



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara honors Hornell mother, teacher and lifelong volunteer as a Senate 'Woman of Distinction': Pauline Holbrook represents 58th District in statewide tribute to women (UPDATE: Watch Polly receive a standing ovation at this year's Awards Ceremony)

THOMAS F. O'MARA May 9, 2019

| ISSUE: **2019 WOMEN OF DISTINCTION**



The Senate's annual "Women of Distinction" program, which began in March to coincide with Women's History Month in New York State, allows senators statewide to select one honoree from their respective legislative districts for this distinguished, statewide tribute.

Albany, N.Y., May 7—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) on Tuesday night paid tribute to Pauline “Polly” Holbrook, a longtime stalwart of civic affairs in the city of Hornell and the Canisteo Valley, as his 2019 New York State Senate “Woman of Distinction.”

Holbrook represented O'Mara's 58th District at the **Senate's 21st Annual “Women of Distinction”** awards ceremony in the Legislative Office Building in Albany. She joined more than 60 other honorees representing senatorial districts from throughout New York.

O'Mara said, “Pauline Holbrook exemplifies a commitment to family, community and country that highlights her recognition this year as a ‘Woman of Distinction.’ From childhood, she was instilled with a strong sense of citizenship that she has passed on to her own family and that has guided her, for over six decades, to enjoy a remarkable standing within the Hornell community and across the Canisteo Valley. She has remained devoted to a life's work of raising her family and serving her community as a teacher, and a tireless and giving friend, neighbor and volunteer. It has been a life well lived, and I am truly looking forward to this opportunity to pay her a well-deserved and well-earned tribute of appreciation and gratitude.”

[UPDATE: **Watch Polly receive a well-deserved standing ovation at this year's Awards Ceremony!**]

Mike Palmesano, Vice Chair of the City of Hornell Republican Committee, who nominated Holbrook for this year's award, said, “When I first saw Senator O'Mara's nomination form, I immediately thought of Pauline Holbrook. Her life's story of dedication and community service reads like a history book. As a veteran myself, I am especially proud to have nominated her for her service during World War Two by entertaining our soldiers and promoting government war bonds. She is unparalleled in her service and dedication to our community and surrounding areas. Her long record of volunteering is most noteworthy. I

am proud to have Mrs. Holbrook as an active member of our City of Hornell Republican Committee and as a dear friend.”

A daughter of Irish immigrants born in Schenectady, New York, Holbrook and her older sister were featured Irish Dancers promoting United States government war bonds.

Following her graduation from Syracuse University, she married William J. Holbrook and the couple settled and raised six children in Hornell – where the late Judge Holbrook is remembered as a longtime City Attorney and City Court Judge (as well as a decorated U.S. Navy veteran, and founder and past commander of the local Naval Reserve), and where Polly remains a stalwart of civic affairs.

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O'Mara's **past honorees** have been:

> in 2011, Carol Berry of Hornell, a longstanding regional library professional and director of the Dormann Library in Bath;

> in 2012, Virginia “Ginny” Houseknecht of Watkins Glen, a longtime area Cornell Cooperative Extension educator and leader, and founder of the Southern Tier Parkinson’s Disease Support Group;

> in 2013, Beverly “Bev” Stamp, co-owner and operator of Lakewood Vineyards in Watkins Glen, a long-time and beloved ambassador of New York State’s nationally and internationally renowned wine and grape industry; and

- > in 2014, Lauren R. Snyder, a public health professional from Penn Yan who served as the Yates County Public Health Director for 28 years before retiring in 2009;
- > in 2015, Linda Thomas, owner and operator of the Wellsburg Diner and recipient of a prestigious “Small Business Excellence Award” from the U.S. Small Business Administration;
- > in 2016, Dawn R. Smith, Transition and Care Management (TCM) Program Manager at the Bath VA Medical Center and a well-known local veterans advocate;
- > in 2017, Carmella Hoffmann, Owner and Operator of Sunset View Creamery in Odessa (Schuyler County); and
- > last year, Kathryn J. Boor, a native of Chemung County and the Ronald P. Lynch Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) at Cornell University.

Read more on Holbrook’s 2019 “Woman of Distinction” award [HERE](#).