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NXIVM courts rich, powerful and influential

Entertainers, politicians, heiresses among group's students, advisers, recruiters

By James M. Odatto Updated 1:57 pm, Wednesday, February 22, 2012



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Nancy Salzman, NXIVM's president, poses for a photo during Vanguard week at Silver Bay Center on Lake George, Tuesday, Aug. 27, 2003. (Will Waldron / Times Union)

The for-profit corporation NXIVM is based on a self-improvement curriculum called "Rational Inquiry," developed by co-founder Keith A. Raniere, who advertises himself as one of the world's smartest people. He formed NXIVM originally as Executive Success Programs with a nurse he met in the late 1990s after the collapse of his earlier business, Consumers' Buyline Inc.

NXIVM devotees at times pursue their efforts on their own or through a number of different organizations or business entities, including several not-for-profit corporations, creating a blur of individual and group affiliations. At times the group's big benefactors, Sara and Clare Bronfman, directly finance NXIVM-related efforts on their own. The movement has involved thousands of people.



Nancy Salzman

Raniere met Salzman in the late 1990s after the collapse of his earlier business, Consumers' Buyline Inc. He said he chose Salzman to become president of NXIVM in 1998 after searching for seven years and interviewing hundreds of people to be the

person to duplicate and teach his model.

Pamela Cafritz and Karen Unterreiner

Long-time Raniere girlfriends who worked for CBI, a multi-level marketing venture, which was based in Clifton Park and employed dozens of Capital Region residents and others across the nation who sold memberships entitling consumers to discounts on goods and services. The business shut down after probes by several investigatory agencies. Without admitting any wrongdoing, they along with CBI signed a **consent agreement** in 1996 with the New York state attorney general, who had accused CBI of being a pyramid scheme. Cafritz and Unterreiner agreed to never promote, offer or grant participation in an illegal chain distributor scheme. Raniere and the company also agreed to pay the state a \$40,000 fine.

Mark Vicente

The **writer/producer/director** is putting together a film about Mexican violence. A **trailer** features Raniere discussing peaceful resolution.

Roger Stone

Campaign strategist and former Senate Republican advisor who helped fashion Carl Paladino's and Kristin Davis' Unsuccessful bids to become New York's governor was hired by NXIVM or some of its top people.

**Linda Evans**

The actress was a student and young actresses Nicki Clyne, Allison Mack and Kristin Kreuk have been among NXIVM's students and recruiters.

Richard L. Mays

The chairman of the scandal-tainted Aqueduct Entertainment Group that was disqualified after winning the bid to build a casino in Queens was also a NXIVM student.

Steve Pigeon

The former Erie County Democratic Party chairman and former counsel to former Senate Majority Leader Pedro Espada Jr. was hired by Clare Bronfman.

Sara and Clare Bronfman

The sisters have homes in the Capital Region and used tens of millions of dollars to underwrite Raniere's activities and help the group purchase about a dozen buildings and homes in the region. They also helped arrange for the Dalai Lama to speak in Albany at an event that drew Raniere to the stage.

Alfonse D'Amato

The former Senator's lobbying and public affairs firm, Park Strategies, was hired for undisclosed reasons by NXIVM board member Clare Bronfman.

Joseph L. Bruno

The former Senate Majority Leader met with Salzman several times and won campaign contributions and jet rides for Senate Republicans from two key NXIVM devotees — Seagrams heiresses Sara and Clare Bronfman.

Jack Casey

Bruno's former Senate lawyer, the past Rensselaer County Republican Party chairman, has been a student and legal adviser.

More Information**Antonia Novello**

The former state Health Commissioner was also a student.

Richard Branson

English business magnate with Virgin Group has been enrolled.

Goldie Hawn

The actress **canceled a speaking engagement** after a 2003 Forbes article about Raniere called "**Cult of Personality**."

Markham Group

The Arkansas-based political advisors, which has advised several presidents, has also been hired by NXIVM or one or both of the Bronfman sisters.

Lama Tenzin Dhonden

The emissary for the Dalai Lama worked together with the Bronfman sisters on the project to get the Dalai Lama to speak in Albany in 2009. Sara Bronfman's investments in real estate in the Capital Region included the purchase of a Halfmoon house for Lama Tenzin Dhonden. Sara Bronfman and Lama Tenzin were "closely associated," according to court testimony.

The Dalai Lama

Wrote a foreword for a book Raniere co-wrote with a NXIVM follower that was published around the time of the spiritual leader's visit to Albany in 2009.



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