

2015 Hall of Fame Honoree

Samara Barend Class of 1995



One of the youngest women to run for Congress, Samara Barend received the democratic nomination for New York State's 29th District in 2004. Just a year out of high school she worked as an aide to NYS Senator Moynihan, and while in college she formed the I-86 Coalition, which mobilized support to redesignate Route 17 as Interstate 86. Her efforts led to the project's subsequent eligibility for federal funding, and in 1998 Senator Moynihan invited her back to Washington, D.C. to help craft legislation for this transportation reauthorization.

In 1999, Ms. Barend was selected as one of 20 "Academic First Team" students, chosen from among 980 college students nationwide who were nominated by their schools. She has served on Vice President Al Gore's presidential campaign in 2000, and then moved onto Hillary Clinton's successful campaign for the New York State Senate.

Supporting communities on the job and off, Ms. Barend also founded the non-profit organization Minds of Steel in 2002 with the goal of promoting healthy habits, especially physical exercise, to alleviate the effects of mental illness in children. Most recently she created and is leading a national nonprofit coalition, the Performance-based Building Coalition, which is focused on advancing the delivery of public/private partnerships (PPPs) for public buildings.

Currently, Ms Barend is senior vice president and director of public/private partnerships at AECOM Capital. A loyal Buffalo Bills fan, she lives in New York and, when not chasing her new daughter, Pia, she enjoys running in her spare time.