



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Young Congratulates Women of Distinction Winners in Albany

CATHARINE YOUNG June 14, 2005

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State Senator Catharine "Cathy" Young (R,I,C - Olean) on Tuesday honored two women from the 57th Senate District during the annual "Women of Distinction" Award. Marianne Laine and Roberta Keller were named as this year's recipients of the New York State Senate's prestigious award.

"I am very pleased to have these two distinguished women from our community recognized for their achievements," Senator Young said. "I congratulate them for truly making a difference."

Marianne Laine of Olean, and Roberta Keller of Silver Creek, joined with nearly 60 honorees from across the state and were recognized at a special ceremony in Albany. Mrs. Keller, unable to attend the ceremony, will be highlighted at a special event in Jamestown later this summer.

Marianne Laine has been a tireless community advocate within her native City of Olean, as

well as the entire 57th Senate District. After teaching secondary English for nine years in West Irondequoit, she returned to Olean to begin a long and distinguished career of volunteering with various organizations. A graduate of St. Bonaventure University, Mrs. Laine recently received St. Bonaventure's Gaudete Medal. Mrs. Laine has served on the advisory board for WBFO, the area's National Public Radio affiliate, served as an officer and board member of the Olean Camp Fire Council, and the Friends of Good Music. In 2001, Mrs. Laine and her sister oversaw the renovation of the former Archbishop Walsh convent into Claire's House, an artists' residency center for St. Bonaventure University. Mrs. Laine has volunteered at the Olean Public Library, Olean General Hospital and was a member of the steering committee for The Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts at St. Bonaventure. Mrs. Laine and her husband have co-chaired the Olean Area Capital Campaign and served on the center's advisory board as well as the St. Bonaventure National Alumni Board. Over the years, Mrs. Laine has always been willing to donate time and financial resources to schools and charitable organizations throughout the 57th Senate District. She resides in Olean with her husband, Erick, and is an owner and partner of two restaurants in Cuba.

Roberta Keller, the 1999 "Most Visionary Director" award recipient by the New York State Child Care Coordinating Council, is the Executive Director of Chautauqua Opportunities Inc. She frequently partners with many service providers in Chautauqua County and works with a number of coalitions designed to help people realize their potential.

Mrs. Keller was born in the Bronx and grew up on Long Island. She migrated to Chautauqua County to attend SUNY Fredonia, where she graduated with a BA in Sociology and Psychology. Since graduation, Roberta has taught, worked as a business liaison with the Chautauqua Child Care Council and served as their director, and has also been the director of the Early Childhood Services with Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. As their Executive Director, she has implemented a central intake system which enables all customers to be

screened and assessed for risk factors. Customers are then aligned with all potential services that may assist them toward self-sufficiency. In her current position, Mrs. Keller fosters economic development opportunities for low-income individuals through extensive lending programs and a small business incubator program. She has fostered an environment that encourages strong management systems with an eye toward better, more effective service delivery that will assist more residents toward a higher quality of life.

Mrs. Keller has also been a Rotarian and a Kiwanian, and has served on a local hospital board of directors, the NYS Child Care Coordinating Council Board of Directors, and the Jamestown YWCA Board of Directors. She is a wife and a mother of two.

The Women of Distinction program was created in 1998 as part of our state celebration of Women's History Month to honor exemplary women from across New York State whose singular professional or personal achievements, commitment to excellence and accomplishments merit special recognition. Honorees are selected from nominations submitted from across the state.