



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

New York State Senate Inducts St. Marianne Cope into Historic Women of Distinction Exhibit

DAVID J. VALESKY March 18, 2014

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ALBANY--To celebrate Women's History Month, the New York State Senate is hosting an exhibit honoring historic New York women whose achievements in arts, science, government, military, labor, education, and social reform have earned them recognition as Women of Distinction.

This exhibit inducts American Saint and health care pioneer St. Marianne Cope (1838-1918), of Syracuse and Utica. In 1869, she became one of the founders of St. Joseph's Hospital in Syracuse. She was a pioneering advocate for patients' rights, sanitation, and hygiene, and believed that no distinction should be made for patients due to their religious beliefs, nationality, or color.

In 1883, King Kalakaua of Hawaii asked Mother Marianne, as she was known then, for help taking care of leprosy sufferers. Mother Marianne and six other Sisters of St. Francis travelled to Honolulu and set up Malulani Hospital, the first of its kind on Maui. She spent many years caring for lepers, but was never affected, saying "I am not afraid of any disease." On December 19, 2011, Pope Benedict signed and approved the promulgation of the decree for her sainthood, and she was canonized on October 21, 2012.

“Women’s History Month is a time to recognize and celebrate the contributions of our state’s accomplished women. As founder of St. Joseph’s Hospital, St. Marianne Cope forever changed the delivery of health care services in our community,” Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) said.

“We wholeheartedly agree that St. Marianne Cope was ahead of her time,” said Kathryn H. Ruscitto, president and chief executive officer of St. Joseph’s Hospital Health Center. “From hand-washing to medical education to patient’s rights, she set new standards in patient care that we continue to live today.”

The Women of Distinction exhibit features historic New York women, from suffragists to geneticists, labor organizers to entertainers, whose contributions are still felt today and who stand as inspirations to the next generation of inventors, explorers, and achievers. Some of the women in the display include Susan B. Anthony, Lucille Ball, “Grandma Moses” Robertson, Harriet Tubman, Emma Willard, among others, all with strong links to New York State. The exhibit will be on display in Albany from March 10-28 at the Legislative Office Building.

Along with St. Marianne Cope, two other new honorees are being inducted: photographer Alice Austen (1866-1952) of Staten Island and activist and Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm (1924-2005) of Brooklyn.

The Women of Distinction program was created by the Senate in 1998 to recognize the historic contributions of New Yorkers in celebration of National Women’s History Month, observed each March.