. During her time singing with IHC Maryanne has been happily married to her husband, had and raised her daughter, and worked primarily as a hospital-based Psychiatric Nurse, and later, as a clinical teacher of nursing, in local colleges. All required cohesive teamwork.

Learning the barbershop craft was her main focus in the early years. Maryanne was also active with some Board work, fundraising, and working with the set design team back when Island Hills produced an annual show. Over the years she took on several roles within the management team that better informed her working knowledge of the chorus: she acted as Events Coordinator, Chorus Competition Liaison (CCL), and then, Team Leader. In her last term as Team Leader, Maryanne worked tirelessly to increase the number of new members and encourage our existing members to get more involved in the management team. By developing a structure where each committee member had a backup person(s) helping to shoulder the responsibilities, she found that members were more willing to step up.

The members of the Island Hills Chorus are grateful for Maryanne and for all she has done over the years to support our beloved chorus. We are proud to have selected Maryanne Friedlander as our Member of Note for 2025!

Congratulations, Maryanne!

Veronica (Ronnie) Greene

Twin County Chorus

It is Twin County's great pleasure to introduce you to Veronica "Ronnie" Greene, Member of Note recipient for 2025!

Twin County has had the pleasure of Ronnie's membership since 1999. Never one to shy away from responsibility, Ronnie has held many positions in her Twin County life. Whether it was Costume Chair, Ways and Means Committee, Show Committee, Communications Coordinator, Team Coordinator, or that help that just steps up when you need it, Ronnie has ALWAYS served Twin County in some capacity. If ever there were a member who could be counted on to serve with poise, grace and good humor, it is Ronnie.

Generous, kind, funny, reliable, helpful, supportive are just a few of the adjectives that could be used to describe Ronnie. She performs many of her good deeds quietly, so much that it's made Ronnie truly an unsung hero of our chorus. We suspect that no single person in the chorus knows how many of us she's reached out to with an offer of help when they needed it. She can be very observant of people's needs.

A trained pianist, Ronnie always had a love for music, which she fostered into the curriculum at the New York City public school where she served as Principal for many years. She also had the pleasure of welcoming the Ballroom Dancing program at her school, which offered free dance classes combining the joy of music and movement at a very impressionable age culminating in an end of year performance. Now happily retired, Ronnie enjoys spending time with her 7 grandchildren.

How fortunate we are to have such a devoted member in Ronnie. Her tireless commitment to Twin County, colored with her brand of a very sassy Irish wit, makes Ronnie noteworthy indeed. We are so proud of her and grateful for her.

Congratulations, Ronnie!

Audrey Wells

Jersey Harmony Chorus

The Jersey Harmony Chorus is pleased to select Audrey Wells as our recipient of this year's Member Of Note designation.

Audrey was brought to us by her daughter, Robin, shortly after Robin became a member of JHC. In the short time Audrey has been in chorus, not only does she enhance the tenor section with her lovely voice, she is always eager to help out in the various workings of the chorus.

She became an assistant to our Financial Chair and has now taken over the position, and as our new financial chair, is now a valued member of the Management Team. She has recently accepted the position of assistant to our director, and under Kat Britt's guidance is quickly becoming valuable as our vocal warm-up leader. It is our pleasure to have both mother and daughter as talented and vibrant members of Jersey Harmony.

And we are so pleased to present Audrey as our well deserved candidate for this year's Member of Note.

Congratulations, Audrey!

Donna Mancuso

Long Island Sound Chorus

In February of 2019, Donna Mancuso decided that she needed more music in her life. Her three children were in college or out on their own – it was time for her! She googled “choruses near me” and found The Long Island Sound Chorus in Hampton Bays. She made the call to the membership coordinator and was warmly welcomed by the chorus to join them on the risers. Within 6 weeks she had passed her audition as a baritone and was heading to her first regional competition in Albany! She heard so many talented choruses and quartets that year and knew that she had found her place in Sweet Adelines.

Donna is a beloved member of the chorus. In the summer of 2019, the director asked her to step into the role of baritone section leader. She graduated as a music major from California Lutheran University and loves sharing her musical knowledge with her “awesome baritones” and the chorus. During the COVID pandemic, she assisted coordinating Zoom chorus and section rehearsals to keep everyone singing together.

