

Women in Banking 2025

Unlocking Your Inner Power

April 16, 2025

Speaker BIOS



Amy Bassett

District Director, NH Office

Small Business Administration

Amy Bassett was appointed as district director of SBA's New Hampshire district office in December of 2020. Prior to her appointment in New Hampshire, she served as the SBA district director in Maine.

In her role as district director, Ms. Bassett is responsible for leading the New Hampshire SBA team in the delivery of SBA's financial assistance, entrepreneurial development and contracting programs throughout the state. Key to the delivery of programs and services is the close collaboration she helps foster with lending partners, SBA resource partners, economic development professionals and local and state entities.

She began her career with the SBA in the New Hampshire district office in 1990 and held a variety of positions during her time with that office. She is a NH native and proud graduate of Plymouth State College.



Betsy Harrison, MA, LCMHC

Founding Partner

Counseling Associates

Betsy Harrison, MA, LCMHC, is a licensed clinical mental health counselor and founding partner of Counseling Associates of New London, PLLC. In 2004, she and partner Susan Borchert, PhD, launched a two-person practice to address unmet mental health needs in their community. Twenty years later, Counseling Associates has grown into a thriving organization with eight locations and over 100 clinical and support staff.

In 2024, Betsy and Susan were honored as the **SBA's New Hampshire Small Business Persons of the Year**. Counseling Associates also received the **Business Excellence Award in Healthcare** from *New Hampshire Business Review* and was named one of the **Top Women-Led Businesses in NH** by *Business NH Magazine*.

Drawing on her family business background and clinical training, Betsy is committed to building strong, community-centered teams. Her leadership blends compassion, collaboration, and strengths-based approaches, making her a respected voice in both the behavioral health and business communities.



Jennifer MacLaren
Owner
Dew Collective

Jennifer MacLaren is the Founder & Curator of Dew Collective, a modern flower concept brand designing arrangements and events with artistic flair and retail shop owner curating art, home decor, daily flower Dew Bar and plants in Manchester, NH and Newburyport, MA. MacLaren has a 20 year executive branding and operational career working on reputation management for financial transactions with FTI Consulting and Willis Towers Watson. She specializes in mid-market consulting, start-ups, exit strategies and operational efficiencies.



Abbey Morrison
Co-Owner
The Fresh Chef Press

Abbey Morrison graduated from the University of Johnson & Wales with a Bachelor's degree in Culinary Nutrition. She has always loved basketball and was grateful to pursue both passions during her four years representing Johnson & Wales. She now is co-owner of a small farm to table cafe called **The Fresh Chef** located in Manchester, NH. With over 8 years of experience in the Culinary Nutrition field, three of those eight being a business owner, she is honored to share her love of Nutrition, specifically how it works in the body, with her colleagues, customers, friends, and family.



Dr. Cristy Beemer
Associate Professor of English
University of New Hampshire (UNH)

Dr. Cristy Beemer is an Associate Professor of English at the University of New Hampshire where she was awarded a College of Liberal Arts Excellence in Teaching Award in 2015. In addition to directing First-Year Writing and Professional and Technical Writing at the college level, Cristy was once in banking herself working for First Citicorp Life Insurance Company in New York City. She has published articles in *Peitho*, *Rhetoric Review*, and *Teaching English at a Two-Year College*, among others and is currently working on her book project, *Gen X Does Breast Cancer: It Ain't Pretty in Pink*.



Linda Lorden
President
Merrimack County Savings Bank

Linda Lorden is President of Merrimack County Savings Bank (The Merrimack). Established in 1867, The Merrimack is a mutual savings bank founded to serve the people of Greater Concord. The Merrimack now has nine branches across Central and Southern New Hampshire.

Lorden's extensive banking career spans over 40 years, starting as a Teller at Concord Savings Bank in 1980. She continued working in various retail leadership positions until her appointment to President in 2018.

Linda was Past Chair and is currently a Director of NH Bankers Association, where she also serves as a Legislative Committee Member. She is a Trustee for Concord Hospital and Capital Region Health Care, and is also a member of the Steering Committee for the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness. A former director and honorary Rotarian at the Bow Rotary Club, Linda was also a board member of the organization for many years. She previously served as President of the Board for the Penacook Community Center, and remains active in the community.



Nicole Howard

Commercial Banking Relationship Manager
Bangor Savings Bank

Nicole Howard is a seasoned banking professional with over a decade of experience in the industry. Since beginning her career, she has developed a deep expertise in financial services, leadership, and strategic growth. A graduate of Southern New Hampshire University, Nicole earned her Master of Business Administration with a focus on business and finance, equipping her with the skills to navigate the evolving banking landscape. She is passionate about empowering women in the financial sector and fostering innovation in banking. Outside of work, Nicole is an avid golfer and resides in Southern New Hampshire with her husband, Doug, and golden retriever, Benson.



