

# Rebecca Seawright



## Assembly Member Seawright Honors Ten "Women of Distinction" During 7th Annual Women's History Month Celebration



To commemorate Women's History Month, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright honored 10 women leaders of distinction for their achievements, noteworthy contributions, and outstanding

work on behalf of the community on the Upper East Side, Yorkville and and Roosevelt Island.

***"Every March, we celebrate Women's History Month to remember the remarkable women who have fought to give the next generation a better future,"*** Assembly Member Seawright said. ***"To the Women of Distinction, we say congratulations! You are an enduring inspiration to our entire community, our beloved city, and our great state of New York!"***

Seawright's seventh annual Women of Distinction Awards ceremony was webcast live on Zoom and Facebook on Monday evening. Holly Buchanan, author of *Selling Financial Services to Women – What Men Need to Know and Even Women Will Be Surprised to Learn*, offered remarks as featured guest speaker

The distinguished honorees hail from public service, neighborhood businesses, volunteer and non-profit institutions, publishing, medical institutions, civic organizations, and labor unions. Honorees received a New York State Assembly citation recognizing "outstanding work on behalf of the community...worthy of esteem for her civic dedication and service, essential to the advancement of the residents of the 76<sup>th</sup> Assembly District and the State of New York."

#### **The 2022 Women of Distinction honorees are:**

**Flor de Maria Ellets** is a 30-year resident of the Upper East Side, works in the Lower East Side as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker at Betances Health Center, where she specializes in seeing patients with trans-generational trauma, history of domestic abuse, and long term grief. During the last three years, Flor has served as a board member of the Four Freedoms Democratic Club and its Health Working Group co-chair.

**Mary Nell Hawk:** Upon discovering East River C.R.E.W. (Community Recreation & Education on the Water) in 1999, Mary Nell Hawk joined the nonprofit's all-volunteer board as a passionate advocate for free open water rowing for all on the East and Harlem Rivers, a common sight in the 19th century. In 2006, with their boat launch, davit, and ladder installation at East 96th Street, East River C.R.E.W. provided safe, no-cost weekly rowing for the first time in decades. They are the only Manhattan access point for human-power boats between Brooklyn Bridge Beach and Dykeman Street, the Bronx.

**Carol Grocki Lewis** is a faculty member of the 92nd Street YM-YWHA Art Center's ceramic program, where she has taught both children and adults. She is a Teaching-Artist at the 92Y's Center for Arts Learning Leaders, in which she has brought the joys of working with clay to numerous children in K-9 public schools in East Harlem. In addition to teaching the many interdisciplinary qualities of clay to persons of all ages, she is also the Founder and Director of the Yorkville Holiday Exhibit & Sale, now in its 10th year, at the Church of the Holy Trinity on East 88th Street. Visit her website at [cgl.pottery.com](http://cgl.pottery.com).

**Kim Moscaritolo** spent 20 years working in television news before moving into the nonprofit world. She currently works as the Director of Communications and Digital Outreach for Hunger Free America. She also serves as a Democratic District Leader, working to help elect Democrats here in New York and around the country. She lives in Yorkville with her husband John and their two cats, Winston and Franklin.

**Shirley L. Mow**, an educator, has worked with foundations, corporations, businesses, and local government and nonprofit organizations to develop, fund, and implement programs to support minority students and encourage girls to study S.T.E.M. fields. She served as associate director of the Educational Partnership Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz; executive director of the Westchester Education Coalition; executive assistant to the president of Hunter College; and associate dean at Pace University. She co-edited the book, *Holding Up Half the Sky: Chinese Women Past, Present, and Future* and served on several boards, including the Feminist Press at the City University of New York.

**Joan Roth** was a pioneer in uncovering the problem of homelessness among women. She

photographed and interviewed many women who lived in the streets in the 1970s, a time of little interest and virtually no understanding of what was happening to these women. She contributed invaluable information about the way they live and how some of them become homeless. As the principal investigator, Ms. Roth's research supported a 1983 report entitled "Shopping Bag Ladies: Homeless Women," which helped develop the rationale for providing outreach services and housing options to homeless women.

**Brenda Sauer** has lived and worked in the Upper East Side for over 35 years. She moved to the neighborhood to work at New York-Presbyterian hospital as a nurse and is now the Director of Patient Access. Brenda is also an active volunteer, working with Holy Trinity Church to prepare their community suppers and the Carl Schurz Park Conservancy, where she co-chaired the very popular Halloween Howl for many years!

