

## S&T Hosts Third Annual Women and Allies in Banking Conference

"This event truly had its start through a spark in conversation that has brought us to today. Because of a suggestion, we developed a program that allows us to take a day to think about our industry, the value of our work and how we can develop our careers," remarked Susie Nicholson, chief human resources officer for S&T regarding S&T Bank's Women and Allies in Banking Conference. This year's event was held in Blairsville, PA.

She went on to say that this conference, led by Director of Inclusion Relationship Development, Genevieve Oduor, engages employees to bring important discussions to life. Participants are brought together each year with business professionals, nonprofits as well as industry and community leaders with four objectives in mind: *Create opportunities for internal networking of women in banking, while fostering relationships and inspiring women to reach their career goals and aspirations; provide a platform where women take the lead encouraging professional development and leadership in our organization; establish a space where we can all share, discuss, learn and develop an understanding of the unique challenges facing women in the workplace and continue to foster male support of women in banking.*

Next, Susie honored the lives of two Bank employees who recently passed away in a moment of silence in celebration of their lives, LaTavia Michael and Jameelah Anderson. In addition, a moment was taken to recognize and honor all active and retired members of our U.S. Military and recognize those in attendance who have family members that are either serving or have served.

CEO, Chris McComish then addressed the group, thanking Genevieve, Felicia Daniel, and the entire conference planning committee for organizing this wonderful event. He noted that, "While women make up seventy percent of S&T employees and fifty percent of our leadership, it's not about the numbers, it's about our values of doing the right thing, going above and beyond and ultimately winning as one team while making people our purpose and giving every employee the best opportunity to be themselves and thrive as part of our team." Chris continued by recognizing the importance of having allies at the conference, who are not only there to support others, but to learn from them too. He was honored to next introduce the event's highly esteemed Keynote Speaker, Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Gretchen Evans, U.S. Army, retired, whose awe-inspiring speech motivated listeners to say yes to new challenges and take that leap of faith to go farther than you even thought possible in life (even in difficult circumstances).

There was hardly a dry eye in the room when CSM Evans spoke of her amazing 27-year Military career in the United States Army. Throughout her service, she rose to one of the highest enlisted ranks in the U.S. Army, highly decorated and one of less than 500 women to receive the Purple Heart. She spoke about being narrowly saved at the top of a mountain by a U.S. Military helicopter comrade and how she'd lost three of her beloved troops on that mountain. She stated that later, at the height of her almost three-decade career while overseeing 30,000 ground troops in Afghanistan, she was injured by a mortar and taken to a hospital in Germany where she was told in writing via whiteboard by a doctor, that she was now deaf in both ears and had suffered a traumatic brain injury. She lost her career and felt like she'd also lost her self-identity and purpose.

CSM Evans began to deal with her grief through running, even to the point of obsession. Not eating and running 12-14 miles per day, this was the outlet she poured herself into, trying to, in a sense, just disappear. One day while on a run, she was struck by a cyclist that she couldn't hear approaching and she was thrown into traffic and smelled the burned rubber all around her. A doctor told her she couldn't do the things she used to, and she felt the doors closing around her. Beaten but not broken, and at the point of feeling like she'd lost all hope, CSM Evans reached out for help. She contacted America's Vet Dogs and was matched with a service dog and companion named Rusty. With Rusty by her side and the help of her husband and family, she began to reclaim her life, redefining how she sees herself and working tirelessly to help other Veterans. She advised the audience to find those people who can be your "rope team"—the core group of people you can count on when times are extremely challenging. She has repurposed her passion and even actively competes in physical and mental challenges (such as The World's Toughest Race) with a group of Veteran civilian athletes (of mixed abilities) around the world. She told the captivated audience, "We are wounded but very much unbroken. Learn what grit can do for you. Just when you think you've taken your last step, you can still take ten more!"

Later in the day, S&T President, Dave Antolik, facilitated a panel discussion with external female leaders including: Jessica Walker, Director of Veterans Affairs, Indiana; Felicia Mycyk, motivational speaker and football coach; Petra Mitchell, President and CEO, Catalyst Connection and S&T WPA Advisory Board Member; Michelle Staton, Chief Operating Officer, PA Bankers Association and Dr. Kelley Smith, D.O. Penn Highlands Healthcare.

A Bank internal panel discussion was moderated by S&T's Director of Sales Strategy and Marketing, Jordyn Kemats. Participants included: Faith Mutunga, audit manager; Stephanie Ramsey, treasury management and analyst manager; Todd Miller, director of consumer banking, risk and operations; Linda Foster, information technology director and Jon Costello, bank operations division manager.

Next, President and CEO, PA Bankers Association (PBA), Duncan Campbell spoke about how he sees S&T as being a place that clearly lives out a commitment to inclusion. He spoke about Susie Nicholson being the 2024 recipient of the Patricia A. Husic Woman of Influence award and recognized current S&T PBA and OBL graduates and committee volunteers. He also recognized Michelle Ciancio, senior business banker who recently received the Rising Star Award from the Ohio Bankers League (OBL).

S&T's Jim Michie, chief credit officer, spoke about his personal Our Shared Future journey and his community giveback efforts. He said that as part of making people our purpose, he chooses to support the March of Dimes Military Baby Shower, and that Pennsylvania is the only state still hosting these events meant to help expecting Military families with piggy banks and financial support as well through volunteering at this event. Representatives from March of Dimes were on hand to receive a \$1,500 check from S&T.

An additional check for \$1,500 was presented to Dr. Kelley Smith for the Penn Highlands Surgical Niche which works to close the healthcare gap by offering a wide range of surgical services within its network outpatient surgery centers and hospitals and outpatient surgery centers, with a focus on providing high-quality and convenient care close to home.

Conference attendees then participated in break-out sessions of their choosing, led by S&T employees and Employee Resource Group leaders. The breakout session feedback was led by Michael Golden, chief operating officer.

S&T Chief Financial Officer, Mark Kochvar, introduced presenters from BrightPlan who educated employees about the plan offerings in terms of assistance with managing their money and achieving financial security.

Finally, Chris McComish recognized Dave Antolik's upcoming milestone of 35 years of service at S&T Bank. He thanked Dave for his dedication to S&T and his community and recognized his impact on the organization.

This event could not have happened without the dedicated conference planning team whose tremendous efforts helped to produce and inspiring and impactful day! This conference was another tangible example of how we are building our future together through people-forward banking!