In 2022, Donna filled the vacated position of marketing coordinator. She continues to increase awareness of the chorus’ events through social media and local TV and newspaper advertising. In this role, she is also responsible for photography, videography, the chorus’ website and Facebook page, and provides the technology and equipment for virtual coaching sessions. She does it all with a smile and a willingness to be a resource for chorus members.

Donna sings lead in De GaLS Quartet and is a dual member with Greater Nassau Chorus. She is married and lives in Shoreham, NY. Her daughter now lives in North Carolina, one of her sons is a professional opera singer and her youngest son is a water treatment operator. Retired after 39 years in public service for Suffolk County Water Authority, she is grateful to have the opportunity to travel with her husband and of course, to have more time to devote to her choruses and quartet.

Congratulations Donna on being named Long Island Sound Chorus’ Sweet Adeline of the Year (Member of Note) for 2024-2025!

Congratulations, Donna!

Jan Rubino

Liberty Oak Chorus

The Liberty Oak Chorus is proud to announce Jan Rubino as our Member of Note for 2025. As a seasoned member of our chorus, we have the privilege of witnessing Jan's unwavering dedication, exceptional organizational skills, and her genuine passion for our chorus.

Jan consistently demonstrates her commitment to our chorus through her extensive volunteerism. She eagerly participates in various committees, and is always ready to lend a hand wherever needed. As the CCL for our regional contests, she meticulously gathers all necessary information, ensuring that it runs smoothly. Jan has also taken on the crucial responsibilities of managing registration and housing for our International competitions, as well as Vocal Fest.

In addition to her organizational prowess, Jan is an exceptional performer on our front row. She shines as a bass in both the chorus and her quartet, Balancing Act, and is a vibrant member of the Visual and Warm-up Teams. Her enthusiasm for singing and dancing is infectious, and she embodies the spirit of our chorus, stating that she "fell in love with this chorus." We have all fallen in love with her right back.

Jan's contributions extend beyond performance. She served on the Board of Directors for six years, including a term as Vice President, where she consistently stepped up to tackle any task that arose. Jan's attendance at rehearsals, events, and performances is exemplary. Her efforts to track and celebrate members' birthdays further showcases her commitment to fostering a supportive and welcoming environment for all. She represents our chorus and Sweet Adelines with pride, leaving a positive impression wherever she goes.

Her involvement in the "Class of 2025" workshops conducted by Balancing Act highlights her dedication to mentoring and supporting fellow members. Jan played a pivotal role in orchestrating our recent membership drive, showcasing her leadership and initiative.

In every way, Jan Rubino embodies the qualities we seek to honor with the LOC Member of Note award. She approaches every challenge with a kind heart and an unwavering commitment to our chorus. We are proud to call her one of our own!

Congratulations, Jan!

Melissa Joy (Missy) Leahy

Heart of Long Island Chorus

When our chorus needed someone to step up as interim director, Melissa took on the role with grace, enthusiasm, and professionalism—bringing exactly the kind of steady, upbeat leadership we needed during a time of transition.

Melissa organizes weekly rehearsals with care and clarity. Her deep knowledge of music, her caring nature and her joyous spirit has created an environment where everyone feels encouraged and inspired to grow. Dedicated and always willing to do the work, Melissa's commitment to excellence and to the group as a whole exemplifies what it means to be a devoted, inspiring, and uplifting member of our chorus and the SAI organization. Under her direction, we don't just sing—we 'Joy'-fully make beautiful music together.

Congratulations, Missy!

Sharon Spaulding

Evergreen Chorus

Sharon has been a member of Evergreen since 2017 as we were preparing for our SAI Harmony Classic performance in Las Vegas. She came to our open house, and was hooked the first time she heard the chorus sing.

Sharon is no stranger to music. She was in the school select Chorus, Concert Band and Marching Band. She loves the purity of the vocal sound, the wonderful harmonies that can be produced and the challenge of creating the overtones. During the past 5 years, Sharon performs with NYCA Victorian Carolers. They are a mixed quartet (SATB) dressed in Victorian costumes that sing Holiday songs around the area like Mohonk Mountain house and annually at the Kingston Snowflake Festival caroling on the streets in the Historic Kingston area.

