



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Stephen M. Saland

Senator Steve Saland Names Vicki Simons as New York State Senate Woman of Distinction

STEPHEN M. SALAND May 17, 2011

Former Editor and Co-Owner of the Independent Newspaper to be honored at Empire State Plaza ceremony in Albany

Senator Steve Saland (R,I,C, Poughkeepsie) today announced that Vicki Simons is being posthumously honored as a 2011 New York State Woman of Distinction.

The Senate's "Women of Distinction" program was created in 1998 as part of the Senate's celebration of Women's History Month to honor New York women who exemplify personal excellence, or whose professional achievements or acts of courage, selflessness, integrity or perseverance serve as an example to all New Yorkers.

Vicki Simons was a founding member and first executive director of Columbia County Bounty, which linked local chefs and caterers with local farmers and food suppliers in events that raised the public profile of local food resources. She spearheaded expansion of the Bounty model to Dutchess, Orange and Ulster counties, which now all operate under the Hudson Valley Bounty banner.

Vicki came to her Bounty involvement after 15 years as editor and co-owner with her husband Tony Jones of the twice-weekly Independent Newspaper covering Columbia County and the southern tier of Rensselaer County. During her tenure, the newspaper was known for its impressive growth and success, careful local coverage, and fostering many community-building initiatives. Vicki served as president of the statewide New York Press Association and was a member of its board for several years. The National Newspaper Association recognized her with its Emma McKinney Award for outstanding leadership and service in the field of community journalism.

In 1996 she was the first woman elected to the Board of The Columbia County Agricultural Society, the organization that puts on the annual Columbia County Fair, where she served as vice president until shortly before her death in 2010.

Vicki moved from New York City to Columbia County in 1977, where she and her husband presided over a family that grew to five children and four grandchildren. A fund established in her memory presents an annual Victoria A. Simons Locavore Award to the individual, farm or business advancing local food initiatives within a 50-mile radius of the Village of Chatham.

“When asked to nominate a Woman of Distinction from my district, Vicki Simons immediately came to my mind,” said Senator Saland. “I have had the good fortune to have known Vicki Simons for many years. She gave selflessly to her community time and time again. She was a remarkable woman and I am pleased to have this occasion to recognize what she has done to improve the quality of life in Columbia County.”

The 2011 Women of Distinction will be honored in ceremonies at the Empire State Plaza in Albany on May 24th.