



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Westfield's Helen Baran Named 'Woman of Distinction'

CATHARINE YOUNG September 1, 2011



WESTFIELD – Westfield's Helen Baran, co-owner of Baran Vineyards, President of the Concord Grape Belt Heritage Association, and successful area realtor, was named a 2011 Woman of Distinction Thursday, an honor bestowed by the New York State Senate.

Helen was nominated for the honor by Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – Olean) who hosted a special ceremony attended by family and friends on Thursday at Noble Winery in Westfield.

“People like Helen Baran make our communities a better place and help others become successful in their lives. She enthusiastically supports her community, and is an effective ambassador for many worthy causes. Her hard work and determination has earned her this recognition and I can’t think of anyone more deserving,” said Senator Young.

“I am honored and humbled to be nominated as a Woman of Distinction and thank Senator Young for everything that she does for our region. We live in such a wonderful region of the state and I am thankful and blessed to be associated with so many people who, through their time and efforts, have made Chautauqua County a wonderful place to live, work and raise and family. Giving back is a rewarding experience and something I look forward to continue doing every day,” said Helen Baran.

Helen and her husband, Steve, own and operate Baran Vineyards, a 180 acre farm in Westfield.

She was named President of the Concord Grape Belt Heritage Association in 2006, and she continues to help transform the Concord Grape Heritage Area into a world renowned agri-tourism destination.

Helen’s efforts have helped to bring the Grape Discovery Center to the region, which when fully completed next Spring, will serve as a visitor center and educational resource. The goal is to attract thousands of visitors per year and direct them to the communities, vineyards, wineries, museums, landscapes, and other attractions in the region.

Helen also is a dedicated rural health advocate. As one of the initial members of the NYS Rural Health Council, she helped develop policy that is still used today to promote the health and well being of rural people and their communities.

She serves as Board of Trustees Chair at Westfield Memorial Hospital, Board of Trustees member for Saint Vincent Health System, Board of Directors member and Past Chair of the Chautauqua County Health Network, and Board of Directors member for the NYS Area Health Education Center.

She has volunteered on the Chautauqua County Charter Revision Committee, the Chautauqua County Planning Board, and was a leader of the 4-H Equestrian Club. She is Chair of Westfield's Board of Assessment Review, Chair of the Rotary Vocational Service Rotary Club and is a member and past President of the Westfield Mayville Rotary Club.

Helen also is a realtor who prides herself on working with people who grasp the beauty of the many communities that make up Western New York.

She has won numerous awards, including the Farm Journal Salutes Women in Agriculture Award, Westfield Chamber of Commerce's Citizen of the Year Award, Citation of Excellence award from Rotary District 7090, and the "Four Avenues of Service" Award from Rotary International. She and Steve also received the NY Farms! "I Love My NYS Farmer" Award in 2007.

Created in 1998, the Senate's "Women of Distinction" recognition seeks 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.