



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Stephen M. Saland

Vicki Simons

STEPHEN M. SALAND May 11, 2011



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**Award:** HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

**Year:** 2011

The Local Food Movement in the Hudson Valley lost a strong spokesperson and organizer when Victoria A. Simons died in March 2010.

Throughout her life, Ms. Simons was an exemplary community leader and activist. As founding member and first Executive Director of Columbia County Bounty, she spearheaded expansion of the Bounty model to Dutchess, Orange and Ulster counties, which now all operate under the Hudson Valley Bounty banner. She worked tirelessly to raise the public profile of local food resources, resulting in heightened awareness and increased community-based action.

Ms. Simons started her Bounty involvement after 15 years as editor and co-owner 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, with close and careful local coverage and breaking significant stories ahead of the competition.

Ms. Simons served as President of the Statewide New York Press Association and was a board member 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, where she served as Vice President until shortly before her death.

Her legacy lives on with the Victoria A. Simons Locavore Award, a prize given to the individual, farm or business advancing local food initiatives within a 50-mile radius of the Village of Chatham.