



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Simcha Felder

Betty Pollack

SIMCHA FELDER May 13, 2015



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

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**Award:** HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

**Year:** 2015

Betty Pollack was born in Louisville, Kentucky, and met her husband at Fort Knox while he was serving in the Army. After his military return from Korea, the couple moved to New York to live and raise their family.

Ms. Pollack was always a doting parent who was very involved in her children's schools, helping to organize fundraising activities, assisting new parents and presiding over many school events.

In 1976, things changed for Ms. Pollack and her family. When Ms. Pollack's tenth child, Eshka, was born, they were told that she might not survive, and if she did, she might live the rest of her life in a vegetative state. Fortunately, the experts were wrong, as Eshka today is a beautiful, verbal, ambulatory, funny young woman. Ms. Pollack remembers how lost she felt while Eshka was growing up and how they had nowhere to turn for help – she made it her mission to change that for families going through the same hardships.

In 1980, Ms. Pollack, together with other families, banded together to form an organization which they called Otsar – meaning “Treasures”. Due to her initiative and leadership, Ms. Pollack was selected to serve as Executive Director.

Otsar's original intent was to provide information and referrals, but Ms. Pollack soon realized that families needed more. In response, Otsar started its Young Adult Program, offering recreation, socialization and cultural activities for adults.

Under her leadership, Otsar's programs have grown to include residential services, camping services, day programs, respite, Com Hab programs and more.

Ms. Pollack's determination and vision to make the lives of so many families better make her truly worthy of being honored as a Woman of Distinction.