



**NJBIZ**

**BEST FIFTY**  
**WOMEN**  
**♀** **IN BUSINESS**  
**2021**



*“Do not follow where the path may lead.*

*Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”*

—Muriel Strode, author and businesswoman

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**Karren L. Johnson**  
EVENT SUPPLEMENT EDITOR

**A**t NJBIZ, we are proud to present to you our 2021 Best 50 Women in Business awards supplement, which spotlights women business leaders who are making a positive impact on New Jersey thanks to their passion for innovation, entrepreneurship and community leadership.

The following pages offer a sneak peek into what has made these talented women a success—from their educational background to their early career influences to their favorite words of wisdom.

This year’s winners, who range from entrepreneurs and inventors to nonprofit leaders and health care professionals to lawyers and CEOs, were selected by an independent panel from a group of outstanding nominees.

Setting the stage for these impressive stories of success is our Lifetime Achievement Award honoree, Brenda Ross-Dulan, who has made her mark in New Jersey as a recognized leader in the financial services industry and more recently as founder and managing principal of The Ross-Dulan Group.

We hope you enjoy learning about these female leaders and that their achievements and tried-and-true advice will provide inspiration—whether you are just starting out or already have a long career under your belt.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karren L. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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# Deborah Kennedy

Managing Director, Senior Banker  
**J.P. Morgan Private Bank**  
SUMMIT, UNION COUNTY

**Education:** Rider University (BS, finance)

**Company description:** Provides customized financial advice to help wealthy clients and their families achieve their goals through an elevated experience.

**Industry:** Financial services/wealth management

**Job responsibility:** Senior banker; helps clients bring their investments and financial assets together into one comprehensive strategy.

**What career accomplishment are you most proud of achieving?** I take a lot of pride in my commitment to not only growing my own business and serving my own clients, but I am dedicated to developing my team and my office overall. Relationship building is core to my day to day, and facilitating introductions and connections for my New Jersey team over the past 25 years has helped it grow to the size it is today.

**What charities or causes are you involved in?** I'm very invested in providing guidance to the next generation of financial talent. In 2015, I began working with my alma mater, Rider University, to serve in the Women's Mentorship Program. I love arts and culture, and the connection the foster between all communities, and I currently serve on the Executive Committee of the Paper Mill Playhouse Board of Trustees.

**What impact do you want to have on your industry or change you want to see or make happen?** I hope to change the misconception that banking is purely transactional. We really are in a relationship business—it is all about building and developing that work over decades. I now work with the third generation of some families I have known since joining private banking in 1995.