**Tricia Shimamura** is a mom, a social worker, a proud Japanese Puerto Rican, and a dedicated community leader who has served her neighbors on the Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island for over a decade. Previously the First Vice-Chair of Manhattan Community Board 8, and the Co-Chair of its Parks and Waterfront Committee, Tricia now serves as the Director of Community Affairs at the Manhattan Borough President's Office. She oversees the Community Affairs Unit and is involved in several neighborhood initiatives throughout the Borough. In addition to serving on the East 72nd Street Neighborhood Association and being a previous board member to Friends of the East River Esplanade.

**Betty Cooper Wallerstein** is the Organizer and President of the East 79th Street Neighborhood Association. Thirty-eight years ago, Betty, having recently moved into the neighborhood, was waiting for an M 31 bus at York Avenue and East 79th Street on a cold winter Sunday when a kind gentleman in a passing car said, "Lady, you've got a long wait this bus doesn't run on Sunday!" York Avenue with the biggest group of excellent hospitals, stores, offices - with no service on Sundays! She contacted others in the neighborhood the following week and organized a meeting. An overflowing crowd appeared. Together they were able to improve slow service daily on the M79 with the help of elected officials. Neighbors complained of the long waits at East End, York, and First Avenues to get a cab in the morning, including seniors, parents taking their children to schools, and people going uptown and midtown. They established the first taxi stand in a residential neighborhood within a year.

**Rebecca Weintraub** was born and raised in A.D. 76, where she now represents Part A as District Leader. She's an active community member, fighting for our parks, schools, libraries, and so much more. She has also served as the Vice President of the East River Democratic Club. Rebecca lives in Lenox Hill with her husband Evan and their son Benjamin.

The keynote speaker was **Holly Buchanan**, a popular speaker, trainer, and author. Buchanan works with financial companies and professionals who want to grow their business by understanding how clients make financial decisions, buy financial products and choose financial advisors. Holly is the author of *Selling Financial Services to Women – What Men Need to Know and Even Women Will Be Surprised to Learn*. She also works with professional women on how to win trust and credibility to be more successful in their careers.

### **Past Honorees**

#### **2015**

Judy Berdy, Barbara Chocky, Winnie Cudjoe, Helaine Eisenberg, Jill Eisner, Yvonne Fitzer, Helene Goldfarb, Monica Iken-Murphy, Patricia Sanders, Judy Schneider, Betty Wallerstein

#### **2016**

Loraine Brown, Alice Heyman, Zoe Markowitz, Ellen Polivy, Margie Smith, Eileen Toback

#### **2017**

Michele Birnbaum, Eva Bosbach, Judy Buck, Mary Coleman, Maureen Fairlie, Linda Heimer, Sherie Helstien, Wendy Hersh, Jean Kim, Dara Lamb, Jacqueline Ludorf, Valerie Mason, Marilyn

Mehr, Sonia Ossorio, Liz Patrick, Barbara Parker, Lynn Shinozaki, Joyce Short, Louella Streit,  
Betty Walker, Elaine Walsh

**2018**

Erlinda S. Brent, Reverend Beverly Dempsey, Joan Falcetta, Lisa Fernandez, Nikki Leopold,  
Rachel Levy, Marie Luarca-Reyes, Truly L. Mason, Madelaine D. Piel, Jennifer Ratner, Naomi  
Semeniuk, Mallory Spain, Carol Tweedy, Inspector Kathleen Walsh, Sharon Williams

**2019**

J. Khadijah Abdurahman, Alexandria Abenshon, Ruth Berghammer, Lori Bores, Jennilie Brewster,  
Alida Camp, Rossana Ceruzzi, Christine Crowther, Julia Ferguson, Faith S. Fraser, Shakima Grant,  
Ruth A. Gutman, Officer Lori Murray, Officer Ashley Pappas, Jovemay Santos, Officer Lorraine  
Wade, Arlene Williams

**2020**

Julia Fan, Janette Gautier, Ruth Halberg, Andrea Jackson, Dr. Mini Kamboj, Zena Kaufman,  
Louise Merriman, RD, Ann Meschery, Lisa Spedalle, Bobbie Slonevsky, Lynda Smith

**2021**

Saundra Coleman, Gayle Baron, Betsy Feist, Deputy Inspector Melissa Eger, Aiesha Eleusizov,  
Dr. Katherine Teets Grimm, Wendy Machaver, Dorian Mecir, Josephine Napolitano, Margaret  
Price, Gabirelle Ross, Serena Sabet, Jeanne Straus, Shari Weiner, Julia Wischnevsky, Dr. Shirley  
Zussman

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