

The Official Publication of the MIDJersey Chamber of Commerce

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**BUSINESS**

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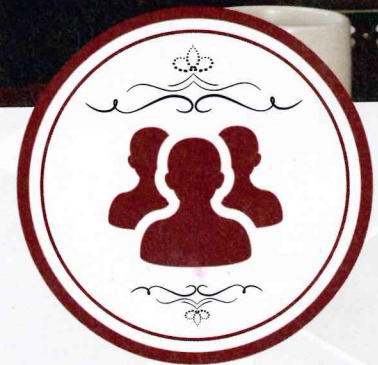
# HALL OF FAME

# AWARDS

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR **SHERISE RITTER**  
HEADLINES THE CHAMBER'S 2014 HONOREES

"You have to go for it. You have to stretch yourself and make things happen. If you don't take some chances in uncomfortable situations, you'll never realize your full potential."

— SHERISE RITTER



# Citizen of the Year

**SHERISE D. RITTER, CPA, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE MERCADIEN GROUP**

Sherise Ritter is living proof that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Growing up in Hamilton Square, one of her earliest altruistic experiences was helping her mother raise money for Deborah Hospital. That's where the spark first ignited her affinity for helping others and keeping herself busy. "My mom has always been a real go-getter," Ritter says. "She's 80 years old now and still working. That's where I get it from."

At Mercadien, Ritter works with small businesses and individuals, but the lion's share of her work is dedicated to non-profits. Ritter chairs the Non-Profit Services Group, where she finds she's not only serving the needs of clients, but also educating and steering them on the right course so they can be more effective to the people and causes they serve.

Non-profits are typically a grassroots affair; well-intentioned individuals seeking to improve conditions within their community but oftentimes naïve to legal and business matters.

That's where she comes in.

"Non-profit is simply a tax status," Ritter says. "These organizations often follow a mission-driven mentality and neglect the financial aspects. They must have a business plan, attend to cash flow, and have a board of directors."

Ritter is the immediate past chairman of the MIDJersey

Chamber's board of directors. She serves on the board of the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton and chairs its foundation. She's the former president and treasurer of the YWCA of Trenton, where she was heavily involved in fund development and received the Ethel Downing Johnson Memorial Award.

Ritter was included as one of New Jersey's Best 50 Women in Business by *NJBIZ* in 2006 and a year later, she received the New Jersey Society of Association Executives' Points of Light Award in recognition of her community service. She also writes for Mercadien's e-newsletter, the *Nonprofit Examiner* and for the last 17 years, she's served on the Accounting Advisory Council at Rider University, her alma mater.

"My wish is that young associates and their children have the opportunities that I've had along the way," she says. "But you have to go for it. You have to stretch yourself and make things happen. If you don't take some chances in uncomfortable situations, you'll never realize your full potential."

For Sherise Ritter, there's been a lot of go-getting, while staying true to the area she's always known.

"I give a lot of credit to my partners at Mercadien and appreciate all the support the firm has given me," she says. "My partners are awesome."

**OFFICE SPACE**

Sherise Ritter | Managing Director, The Mercadien Group

Ritter first went to work for Lee and Sexton in Allentown, NJ, and some mergers later, it's now called the Mercadien Group, which celebrated its golden anniversary in 2013. Thirty years after walking through the door, Ritter works with small businesses and non-profits. She chairs the Non-Profit Services Group, which the firm established in 1990. "Non-profit organizations often follow a mission-driven mentality and neglect the financial aspects," she says. "They must have a business plan, attend to cash flow, and have a board of directors." From this office, Ritter shows them exactly how to do that.



① The monkey represents the term "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil." I feel like this is my life, as I am a confidant to many. This came from my mother-in-law's Ohio home after she passed away. I was helping to pack things up and just had to have the monkey.

② I believe family comes first, so I have pictures of mine all over my office, including a picture of my husband, George, at his mom's home in Ohio and of my daughter, Valerie.

③ I attend many galas and special events for Mercadien clients each year. I bought this mask with a donation to the Eden Dreams gala.

④ When my son went to Arizona last summer, he brought us back these good luck trolls that have semi-precious stones in them. Mine is agate—a stone characterized by its bright colors—and represents balance, grounding, strength, simplicity, precision, and perception.

⑤ This is my gavel, a thank-you plaque from our board at the Chamber. I wish I had a real one for our board meetings when I was the chairman of the MIDJersey Chamber, formerly known as the Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce.

⑥ I am very proud to be a Rider alum and I am active in the school's accounting advisory council. This is my diploma from Rider College—yes college; now we are a university.

## Chairman's Message

# WORTHY RECOGNITION

Over the past few months, you have heard me speak about when I first joined the Chamber and how I made an effort to get involved with the organization. I've shared with you how it helped me develop business opportunities and make wonderful friends and contacts. What I have not shared is how I came to be chairman of the MIDJersey Chamber of Commerce. A few years ago, Sherise Ritter asked me to join the Executive Committee. I was already a member of the board and was serving as a co-chair of the Golf and Tennis event, but this was a new venture for me. I am grateful to my good friend Sherry for seeing my leadership potential.



**All of these individuals and organizations are outstanding for all that they do and the services and resources they provide to our community.**

On a personal level, I am thrilled that she was named this year's Citizen of the Year. Sherry has done so much for the MIDJersey Chamber and our community.

She is a managing director of The Mercadien Group and a principal of Mercadien, P.C., CPAs. She chairs the firm's non-profit practice area and is a member of the board of directors of the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton and chair of its foundation.

Our Distinguished Corporation of the Year is *The Trenton Times*, Rue Insurance was named the Outstanding Small Business of the Year, and the Girl Scouts of Central and Southern New Jersey was named the Community Impact honoree. All of these individuals and organizations are outstanding for all they do and the services and resources they provide to our community.

Nominations for the Chamber's signature Hall of Fame awards are fielded from members in written form and then passed on to a selection committee to review the nominations. At the selection committee meeting, all nominations are discussed and the committee votes to select the honorees for the year.

If you are interested in nominating an individual, company, or an organization to be considered for future awards, look for the official announcement right here in *midJersey Business* later this year.

Best,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Stacy Mattia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Stacy Mattia**

Chairman@MIDJerseyChamber.org