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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Tompkins Connect Seeks Nominations for 2020 Superheroes in Annual
Fab5 Young Professional Awards**

Ithaca, NY – Tompkins Connect is excited to announce it is now accepting nominations for the sixth annual Fab5 Young Professional Awards sponsored by Tompkins Trust Company. The Fab5 Awards celebrate the achievement of young professionals ages 21-40 in Tompkins County. This year, the Fab5 Committee is seeking young professionals who have been able to shine and excel despite the unprecedented challenges our community has faced. Additionally, a sixth Essential Worker “Hero” award has been added this year to recognize a young professional who was considered “essential” by government officials to maintain public health and safety and keep critical infrastructure operations working when parts of the economy were shut down because of COVID-19. Examples of essential workers may have been frontline workers in the healthcare, food service, education, government, or other service industries.

The Fab5 Awards categories are: Entrepreneur of the Year, Not-for-Profit Leader of the Year, Businesses Leader of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, Rookie of the Year, and Essential Worker “Hero” of the Year. Judges will be encouraged to consider individuals in all categories who have been a 2020 superhero by showing strong leadership, resilience and creativity in a way that has benefitted a social justice cause, helped the community during the pandemic, or has made an impact on society in a positive way this past year.

Jessie White, Co-Chair of Tompkins Connect, shared the reasoning behind this momentous change: “we realized that 2020 has been unlike any other year we have ever experienced. Although it’s been a challenging year, we have witnessed many young people step up within the community to make a difference and that’s why we really want to put the spotlight on these young heroes in our community.”

To nominate an individual, visit the Tompkins Chamber’s webpage at www.tompkinschamber.org/fab5awards. Nominations are due by Tuesday, December 15 and the winners will be announced in February.

Under normal circumstances, there would be an awards celebration held at Coltivare; however, this year the winners will be announced through social media and the press, and the ceremony will be held virtually.

Katie Shaw, Marketing and Community Relations Specialist at Tompkins Trust Company and member of the Fab5 planning committee stated: “Normally, we would hold a huge awards ceremony with great food and drink, but this year we have planned something different to ensure the safety of our community.” Shaw added, “In early March, we will be streaming a professional production of the awards ceremony to attendees free of charge. You won’t want to miss it!”

The Fab5 Awards are co-sponsored by Communiqué Design & Marketing and the Tompkins Chamber. The event’s media sponsor is the Ithaca Voice and its production sponsor is Well Said Media.

"There are countless young professionals living and working in our community who are shaping both the short-term and long-term success of our organizations. Our young professionals are so important to the healthy future of our community and we are pleased to honor these young professionals for their achievements," said Tompkins Trust Company President and CEO Greg Hartz. "It is especially important to recognize the accomplishments of our young professionals who have stepped up to help our community this past year, as COVID-19 has had a tremendous impact on our community."

"The Tompkins Connect Young Professional Fab5 Awards are a wonderful way for the community to recognize and show gratitude to young professionals who have excelled or provided leadership as entrepreneurs, non-profit leaders, business leaders, volunteers, civic leaders, and more," said Jennifer Tavares, President of Tompkins Chamber. "The Chamber is thrilled to be partnering with Tompkins Connect, Tompkins Trust Company, and Communiqué to recognize young community leaders."

About Tompkins Connect

Tompkins Connect is a local young professional organization, which was formed in 2010 and currently has over 700 members. Tompkins Connect is housed within two organizations - United Way of Tompkins County and the Tompkins Chamber. Their mission is to connect young professionals and emerging leaders through networking, community building, and volunteerism in Tompkins County.

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