



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## **O'Mara seeking nominations for Senate's 18th Annual 'Women of Distinction' tribute ~ March is Women's History Month**

Thomas F. O'Mara

March 2, 2015

A banner for the "Women of Distinction 2015" event. The banner has a maroon background. At the top, the text "Women of Distinction" is written in a white, elegant script font, with "2015" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. Below the text is a horizontal strip of four images: a woman in a green top, a woman in a white apron holding a red "OPEN" sign in front of a garden, a woman in a white lab coat holding a young girl, and a woman in a white lab coat holding a young girl. On the left side of the banner, there is a circular graphic of the Statue of Liberty. At the bottom of the banner, the text "Now accepting nominees!" is written in a white, elegant script font, flanked by two horizontal lines.

**Elmira, N.Y., March 2**—March is Women's History Month and State Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats) announced today that he is seeking nominations for the Senate's 18th annual "Women of Distinction" program to honor local women making outstanding contributions to area communities.

The Senate's "Women of Distinction" program begins in March to coincide with a variety of Women's History Month celebrations in New York State. As part of their annual March recognition of Women's History Month, O'Mara and his Senate colleagues also display an exhibit in the Legislative Office Building in Albany honoring "Women of Distinction" throughout New York State's history in the arts, sciences, government, military, labor, education, and social reform.

O'Mara said that the Senate's historical exhibit, currently on display in the Legislative Office Building, features a tribute to the career and life of astronaut and Elmira native Eileen M. Collins. The Senate first included Collins in its historical exhibit in 2007. The historical exhibit also includes Susan E. Hall, who was raised in Tompkins County and is recognized as one of the first women in New York State to be accepted as a nurse in the Civil War. O'Mara sponsored Hall's induction in 2011.

The full historical exhibit can be viewed online [HERE](#).

O'Mara and his Senate colleagues select one new "Woman of Distinction" honoree from their respective legislative districts annually. This year's honorees will be invited to an awards ceremony and reception in Albany in early May.

"The 'Woman of Distinction' tribute is a meaningful recognition. I look forward to this annual opportunity to recognize an outstanding area citizen," said O'Mara, whose 58th Senate District encompasses all of Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben and Yates counties, and part of Tompkins County (the city and town of Ithaca, and the towns of Enfield, Newfield and Ulysses). "We all know someone who makes an enormous difference to the community at large. Whether she is a service provider, a teacher going above and beyond the call of duty, a businesswoman, or simply a community resident known for her good deeds, I'd like to see her recognized."

In 2011, his first year in the Senate, O'Mara honored Carol Berry of Hornell, a long-time regional library professional and director of the Dormann Library in Bath.

Virginia "Ginny" Houseknecht of Watkins Glen, a local Cornell Cooperative Extension educator and leader, and founder of the Southern Tier Parkinson's Disease Support Group, was the area "Woman of Distinction" in 2012. Two years ago O'Mara paid tribute to Beverly "Bev" Stamp, co-owner and operator of Lakewood Vineyards in Schuyler County, and a beloved ambassador of New York State's nationally and internationally renowned wine and grape industry. Last year, O'Mara recognized Lauren R. Snyder of Penn Yan, a well-known public health professional in Yates County who served as the county's Public Health Director for 28 years before retiring.

in 2009.

Nominations for this year's award must be received no later than Monday, March 30, 2015.

They can be submitted online [HERE](#).

A downloadable nomination form is attached below.

Forms can also be obtained by emailing a request to [omara@nysenate.com](mailto:omara@nysenate.com).