

WNY's Most Admired Companies

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Staff
Buffalo Business First

Western New York has countless talented individuals who strive to maximize the potential of their workplaces and the community at large. They are the building blocks of successful, thriving companies – and we have hundreds, if not thousands, of them. Throughout the year, Business First recognizes those star companies through a variety of publications and awards programs, from the Book of Lists to Fast Track Companies to Best Places to Work and Top Private Companies.

To close out the year, we compiled a list — with some assistance from our readers — of companies that deserve to be respected. We considered company growth, success as an employer and connection with the community. And now, we're proud to share with you the list of Western New York's Most Admired Companies.

The information that follows was provided by officials from each company and edited by Business First for length and clarity. All photos were supplied by the companies.



Phillips Lytle LLP

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One Canalside, Buffalo, NY 14203 - phillipslytle.com

[David McNamara](#), managing partner

Founded: 1834

WNY employees: 282

Overview: [Phillips Lytle](#) is a regional law firm that is recognized nationally for legal excellence. Our attorneys are passionate people who take a pragmatic approach to providing legal services. We are strong partners with our clients, approaching each case thoughtfully, in the context of our clients' objectives, working efficiently to arrive at outcomes that make good business sense. The firm has more than 190 attorneys resident in six offices in New York State, one office in Washington, D.C., and one office in the Waterloo region of Canada.

Growth for employees: Offers a wellness program that aims to help employees achieve and maintain healthier lives and promotes wellness in the workplace. This past year, employees were given the opportunity to participate in a number of programs including wellness screenings, flu shot vaccinations and seminars on fitness at work and holiday nutrition. The firm also has steadily increased training programs for associates, providing greater opportunities to learn from our attorneys and from within our clients' in-house legal departments. The firm also has established the AdvanceU program to provide formal and informal training to attorneys to advance their careers, and a Women's [Affinity Group](#) that seeks to develop and promote female lawyers and maximize their opportunities for business development and leadership.

Innovations: In 1991, the firm established a diversity scholarship program at [SUNY Buffalo](#) Law School. Each year, this scholarship is given to students who are traditionally underrepresented in the Western New York legal community and who demonstrate a commitment to practicing in the region. In addition, one of our most exciting achievements has been the development of the "Peace Out!" pipeline program. Teams of attorneys work with middle school students in underserved communities to introduce them to the practice of law. The program engages students in role playing as they explore problem solving and dispute resolution in a scripted legal controversy led by our practitioners. To date, more than 1,076 middle school students and over 73 Phillips Lytle attorneys have participated in this program in Buffalo, Rochester and New York City. Finally, the firm's new headquarters is LEED certified and allows for the newest technology to be implemented.

Contributions to WNY: Phillips Lytle LLP has grown and prospered in Western New York for over 180 years. Throughout those years, the firm has provided significant contributions to the community. In addition to its support of more than 400 community and national organizations, the firm has been regarded as a pioneer in the revival of Buffalo's Canalside district. In 2013 it moved nearly 300 employees into new office headquarters at One Canalside. This move was a huge step for Western New York as it represented one of the first major private-sector investments in the Canalside District and was viewed as a milestone for Canalside's continued development, as well as a symbol of Buffalo's bright future.

Civic giveback: Each year, the firm supports hundreds of community and national organizations through financial commitments and board service. It has always encouraged attorneys to be active members of their communities and to serve on boards or institutions of their choice. The "Volunteer Crew" was established in 1994 and is managed through a committee of employees. The core team of volunteers recruits and coordinates the activities of more than 100 full-time employees and their family members. Thousands of hours are spent working on initiatives such as delivering meals, partnering with clients in school mentoring programs, staffing community events, cleaning, painting and providing free legal services. Phillips Lytle's belief in giving back to the community is also demonstrated through extensive pro bono work, which is treated in the same manner as billable time.