In Evergreen, Sharon is a lead and a co-section leader. She recently was elected as co-team leader for the management team. Sharon has assisted in vocal warmups and she has assisted the finance person with collecting and keeping track of dues. Sharon was a member of the quartet JiNKS in 2018-2019. Behind the scenes, Sharon works tirelessly to support Evergreen along with her husband and children. They help with technical items like sound and lighting at our annual shows. Through her work at IBM, she applies for matching grants and other "not for profit" support programs. In 2024, she was awarded an IBM Outstanding Volunteer Excellence award which allowed her to direct substantial funds to Evergreen. With this money, we were able to purchase much needed new portable sound equipment along with new pitch pipes.

Congratulations, Sharon!

Kat Britt

Harmony Celebration Chorus

Since joining Harmony Celebration Chorus in 2010, Kat has been a shining example of commitment, leadership, and joy. A barbershopper for nearly 30 years, she serves as one of HCC's talented assistant directors and also brings her musical expertise to the Jersey Harmony Chorus as their director.

During a pivotal time in Harmony Celebration's journey, Kat stepped up with grace and generosity, guiding our ensemble with steady leadership and an unwavering smile. Her passion for barbershop harmony and her willingness to give her all have inspired everyone around her.

Her contributions extend far beyond our risers. As the Region Quartet Coordinator, Kat plays a key role, sharing her time, skills, and enthusiasm to help enrich the greater barbershop community. She brings the same dedication to her quartets and has sung in an impressive eleven over the years! Currently, she performs with Just 4(Kicks) and the Holiday Belles, delighting audiences with her artistry and energy.

Outside of chorus life, Kat nurtures her creative spirit through gardening, collecting antiques, and producing intricate dollhouse miniatures—passions that blend her love for beauty and detail. She even shares her miniature creations on her own YouTube channel, where her artistry reaches an audience well beyond Region 15.

Whether she's on the risers, at the front of the room, or chatting with members after rehearsal, Kat embodies the heart and soul of Harmony Celebration Chorus. Her musical leadership, infectious positivity, and dedication to the art form make her truly deserving of being honored as Harmony Celebration's 2025 Member of Note.

Congratulations, Kat!

Mary Johnson-Butler

City of The Hills Chorus

Mary Johnson Butler portrays the soul of our chorus. From holding down the Bass section, to working on the Membership and Marketing Committees, to making us all laugh each and every rehearsal night, Mary is the lady of the hour and a devoted Sweet Adeline.

Mary is a great ambassador for our chorus and is always promoting our group, sharing our message with those she meets at her many affiliations and events she attends. As Publicity Chair, Mary expertly notifies local news outlets and social media of our chorus activities and creates imaginative posters for our events. She also arranges for announcers at all of our sing-outs. Mary is encouraging, supportive, and kind, especially to prospective new members. Her contribution to the Bass Section is monumental – nearing 40 years of membership, her beautiful smiling face and strong voice is and has been a continuing foundation of the Chorus and several Quartets.

When Mary expressed her joy when singing with Oneonta's City of the Hills Barbershop chorus, her sister Pat was intrigued and discovered that there was a Sweet Adeline chorus within easy driving distance of her home in Depew, NY. Pat became a Bass member of the award winning "Buffalo Gateway Chorus" in Region 17. Mary keeps us updated on Buffalo's success in Region 17 and on the International stage.

Mary's son, a graphic designer, and daughter who has retired from international relief organizations, have given Mary a wonderful opportunity for world-wide travel and immersion in diverse cultures. Mary is also a loving grandmother to two.

We in City of the Hills Chorus are lucky to have this gem of a woman with us and to honor Mary as our 2025 Member of Note.

Congratulations, Mary!

Amy Cordero

Greater Nassau Chorus

Greater Nassau Chorus Member of Note honoree is Amy Cordero, a long-time member who is comfortable and confident in any role she takes on.

At the start of every rehearsal, Amy leads us in Qi Gong exercises to begin letting out the stress of the day. This is followed by a new dance routine each month, choreographed and expertly taught by Amy, who has a dance background. Her choice of music for the dance ties in to our current package or show, to get us in the right mindset for the rest of the night's rehearsal. When the chorus was meeting on Zoom during the many months of the Covid pandemic, Amy kept us connected and cheered us with her curated choice of music at the open and close of each virtual rehearsal.

