



2023 Nominee: Kelli A. Komondor, K2 Creative, LLC
Nominator: Renee DeMichiei Farrow, Decorating Details

Describe how your nominee excels in her profession / occupation:

Kelli A. Komondor is a Visibility Strategist, Speaker, and Bestselling Author. She has a diverse professional background that includes marketing & PR, writing, management, and business development roles in multiple industries; most notably spending 11 years with the Pittsburgh Business Times. After a pandemic-related layoff in 2020, she gathered all her experience and her drive to help others and started her agency, K2 Creative LLC. Her focus is to “Make Your Message Matter” by helping established entrepreneurs find new opportunities and budding entrepreneurs take their “side hustle” to a higher level. Since K2 Creative’s start, she’s helped over fifty female authors, coaches, and speakers promote their books, products, and services through visibility consulting and strategy and content marketing services. In addition to publicity and marketing support, she often serves as emcee at client events and book launch celebrations. As an agent for her clients, she continually finds ways to promote and recognize their accomplishments by telling their story to professional groups, podcasts, radio, television, and print media. Using her writing skills and creativity, Kelli generates content for her clients to use in print, video, and social media initiatives. She strategizes with clients and prepares them for media opportunities, speaking engagements, and interviews. Her clients have been featured across the nation through a variety of podcasts, publications, and TV shows including the Dr. Phil Show, Pittsburgh Today Live, Littsburgh.com, Superstar Women Entrepreneurs Media Network, International Business Times, LosAngelesNews.net, The Boston Herald, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, TribLIVE, The Thinking Branch, The New York Telegraph, The Daily Herald (Chicago, IL), Too Jewish Radio, and more.

Describe how your nominee helps to advance or mentor women:

Kelli’s professional mentorship experience began while working at the Pittsburgh Business Times and participating in the multiple networking events the organization hosted every year. She was involved in the planning of the first Mentoring Monday event where female mentees can “speed network” with mentors to receive guidance and inspiration. She was also a part of the Women in Business networking group with the Business Times, and organized mixers and other events focused on elevating women.

While she was a business development manager at 4C Technologies, she started a networking group called Building a Network: MACE (manufacturing, architecture, construction, engineering, and energy). Partnering with four colleagues, she planned networking mixers focused on connecting companies and building relationships within those “MACE” industries, particularly focusing on inviting women to represent their companies. She helped advance women while working as a branch manager with First Commonwealth Bank by supporting Financial Solutions Specialists, many which were females, grow in their positions, learn new skills, and take on new responsibilities—resulting in an increase in their salary and upswing in their confidence leading to additional opportunities and promotions.

In November 2020 she gathered twenty female business owners and nonprofit executives and created the Amazon bestselling anthology *Twenty Won: 21 Female Entrepreneurs Share Their Stories of Resilience During a Global Crisis*. Kelli knew that if she was able to pivot during the pandemic, others were able to adjust and find success as well! She wanted to provide a platform for them to celebrate those accomplishments. In less than six months Kelli and those twenty brave and inspiring women, many who were making their debut as a published author, brought *Twenty Won* into the universe. The book has served as an inspiration for women in all stages in their lives and careers and has been read in over a half-dozen countries.

Her chapter, “From Imposter to Inspiration” details how the “gifted, popular girl”—who should’ve been a no-brainer four-year collegiate—dropped out of college and took a more scenic route to a professional career. She discusses how imposter syndrome has made such a significant impact on her life and how writing *Twenty Won* was her real first step in attempting to overcome it. She shares how her unexpected type II diabetes diagnosis in December 2019 has allowed her to lead a healthier life and has encouraged her to simply “go for it”. She also shares ideas she hopes will inspire other women when they are starting their own business.

Kelli wrote the introduction and the conclusion to *Twenty Won*. In part, the introduction reads; “The brave women in this book all have something we consider the ‘secret sauce’ to our success; some of us have been using the recipe for years, while some of us have just recently concocted it. Like the family recipe for pierogi—handwritten by my gram and framed in my kitchen—things need tweaked from time to time. Think of it like this: An extra pinch of salt and a few more drops of water = Women with grit, but not without some tears. It’s a nice combination! We were all simmering at a nice pace until 2020 brought us to a boil and we had to decide . . . Would we let the pot go unattended until it is empty and ignited in flames, or would we slow things down, keep a close eye on it, adjust the recipe, and keep going?”

She has had the pleasure of taking Twenty Won beyond the bookshelf, speaking on imposter syndrome with her signature workshop, From Imposter to Inspiration: Getting Past Imposter Syndrome and Increasing Your Visibility, to hundreds through conferences, workshops, podcasts, and livestream presentations. Kelli also speaks on gaining visibility with your personal brand, and about creating your 'village' of support when starting and maintaining a business.

Things are coming full circle as Kelli is participating in the 10th annual Pittsburgh Business Times Mentoring Monday, volunteering her time and talents to mentor women at the event she helped start a decade ago. This summer, Kelli will be a keynote speaker at the 2023 Pittsburgh Diversity Conference, providing a presentation on imposter syndrome focusing on the diverse community that is our beautiful city of Pittsburgh.

Additionally, she has volunteered her time to present talks and workshops to Brave Women Project (BWP), Women's Business Network (WBN), Women in Technology (WITCON), Chatham University, Point Park University, The Connected Mom Summit, and Resilience Training for Entrepreneurs, among other women-focused organizations and events.

Describe the different community activities and volunteer efforts in which your nominee has been involved:

Kelli volunteers by supporting both the annual You Make a Difference Awards and WALK the TALK for Liver Health with the Community Liver Alliance. She is a founding member and serves on the board of directors of the Brave Women Project (BWP). She believes wholeheartedly in the organization's mantra of "Do one brave thing every day!" and the 5 E's that are BWP's foundation: Engage, Encourage, Empower, Educate, and Evolve.

In 2016 Kelli joined the board of the Cynthia McGraw-Davic Memorial Dog Park, "Cindy's Bark Park", and raised funds to build a community dog park in her town of Port Vue Borough. The park serves as a memorial to Cindy, an animal rescuer, volunteer, transporter, and advocate for every animal imaginable, and provides a place for borough residents to gather and allow their dogs to safely run wild!

Her past volunteer activities include working with the Persad Center as a committee member for the Art for Change annual event, and for First Commonwealth Bank's Bourbon & Bites benefiting the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

What feels like a lifetime ago, Kelli was a troop leader for her daughter's Daisy and Brownie troops with the Girl Scouts of America and she was one of the den mothers for her son's Cub Scout Pack. She ran the annual St. Joseph Regional Bazaar's auction and was a classroom mom while her children were in elementary school. She supported both of her children's soccer teams by being a "booster"; raising funds, running concession stands, and planning end-of-year banquets.

Include any additional information that you feel is important for consideration of your nominee:

Kelli is an all-around champion for women at all stages of their lives and careers. As a woman without a college degree, Kelli's success has been a result of her drive to be better and do better. She believes in "collaboration over competition" and is always happy to bring other women along—and up—with her by making referrals and introductions. A perfect day, in Kelli's mind, equals connecting people to provide opportunities for everyone.

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