



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

Elaine E. Stillwell

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*Women of*  
**DISTINCTION**  
HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

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**Award:** HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

**Year:** 2013

After teaching for 35 years, Rockville Centre resident Elaine Edden Stillwell, has been enlightening a new audience – the bereaved.

Following the deaths of her two oldest children, Denis and Peggy, Ms. Stillwell founded a chapter of The Compassionate Friends. For over 26 years she has inspired, encouraged, and given bereaved parents the gift of friendship in the memory of their own children.

Ms. Stillwell is a Charter Member of Bereaved Parents/USA, has served as Workshop and Keynote Chairman for their 2009 BP/USA Gathering, has been the Keynote speaker at J.I.M.'s Picnic, the Samaritan Ministry, as well as Evanston Hospital. She helped establish the TCF of Center Moriches, Brookhaven, Manhasset, Flushing, and two local suicide support groups: A Place for Healing and A Place for Hope, Massapequa. She also launched and co-facilitated Guardian Angel Perinatal Support, Farmingdale and Catholic Bereaved Parents, Wantagh. In 1998, she introduced the chapter's Adult Sibling group.

Ms. Stillwell was the Bereavement Coordinator from 1998-2010 for the Diocese of Rockville Centre, serving 134 parishes. With her lively sense of humor and intense passion, she put bereavement in the spotlight. For people who thought they would never live through their loss, Ms. Stillwell gave them back their lives.

After September 11, 2001, Ms. Stillwell aided 500 families who lost someone by distributing \$100,000 worth of supplies. In addition, she also sent bereavement materials to the families who lost loved ones in the Virginia Tech and Newtown tragedies. She frequently sends bereavement materials to the families of servicemen and women killed in the line of duty.

Ms. Stillwell calls passionately educating the bereaved, “Sharing Peggy and Denis with the world.” Even though her children died in 1986, she feels they are making a difference in the world and that makes her heart sing. She is true to the mantra, “If their song is to continue, then we must do the singing.”

Ms. Stillwell is the author of *The Death of a Child: Reflections for Grieving Parents*, *Sweet Memories*, and *A Forever Angel*.