



# Schenectady Business & Professional Women's Club, Inc.

## 2016 Schenectady BPW Woman of the Year Pasqualina Ferri Founder/Owner, Ferri Formals and Bridal



From the time she was a little girl in Frosinone, Italy, Pasqualina loved to sew and create clothes for members of her family, especially her two sisters. Following fifth grade, she began to receive more formal instruction in sewing when she attended the Scuola di Taglia. Her career had started.

In 1963 she married Silvio Ferri and soon emigrated to the United States, specifically Schenectady, New York. Although she had no formal education in the English language, she was determined to start a business career and earn a good living, which required learning more about the clothing industry. So she began work at the Belrod Factory and the Ursula of Switzerland Factory in Schenectady. With her love of the clothing business and her dedicated work ethic, she soon was promoted to Floor Lady, a supervisory position. About the same time, she started working at Country Miss Dress Shop performing alterations. Her reputation for skilled work led people to seek her out, and so she began accepting customers for designing and alterations in her own home.

In 1988, Pasqualina decided to pursue her dream of owning her own business. She and her daughter Marylu opened a modest shop on Hamburg Street in Schenectady. There, she custom-designed gowns for weddings and proms and also did alterations. With her business flourishing, she expanded to a larger site in 1996 at 1608 Union Street in Schenectady, where she and Marylu started a retail special order bridal and tuxedo shop. Always aware of the importance of education, she began her work on her GED, setting an outstanding example for her children about the importance of education.

The business flourished, and Pasqualina became a vital force in the Upper Union Street business community. She was a leader in the enhancement of store facades. She brought in upscale designers and was able with her own building expansions to showcase the Vera Wang Designer Gown Collection for the first time in the Capital Region and to feature designers such as Justin Alexander, Stella York and Allure Couture Bridals. She offered internships for college students and created employment for women by teaching them basic skills. In addition, she opened up her shop for local jewelry artisans to display and sell their wares.

Pasqualina has become an outstanding model of a successful business woman. Her eyes still sparkle with the love of what she does; to make men and women look their very best on those very special occasions.