Kimberly Lebron

EVP & Chief Lending Officer
Ledyard Bank

Kimberly (Kim) Lebron is a seasoned financial executive with over 30 years of experience in commercial and consumer lending, credit risk and loan portfolio management. As the Chief Lending Officer (CLO) at Ledyard National Bank, Kim leads the institution's lending strategy, ensuring sustainable growth while maintaining strong risk management practices.

With a deep understanding of market trends, regulatory compliance, and financial analysis, Kim has successfully developed and implemented lending programs that drive profitability while serving the needs of businesses and individuals. Her expertise spans commercial real estate, small business and SBA guaranteed lending, mortgage and consumer banking, making her a dynamic leader in the evolving financial landscape.

Prior to joining Ledyard, Kim held leadership roles at Thomaston Savings Bank, where she oversaw lending strategies, optimized credit policies, and improved operational efficiencies. Her ability to align lending practices with corporate objectives has been instrumental in achieving record-breaking loan growth and customer satisfaction.

Kim holds a Bachelor of Science in Finance from the Post University and completed a two-year executive education program at the Stonier Graduate School of Banking at the University of Pennsylvania.

A proud veteran, Kim served in the United States Army from 1984 to 1990. She remains actively engaged in her community, serving as a board member for the New Hampshire chapter of the American Red Cross and as a board trustee for Alice Peck LifeCare in Lebanon.



Joanne Connelly
SVP, Commercial Lending Team Leader
Merrimack County Savings Bank

Joanne Connelly is a Senior Vice President, Commercial Lending Team Leader at Merrimack County Savings Bank (The Merrimack) based out of Nashua. She began her banking career 39 years ago as a teller and later held roles in loan servicing, loan administration, commercial credit and commercial lending.

Connelly earned her degree in Business Studies with a concentration in Finance from New Hampshire College (now SNHU) and also studied at the New England School of Banking at Williams College. Outside of the office, she enjoys cooking, reading and volunteering for a variety of nonprofits, especially as a Bold Futures Mentor for Girls, Inc. NH.

She has a son, Drew, serving in the US Coast Guard as a pilot, stationed in Corpus Christi, TX. Connelly resides in Mont Vernon with her husband, Chris and their Irish Terrier, Fin.



Cathy Nestrick
VP, Women's Leadership & Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
American Bankers Association (ABA)

Cathy is the Vice President of Women's Leadership and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the American Bankers Association where she provides guidance, thought leadership, and resources for the banking and financial services industry. Cathy came to ABA after she transitioned from a legal career, first as a law partner in a Midwest firm where she represented banks and other businesses, and later as the Vice President and General Counsel of a global manufacturing company where she also founded the first Office of Diversity and Inclusion. She received a bachelor's degree in economics from Hanover College, a law degree from Indiana University, and an Executive Certificate in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion from Georgetown University. Cathy co-founded the Parity Podcast focused on the equitable advancement of women. She is a frequent speaker and workshop facilitator on women's leadership, allyship, and inclusive workplace cultures.



Linda Clemons
CEO
Sisterpreneur, Inc.

Linda Clemons from Indianapolis, Indiana is the CEO of Sisterpreneur® Inc. Linda is an award-winning a record setting sales producer as well as one of the top sales trainers in the world in the resort/timeshare industry where clients have generated over two billion in sales.

A Body Language Expert trained and certified in Analytic Interviewing and Statement Analysis™ which is a process used to detect deception.

Her clients and audiences include Southwest Airlines, Coca-Cola, Spanx, Publicis, Nielsen, National Urban League, Nestle, MGM, Major League Baseball, Wells Fargo. Leo Burnett Worldwide, US Customs, FBI, Marriott, Hilton, Wyndham and Starwood. Her client list includes celebrities, executives, politicians, and entrepreneurs.

Linda has opened for or shared the stage with such notables as Oprah Winfrey, President Obama, Steve Wozniak co-founder of Apple, Dr. Condoleezza Rice and Vice President Kamala Harris.

Awards to include but not limited to:

- Office Depot National Entrepreneur Award
- Women of Wealth Top Mentor Award
- A listing in the United States Congressional Records for community work.
- Sagamore of the Wabash the highest civilian award given by the governor in the State of Indiana.
- Memberships-Rotary International
- Board member for the FBI Citizens Academy
- Recognized by President Obama for community work