Hon. Carol E. Heckman (Ret.) Receives Buffalo Business First 2026 Women of Influence Award



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Lippes Mathias LLP partner Hon. Carol E. Heckman (Ret.), the first woman appointed as a U.S. magistrate judge in the Western District of New York, was honored as a recipient of Buffalo Business First's 2026 Women of Influence Award.

Buffalo Business First honored 25 women in the 20th Women of Influence awards. Honorees were selected by Business First editorial staff and judges from more than 100 nominations on the strength of their contributions to their companies and the overall community. Since the program began in 2007, some 500 women have been honored.

Heckman served as a magistrate judge in the Western District of New York for eight years, where she was selected to sit on the Federal State's Education Committee for Magistrate Judges and as an officer in the Federal Magistrate Judges Association. She has also trained federal judges in mediation techniques. At Lippes Mathias, she leads the firm's alternative dispute resolution practice team and serves on the board of directors of the College of Commercial Arbitrators.

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About Hon. Carol E. Heckman (Ret.)

Hon. Carol E. Heckman (Ret.) has more than 40 years of experience as a trial lawyer, arbitrator, and judge. Heckman has conducted more than 250 arbitrations for the American Arbitration Association (AAA), in most major metropolitan areas, with a particular concentration in New York City. Her arbitration cases span employment, complex commercial, health care, and process arbitration appointments. In her arbitration practice, she is widely regarded as efficient, open-minded, and fair. Heckman also handles litigation counseling and trial work for American Indian tribes and a group of business clients.

Heckman has served as a trial attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, an assistant U.S. attorney in Buffalo, New York, and as a law clerk for Hon. John T. Curtin, former chief judge of the Western District of New York.

She has significant training and experience as a mediator and is a certified mediator for the Western District of New York. Successful mediations include the full range of federal court cases, including class actions, high-stakes business disputes, employment disputes of all kinds, environmental claims, products liability and other tort claims, securities claims, patent claims, and §1983 claims. Heckman's arbitration experience includes all aspects of executive compensation, complex and high-dollar commercial disputes, employment litigation, FLSA, non-compete agreements, construction cases, ERISA liability, international cases involving contractual matters, contract claims, mass claims, and process arbitrator assignments under the AAA's Mass Arbitration Supplementary Rules effective Aug. 1, 2023. She frequently serves on three arbitrator panels. Her private client representation includes advising Fortune 500 companies and closely held companies on major litigation strategy in commercial cases, particularly in the areas of health care, the False Claims Act, federal court procedure and strategy, and mediation preparation and strategy. She frequently serves as valued local counsel for cases in the Western District of New York. In addition to her arbitration experience, Heckman is also a member of the firm's Indian law practice team and advises select business clients on trial and appellate issues. Her experience representing tribal governments spans state, federal, and tribal courts as well as arbitrations, and has involved taxation, land claims, sovereign immunity, tribally-owned businesses, gaming compacts, IGRA, the Nonintercourse Act, insurance, the Indian Child Welfare Act, tribal civil jurisdiction, constitutional claims, tort claims, treaty issues and contract claims.

About Lippes Mathias LLP

Lippes Mathias is a full-service law firm ranked among the top 200 law firms in the U.S. by size, with nearly 230 attorneys serving clients regionally, nationally, and internationally. With offices in Buffalo, Clarence, Albany, Long Island, New York, Rochester, Syracuse, and Saratoga Springs, N.Y.; Greater Toronto Area; Chicago, Ill.; Jacksonville, Tampa Bay, and West Palm Beach, Fla.; Cleveland, Ohio; San Antonio, Texas; Oklahoma City, Okla. and Washington, D.C., the firm represents publicly and privately-owned companies, private equity and venture capital firms, independent sponsors, real estate developers, financial institutions, municipalities, governmental entities, and individuals.

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