Amy is a skilled and patient section leader for the baritones, always prepared, and steers the section through the challenging nuances of the baritone part. As a tape coach she is tough but helpful, hearing mistakes but also offering suggestions to correct them, and motivates the section to sing at a high level. She is very approachable, answering questions thoughtfully and giving encouragement, especially to those new to the baritone part, with the sincere words, "You belong."

Amy's dance background and musicality have been an asset to the chorus over the years. She can be relied upon to lead us through vocal warm-ups when the director is delayed or absent, and has also been called upon on occasion to direct us in performances. She's helped the visual team when needed in creating and refining choreography.

Besides her musical talents, she is organized and detail-oriented, handling hotel reservations for our regional and international competitions. Amy's records of room assignments and payments are methodical and accurate.

She is also co-coordinator on our make up team, not only ensuring make up orders are taken care of, but also making sure we all look beautiful before stepping onto the contest stage.

Amy wears many different hats in the chorus and brings a high level of dedication to whatever she does, yet never seeks the spotlight or looks for recognition. That's why we are so proud to bestow her with the honor of naming her our Member of Note.

Congratulations, Amy!

Sherry Barell

Heart of New Jersey

Heart of New Jersey Chorus is proud to announce our 2025 "Member of Note".....Sherry Barell.

Sherry brings cheerful and helpful energy to everything she does for the chorus. She is always willing to step up to do whatever is needed, even if it is out of her comfort zone. She is always prepared with her music and she communicates well with all members about ideas and concerns to help the chorus.

Sherry has been our Show chairperson for several years. She does a wonderful job coordinating, advertising, creating flyers and tickets, etc. She is also responsible for finding our new rehearsal location in Parlin. Most recently, Sherry volunteered to take over our Costume Committee.

She always greets everyone with a warm, friendly and welcoming conversation. Her laugh is infectious! Sherry is truly a valued member of our chorus and she is deserving of this honor.

Congratulations, Sherry!

Angela Dourdis

Capitaland Chorus

This year Capitaland Chorus has the sweetest of Adelines to recognize.

Not only does she possess the positive qualities of being a Sweet Adeline, she is kind....generous....and sincerely cares about our organization, our mission and our members. Angie is always looking to assist new members...takes them under her wing...asks how they are doing...answers their questions....always looking to make them comfortable. And....mind you...none of this is her obligation.....it's not for self gratification....she simply cares deeply.

Angie is honestly committed to the well-being of the chorus. If there's a task to be done...if you need a volunteer....she is right there. She wants to do all that she can do for the benefit of our organization.

Angie works tirelessly for the chorus and is currently on the Management Team. She is a longtime-quartet member, current chairperson of our Recruitment Committee and participates on several other committees....and yes...she is a baritone!

....our 2025 Member of Note is ANGELA DOURDIS, or better known as "Mayor of Capitaland Chorus".

WE LOVE YOU ANGIE !!!!!!!

Congratulations, Angie!

Helen Bravi

Saratoga Soundtrack Chorus

Saratoga Soundtrack selects Helen Bravi as our 2025 Member of Note. When Helen joined our chorus in 2011, she brought with her a wealth of Barbershop experience along with the passion and desire to share this craft. Her attributes have been described as patient, nurturing and calm as she shares this knowledge. This desire has been evident in the success and growth of Saratoga Soundtrack.

Helen has many roles and goes about them with a quiet nature. These roles include Tenor Section Leader. New tenors are taken under her wing as she prepares them for auditioning and continues to guide the tenors through learning our repertoire, bringing out the best in them. Her other roles include Music Team and Costume Chair, Management Team member and rehearsal space liaison with our host, the Knights of Columbus.

As our chorus learns Bel Canto style of singing, Helen has embraced this method by studying privately with Debra Lynn and sharing that knowledge to enhance our understanding and quality of singing. Helen is currently making her way through the Director's Certification Program of Sweet Adelines International and acts in an Assistant Director role for our chorus. She is also a dual member with Spirit of Syracuse Chorus and sings with a competitive Quartet. She truly embodies the attributes and the "Spirit" of Sweet Adelines !!

