

## BANQUET KEYNOTE SPEAKER

ELENA LAQUATRA

Saturday, August 7 @8:00 PM



Though 100% deaf in both ears, Elena LaQuatra is defying all odds.

She spent her grade school years performing as the lead in over two dozen musicals, winning numerous awards for dance choreography, and performing as a member of her high school's percussion ensemble, learning to play dozens of percussion instruments.

Elena spent her teenage years competing in pageants, winning the prestigious titles of Miss Pennsylvania's Outstanding Teen in 2007 and Miss Pennsylvania Teen USA in 2010. She captured the title of Miss Pennsylvania USA in 2016 and represented the state at the Miss USA pageant, televised live on FOX from Las Vegas.

In college, Elena made a number of international television appearances. She was contestant on Greece's Next Top Model, a coach on an episode of MTV's "Made," and had a principal role in a Superbowl commercial alongside NFL legends.

She graduated from Point Park University, obtaining her Bachelor of Arts degree in Broadcast Communications. Shortly after, she landed her first job as a Digital Video Reporter for Pittsburgh's online lifestyle and entertainment channel, 4the412 for WTAE. In 2017, Elena accepted a full-time position as a General Assignment Reporter and Anchor for WJET in Erie, Pennsylvania. By 2018, she returned back to WTAE in Pittsburgh, accepting her dream job as a full-time General Assignment Reporter.

At age four, Elena contracted bacterial meningitis, resulting in the loss of all of her hearing and balance. After extreme rehabilitative measures, including numerous surgeries, Elena now hears with a Cochlear Implant. She attended the DePaul School for Hearing and Speech in Pittsburgh for four years to regain her listening and spoken language skills.

Living life with a disability has instilled in Elena a love of philanthropy. She serves as the Mistress of Ceremonies for fundraising galas nationwide, she's a host and spokesperson for various projects and businesses across the tristate region, an ambassador to numerous non-profit organizations, and gives motivational speeches across the country. Elena was the top fundraiser for The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation's "Pittsburgh's 50 Finest" program in 2013, was named one of Whirl Magazine's "13 Under 30," Pittsburgh Magazine's "40 Under 40," The National Herald's "40 Under 40," and the Greek America Foundation's "Forty Under 40."

Her greatest passions include inspiring those living with disabilities, mentoring young girls, volunteering, traveling to Europe, and spending time with her family, boyfriend, and chihuahuas.

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