

## NEWSMAKERS OF THE YEAR

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– Bill Cosby, Harvey Weinstein, Al Franken, Roy Moore, Mario Batali, Matt Lauer and the list goes on – there is also the public reckoning that the best “fix” may well be found in the continued push for diversity in the workplace, whether in government, media, Hollywood, restaurants and more.

Yet, looming over the political mood of the nation is a perception by many that the Trump Administration is dismissive of women’s issues.

Which is where women are mobilizing and intend to make their mark, many said.

“The year 2017 was not a sudden emergence of women in positions of authority and influence,” said Laureen Harris, a partner with Cronin, Cronin, Harris & O’Brien in Uniondale, who also serves as president of the Association for a Better Long Island, a business group.

“It has been building for decades, the result of a previous generation who broke gender barriers and confronted prejudice in the board room and the ballot box,” she pointed out. “What 2017 saw was the confluence of a number of factors – from voters recognizing integrity and competence in women candidates, to women speaking out about work-place sexual harassment to women reacting to a misogynistic president. The year represents a watershed on many levels and 2018 promises to build on what has become the Year of the Woman.”

And New York women continue to take the reins.

For example, U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, was reportedly the first Democrat to call for Franken’s resignation. But that demand wasn’t necessarily a surprise for those who have followed Gillibrand’s career. She has long pushed for reforms against sexual misconduct in the military, including at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point. She’s also called for new policies, including federal paid family leave, which would strengthen equality in the workplace. Last year she told business leaders at a Long Island Association breakfast in Melville that the United States is “the only industrialized nation in the world without



Photo by Associated Press

**KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND: The US senator has long pushed for reforms that would strengthen equality in the workplace.**

any form of paid leave.”

Also leading the charge is New York’s Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul.

“New York women have an enduring legacy in the pursuit of equal rights that began nearly 170 years ago in Seneca Falls, and as a result of their advocacy this state passed women’s suffrage three years before the rest of the nation,” she said in a statement that commemorated the women’s suffrage movement in March. “This year we celebrate the accomplishments of the women who led the fight for equality, setting the stage for future battles against workplace discrimination, in support of pay equity, and to preserve a woman’s right to make decisions about her health care.”

Meanwhile, elsewhere on Long Island, women continue to make strides. In Islip, for example, Town Supervisor Angie Carpenter, along with Long Island MacArthur Airport Commissioner Shelley LaRose-Arken said in November that the airport, after four years of suffering losses, anticipated a \$2 million surplus in 2017. Those gains were thanks in part to measures that included reducing the annual operating budget and raising certain fees, according to published reports.

And earlier this year, the town announced that Moody’s had for the second time reaffirmed Islip’s Aaa financial rating status with a stable outlook. The rating reflected



**LAURA CURRAN: “I am honored to be the first female county executive.”**

the town’s “strong credit profile, including a sound financial position, a large tax base poised for future growth, above-average wealth indicators and manageable debt,” according to a statement from the rating’s agency.

“We worked closely with our commissioners to tighten budgets as necessary, making certain that each and every taxpayer dollar spent is done with the utmost scrutiny,” Carpenter said in a statement. “We have instituted zero-based budgeting to our spending plans, assuring that no projects move forward unless they are deemed essential.”

Long Island’s women in power may look to New Yorkers before them, including Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton who organized the first Women’s Rights Convention in 1848, ultimately leading to women’s right to vote in the state in 1917.

But there is still work to be done. Speaking at the 100th anniversary of women’s suffrage in New York, Hochul put it this way: “As the state’s highest ranking elected woman, I consider it my mission to inspire the next generation of women to rise up and shape a more just, equitable society.”

■ AGENN@LIBN.COM