



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elijah Reichlin-Melnick

Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick honors six local residents with “Heritage & History” awards

ELIJAH REICHLIN-MELNICK August 3, 2021



ORANGEBURG, NY - Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick presented New York State Senate Awards to men and women from Rockland and Westchester on Saturday at his first-ever “Heritage & History” awards ceremony held outside the Orangetown Historical Museum’s DePew House in Orangeburg. Honorees were recognized for their dedication and achievement preserving the cultural heritage and history of the people of Rockland and Westchester Counties.

Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick said, “Our local history and heritage shape who we are, and help us to understand our future by knowing our past. These honorees have worked hard, some for decades, to preserve our history and ensure that this precious knowledge of the past is preserved and shared with current and future generations. We owe them all a major debt for their important work.”

The event was attended by more than 50 people from across the lower Hudson Valley to honor the following awardees, who made these statements in accepting their rewards:

Mary Cardenas, Orangetown Town Historian was recognized for her 28 years of service as the Orangetown Historian and museum director, and her success in saving numerous historic sandstone homes from as early as the 1700’s. “It’s not easy to save old houses - and it also is very expensive”, Ms. Cardenas said, “But it saves a part of that community’s history, and in turning these houses into a museum, it gives back to that community.”

Joyce Sharrock Cole, Ossining Village Historian was recognized for her work in creating the Ossining COVID project, which documents the lived experience of the COVID pandemic, as well as curating the the Ossining Black History and Culture Exhibit at Bethany Arts Community: 6 rooms filled with the never before written or published history of the Ossining Black community from 1790 to today. Ms. Sharrock Cole said “It’s so important to know where we came from, to know where we’re at, to know where we’re going. To see yourself in history makes you really appreciate where you are, and where you have been”

Ed England, President of Friends of Mount Moor Cemetery was recognized for his work leading the organization in their mission to ensure the hallowed grounds of the historic Black cemetery in the shadow of the Palisades mall are properly maintained and restored. Under Mr. England’s leadership, significant restoration of the cemetery has taken place, including

ten new headstones as well as the repair and refurbishment of markers previously forgotten. Mr. England said "It is imperative that we remember who we are and where we came from, and who the people are that were here before us. That is what we have done in maintaining the Mount Moor Cemetery, thanks to our partnership with various community and veterans organizations."

Alan Moskin, Holocaust Liberator and WWII Veteran was recognized as a dedicated speaker about his experience as a member of the greatest generation, one who served actively in World War II to defeat Nazism and liberate those held in concentration camps. He served in combat through France, Germany and Austria, where he participated in the liberation of the Gunskirchen Concentration Camp. Mr. Moskin said "I want to thank Senator Reichlin-Melnick for this award, and I accept it on behalf of all the veterans in Rockland County - I'm just one of many. We have a very active veterans community here in Rockland and I just take this as their representative. I was one of the lucky ones that got back from World War II. I didn't speak for 50 years after the war because of PTSD... but now I want the young people to know what happened."

Chief Dwaine Perry, Chief of the Ramapough Lenape Nation was honored for his leadership fighting for human rights and specifically the rights of indigenous people. Chief Perry has worked to establish the Split Rock SweetWater Prayer Camp in Northern New Jersey, The First Embassy in Rockland representing the Sovereign Indigenous Nations of the Western Hemisphere, and The Ramapough Munsee Museum - giving voice through Art and Antiquities to those who have remained without a voice. "It is no small thing to persevere in the vortex of muzzled reality," Chief Perry said. "Senator Reichlin-Melnick has raised the banner of integrity for all to see, by giving voice to those who are rarely heard outside of their own struggle. The Senator has shown through this honoring, a powerful alliance to truth."

Win Perry, John Green Preservation Coalition was honored for his 55-year career in architecture designing and preserving many local community buildings, his nearly 50 years of service as the Upper Nyack Village Historian, and in his role as President of the Historical Society of the Nyacks and of the John Green Preservation Coalition, where he is working to restore the last surviving Dutch style stone house in Nyack. Mr. Perry said "It has been great having Senator Reichlin-Melnick's support - when he was on the village board in Nyack, he voted to make the John Green House a local historic landmark, giving it an additional layer of supervision and protection. It is an exciting campaign of restoring local history, and it is great to be with a group of people who share that enthusiasm."