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Media Contact

Tara Dowdell

tara@taradowdellgroup.com

(201) 413-5220

Executive Women of New Jersey to Host Biennial Salute to the Policy Makers Gala

*Event to Feature Keynote Speaker Susan Chapman-Hughes, SVP at American Express
and Honorary Chair Laurence M. Downes, Chairman and CEO at New Jersey Resources*

On May 9, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. at The Palace at Somerset Park, Executive Women of New Jersey (EWNJ) will host its signature biennial gala, *Salute to the Policy Makers*, honoring the contributions of New Jersey's most accomplished and influential women leaders in business, government, and academia. EWNJ is proud to announce that Susan Chapman-Hughes, Senior Vice President in the Global Commercial Services division at American Express, will serve as the keynote speaker and Laurence M. Downes, Chairman and CEO of New Jersey Resources, will serve as the Honorary Chair.

Salute to the Policy Makers funds EWNJ's various programs and initiatives aimed at advancing women's leadership. Most notably, it benefits the organization's Graduate Merit Award Program, which provides scholarships to women who are non-traditional graduate students with the goal of establishing a pipeline of future women leaders. As the largest provider of scholarships to women who are non-traditional graduate students in New Jersey, EWNJ has awarded over \$1.2 million to deserving candidates over the last 30 years.

"We are elated to have Susan Chapman-Hughes, a trailblazer and change-making global leader, serving as this year's keynote speaker. She exemplifies the impact of women's leadership and underscores the importance of Executive Women of New Jersey's work," stated Michellene Davis, Esq., President of Executive Women of New Jersey and Executive Vice President and Chief Corporate Affairs Officer at RWJBarnabas Health. "We are also excited to have Larry Downes as our Honorary Chair. Given that the overwhelming majority of CEOs are men, it is essential that we engage them in our efforts to ensure that women have equal access to leadership opportunities."

"The effectiveness of our work relies on the support of partners who share our vision of advancing women's leadership. Our research, as outlined in our 2017 report on corporate gender diversity, demonstrates that the change we're seeking requires the support and advocacy of prominent voices, and we are grateful to Susan and Larry for lending theirs," explained Barbara E. Kauffman, President Elect of Executive Women of New Jersey, Chair of *Salute to the Policy Makers*, and Executive Vice President and COO of Newark Regional Business Partnership.

Susan Chapman-Hughes serves as Senior Vice President/General Manager of Global Digital Capabilities, Transformation, and Operations for Global Commercial Services at American Express. She leads a global team responsible for managing and optimizing the customer experience for commercial clients. In 2013, she was named as one of the “100 Most Creative People in Business” by Fast Company. Recent *Salute to the Policy Makers* keynote speakers have included Barbara Corcoran, Founder of the Corcoran Group, and Christine LaSala, Chair of Willis Towers Watson.

Laurence M. Downes is Chairman and CEO of New Jersey Resources, a Fortune 1000 company, and its principal subsidiary, New Jersey Natural Gas. He is also Chair of the New Jersey Economic Development Authority and the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development's National Advisory Board at Rutgers University, as well as a member of the Board of Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey. He joins a distinguished list of New Jersey business leaders who have served as Honorary Chair of *Salute to the Policy Makers* including Barry H. Ostrowsky, President and CEO of RWJBarnabas Health, and John R. Strangfeld, Chairman and CEO of Prudential Financial, Inc.

To purchase tickets to *Salute to the Policy Makers*, visit www.ewnj.org/events.

About EWNJ:

Founded in 1980, EWNJ is the leading senior-level executive women's organization that is committed to increasing the presence of women serving on corporate boards and in the top leadership of New Jersey companies. To this end, we publish a biennial report on the number of women on boards and in the senior governance of publicly traded companies in New Jersey. This report is the only one of its kind in the state.

We also host an array of events designed to offer women executives prime networking opportunities, to amplify our gender diversity advocacy efforts, and to raise funds for our Graduate Merit Award Program, which is focused on establishing a pipeline of future leaders. As the largest provider of scholarships to women who are non-traditional graduate students in New Jersey, we are proud to have awarded over \$1.2 million to deserving candidates over the last 30 years.

For more information about our organization, visit our website at www.ewnj.org. To learn more about the *Salute to the Policy Makers Gala*, please visit www.ewnj.org/salute.