

WESTCHESTER

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June 2021 Issue

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301 Top Dentists

Keep Your Teeth Bright
And Your Smile Brighter

Top Cosmetic Docs

64 Dermatologists
And Plastic Surgeons

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A History of Ill-fated Crossing Proposals

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Power Players

Next-Gen Leaders in Government, Business, Healthcare & More

Plus:
**Food Truck
Paradise**

Wheely Good Eats!

Power Players (l to r):
Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano,
New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson,
White Plains Mayor Tom Roach



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Power Players

48 movers and shakers whose influence
is resonating across Westchester

**By Paul Adler, Janine Clements, Amy R. Partridge,
Duke Ratliff & Kevin Zawacki**

Not all of these changemakers are household names just yet, but they are part of a new guard of emerging leaders who are shaking up the power structure in Westchester. Coming into their own over the past several years — or recently raising the stakes on an already-solidified reputation of power — they have been racking up contributions and accomplishments that are being seen and felt across the county. While certainly not an exhaustive list of all the newer VIPs around town, these are some of the interesting and dynamic men and women we're avidly watching.

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Power Players Business

SPOTLIGHT:

Michael Romita

President & CEO, Westchester County Association

Westchester's business community is confronting its biggest challenge in recent history: a grueling pandemic that's slowed the economy to a crawl. That means Michael Romita — the new president/CEO of the Westchester County Association (WCA) — has a Herculean task ahead of him.

For 70 years, the WCA has sparked economic development as an advocate for local business. That mission matters more than ever, with lingering shutdowns and virus rates taxing the region. Thankfully, Romita is especially qualified for his role. In past professional lives, he was a trial attorney for the Department of Justice, chief of a family-run oil company, and partner at a Washington, DC, public-policy firm. So, he innately understands the policies and aid Westchester businesses need right now.

In the past year, much of Romita's energy has focused on getting funds to local merchants. "We recognized pretty early that the county had a very tight budget and that the state was spending [its] money fighting the pandemic," Romita recalls. "So, we had to pivot our advocacy to the federal level."

Romita is also helping fuel the region's healthcare industry. "We're developing a local pipeline of talent for the sector," he says. "That's going to be a growing need for our economy." To do this, the WCA and Romita convened the Healthcare Talent Council, "a high-level roundtable with the heads of the hospitals and the deans and presidents of [local] colleges," Romita explains. The council is ensuring local curricula aligns with local hospital needs and pushing for more clinical training. "You can't have somebody come out of a [classroom]



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and throw them into a COVID emergency room,” Romita says.

Romita’s leadership isn’t all reactive, however. “It’s pretty easy to be distracted by every short-term issue,” he warns. “But we need to think more strategically about how our regional economy fits into the broader national conversation.” Romita’s long-term vision for the WCA entails revitalizing the county’s commercial office space, strengthening the regional healthcare sector, helping the transition to clean energy, growing affordable housing, and closing the digital divide.

It’s an ambitious to-do list, but Romita plans on leaning into Westchester’s strong suits. “Our socioeconomic diversity is one of our greatest strengths,” he says. “We’re professionally diverse. And we’ve got very dedicated, engaged businesses and nonprofits who really care about solving our problems.” —KZ

