

Empire State Bank Announces Election of New Directors to Its Board

NEWBURGH, N.Y., Oct. 23, 2020 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- ES Bancshares, Inc. and Empire State Bank is proud to announce the appointment of Michael O'Brien and Penda Aiken to its Board of Directors. "The depth of their knowledge and expertise will provide enhanced support to the Bank's vision. As we execute strategic growth initiatives, this will ensure our path to continued success," said Philip Guarnieri, Empire State Bank's Chief Executive Officer.

Michael O'Brien, an accomplished leader and entrepreneur, has been an investor for more than 35 years in public, private and start-up organizations in the financial service industry. In 2007, Mr. O'Brien founded Deerhill Pond Investment Partners, LP, an asset management firm that invests across the capital structure in both debt and equity instruments. Prior to Deerhill, Mr. O'Brien worked 22 years for Keefe, Bruyette and Woods Inc. (KBW), a full-service boutique investment bank and broker-dealer specializing in the financial service sector serving institutions throughout North America and Europe. Mr. O'Brien managed KBW's London based European operation advising international portfolio managers and raising capital for U.S. financial institutions. Mr. O'Brien served as a member of the Board of Directors and Operating Committee for KBW and as CEO and President of KBW Asset Management.

In the early days of his career, Mr. O'Brien served as a Managing Director for Data Resources Inc. (DRI), an economic consulting firm that was a pioneer in building data bases, analytic software and econometric models. Mr. O'Brien and his team's clients were the top tier investment banks.

There were very few who were untouched by the devastation of the 2001 World Trade Center attacks and KBW was no exception, losing nearly one-third of its staff. In the aftermath, Michael was instrumental in providing crucial aid and support to the families of the employees that perished. In subsequent months, Mr. O'Brien and the rest of the firm worked tirelessly to successfully rebuild the organization.

Mr. O'Brien holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics from Trinity College, and a Master's degree in Business Administration from Stanford University. In addition to his strong background in investment management and private banking, he is a key contributor to countless charitable endeavors. Mr. O'Brien serves on the Board of the Village School, a private, non-profit Montessori school. He is a member, active speaker, mentor and advocate for the Church of the Presentation and leads a ministry dedicated to helping the inner-city Catholic schools thrive. For three years Mr. O'Brien served as Vice Chairman of the Board of the Scholarship Fund for Inner-City Children (SFIC), a non-profit organization investing in the future of economically disadvantaged children. He also serves on the Board of the Bergen County Society (BCS) and as a merit badge counselor for the Boy Scouts. Mr. O'Brien is married to Julie and together they have five children and three grandchildren.

Penda Aiken is a well-recognized leader and respected entrepreneur with more than 30 years of experience in the staffing industry and has held numerous leadership roles. She is President and Principal Owner of Penda Aiken Inc. (PAI), a prime talent acquisition firm, which she established in 1990 serving the NYC Metropolitan area with a wide range of programs and services including, consultant management for compliance monitoring, workforce utilization tracking, community outreach and M/WBE related services. Ms. Aiken has been one of the driving forces behind the company's strategic and operational success. Ms. Aiken has successfully provided staffing expertise to public and private sector entities and has addressed other human resource challenges with innovative ideas and solutions. Through her leadership, PAI has successfully grown to one of the largest prime talent acquisition firms completing over 25,000 engagements.

Ms. Aiken holds a bachelor's degree from the CUNY Baccalaureate Program and an MFA from Columbia University. She is an active member of various community boards where she holds numerous leadership positions in a variety of non-profit organizations, including Director of The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce where she serves as Committee Chair of Workforce Development; Director of Court - Livingston - Schermerhorn Business Improvement District; Director of National Association of Minority Contractors NY Tri-State Chapter; Director of Brooklyn Neighborhood Improvement Association, and Director Women Builders Council. Ms. Aiken is passionate about serving the communities around her and is a leader in M/WBE, civic and philanthropic endeavors. In addition to her work with various community boards, she is founder and Board Chair of Teach to Excel Foundation, a nonprofit formed to improve professional capability of teachers/educators and to improve student education and career goals. Ms. Aiken resides in Brooklyn, NY. She has a son, Kijo Aiken, who has worked at Penda Aiken, Inc. since 2006, and two grandchildren, Taylor and Quentin.

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