Congratulations, Helen!

Alexis DePersia-Norelli

Sirens of Gotham Chorus

Alexis DePersia-Norelli has been a cornerstone of Sirens since its very beginning. As a critical founding and charter member, Alexis helped shape not only the chorus's identity but also its spirit. From administrative leadership to creative vision, she has touched every aspect of Sirens life and continues to be one of the chorus's most dedicated ambassadors.

Alexis's passion for barbershop and for Sirens shines in everything she does. She has held countless leadership roles within the chapter, contributed her talents on the performance and visual teams, and played a central role on the Transition Committee, guiding the group through a particularly challenging moment with wisdom, empathy, and optimism. Her ability to bring clarity to difficult topics while maintaining a positive outlook has made her a trusted voice and advocate within the chorus.

On the risers, Alexis's creativity and skill are equally impactful. She has choreographed routines that are engaging, accessible, and joyful for every member. Her willingness to offer support and encouragement makes her a go-to person for anyone needing help, guidance, or simply a listening ear. Many members recall how Alexis was among the very first to welcome them, ensuring that new singers felt at home and quickly became part of the Sirens family.

Beyond the chapter, Alexis promotes Sirens tirelessly within the wider barbershop community, both regionally and internationally. She represents the chorus with excellence as part of Region 15's Regional Management Team and works passionately to ensure that Sweet Adelines International is inclusive and welcoming for all.

Alexis is the embodiment of the Member of Note honor: a leader, a creator, an advocate, and an unwavering cheerleader for Sirens. Her energy and enthusiasm are boundless, her influence is deeply felt, and her dedication has been instrumental to the chorus's growth and success. Recognition for Alexis is long overdue, and it is with immense pride and gratitude that we nominate her as Sirens of Gotham's 2025 Member of Note.

Congratulations, Alexis!

Rosalind Dempsey

Golden Apple Chorus

It is a pleasure and an honor for the Golden Apple Chorus to announce our 2025 Member of Note, ROZ DEMPSEY!

Rosalind “Roz” Dempsey joined Golden Apple Chorus in 2022, and her contributions to our chorus have been invaluable. Roz is an engineer by trade, and our residential technological guru. She has taken on the task of recording our weekly rehearsals from start to finish, and then she meticulously breaks the recordings into sections, complete with director comments. The time and energy Roz puts into this task is astounding, and we’re sure is no small part of the reason that Golden Apple is Region 15’s 2025 Most Improved Chorus!

Harmony runs through Roz’s family. Her father is a longtime member of Westchester Harmony (formally known as the Westchester Chordsmen), and his connection with them is part of why we are so lucky to have Roz with us. She is a true asset to our lead section, with an amazing capacity for learning our music in record time. She quietly steps up with no expectation of recognition whenever there is a task to be done.

Though Roz’s time with our chorus has been short, there is no doubt that she has embodied what it means to be a Sweet Adeline and Member of Note. We are so pleased that Roz is a Golden Apple and so proud to choose her for our 2025 Member of Note.

Congratulations, Roz!

Karla Chun

Spirit of Syracuse Chorus

The Spirit of Syracuse Chorus is excited to announce Karla Chun as our 2025 Member of Note! This is Karla's second time receiving this honor since she joined the chorus in 2018. That speaks volumes on what a wonderful and contributing member she is for our chorus.

When you think about or talk to Karla, you are immediately affected by her upbeat personality. She always has a smile that is contagious, and she will make you laugh.

Karla's accolades are many. She is currently on the Management Team as the Communication Chairperson. During her time with the chorus, she has taken on many various responsibilities, just to name a few: Delegate-at-Large, organized multiple fundraisers, member of the Riser Committee, involved with membership drives, revitalized our social media presence, member of our performance team, and if you need any technical computer support, she is our go to person. Karla is also the lead in the quartet "Nightshade." Once a month you can find Karla dressed in an outrageous costume to celebrate monthly birthdays with special chocolate.

Karla exemplifies what a Sweet Adeline is: kind, generous, happy to be involved, dedicated to learning her music, and an all around wonderful human being. Please join us in celebrating Karla and take a moment to meet her. She will definitely brighten your day.

Congratulations, Karla!