



PEOPLE

Givers and Good Causes Honored at Professional Women of Westchester's SHERO Award Gala

WHITE PLAINS, NY—Professional Women of Westchester (PWW), a networking group for enterprising women, was filled with the holiday spirit Monday evening, December 5th, when the group held its second annual Holiday Benefit for Hope's Door and SHERO Award Celebration at Benjamin's Steakhouse in White Plains.

More than 80 women attended the affair, which raised thousands of dollars in gifts, toys, clothing, gift cards and checks for Hope's Door. Andrea Naso Nord, Director of Development and Community Relations for Hope's Door and board members, Jean Marie Connolly and Elizabeth Cronin were on hand to accept the donations.

"The staff and board at Hope's Door are very grateful to the members of Professional Women of Westchester for their generosity and thoughtfulness," said Andrea Naso Nord. "Thank you once again for hosting a GREAT event benefitting Hope's Door."

"The holidays are a time of reflection, family and giving thanks," says PWW president, Jamie Imperati. "So often we get wrapped up in the hustle and bustle, that we forget about the thousands of families right on our doorstep who don't have a safe home to celebrate Christmas,



PWW president, Jamie Imperati and co-founding board members, Rose Colonna, Tasteful Treats & Treasures and Lisa Kaslyn, Prosper Communications, presented Maria Freburg with a plaque and necklace emblazoned with the PWW logo as a memento of the award and recognition of her honorable achievements in the community

Hanukkah or a simple dinner. We're delighted and honored to help our friends at Hope's Door, because they never forget about any family in crisis."

And the 2011 SHERO Award Goes to... Maria Freburg

Webster Bank's Market Manager for Westchester County, Maria Freburg, was

nominated as this year's SHERO Award winner. Based on her heroic and tireless support of Westchester businesswomen; as well as a supporter of children and the disadvantaged in the Westchester community, including work with the White Plains Youth Bureau, Westchester Jewish Community Services, The Abbott House, Girls Inc., and many more, Maria was selected as this year's award recipient.

About Hope's Door: Hope's Door, formerly The Northern Westchester Shelter, is a private non-profit organization, which was founded in 1980 to provide a safe haven and caring services to survivors of domestic violence. While our name has changed, our mission remains the same: Hope's Door seeks to end domestic violence and to empower victims to achieve safety, independence and healing from the trauma of abuse. Visit: northernwestchestershelter.org for more information.

About "Professional Women..." The "Professional Women of..." brand represents an organization, which is comprised of three chapters: Professional Women of Putnam, Professional Women of Connecticut and Professional Women of Westchester. Our programs and initiatives are led by our members' needs – professional, emotional and educational.

Hart Island: Resurrecting Lost Ones Through Art



By **ABBY LUBY**

Artists create many ways for us to remember the dead. They paint and sketch their faces on canvas and paper, sculpt their likeness in bronze or clay, and, if the deceased are famous, erect larger-than-life monuments.

But what about the dead who are poor, friendless, indigent, and disappear without a trace? And who are buried in urban graves without markers or tombstones? If our loved ones are among these lost souls, how do we track them down?

Peekskill-based artist Melinda Hunt has pursued the stories and lives of the deceased who were whisked away and buried in Potter's Field on Hart Island off the Bronx coast on Long Island Sound. For 20 years, Hunt, a writer, filmmaker and who holds a Yale degree in sculpture, has straddled the professions of artist and investigative reporter by creating numerous projects that shed light on the largest urban cemetery in the world. Her current show, "Shades of New York: An Exhibition of The Hart Island Project," is now at Westchester Community College's Center for Digital Arts in Peekskill and runs to January 14, 2012.



Sonia Salim, buried 2002-2011 Melinda Hunt, *The Hart Island Project*

The works in this show are both poignant and informative. Large, black and white photographs of graveyard scenes are a desolate backdrop to Hunt's hand lined, ink overlay of a single, deceased figure, looming large, transparent, floating, spiritually inhabiting the raw terrain – the cemetery that ultimately claimed their bodies.

The 13 works potentially carry the memory of those who Hunt was able to name and ultimately connect with relatives. Buried in plot 137 in 1982 is Richard Ferrick, age 36; Hunt shows us a suited, faceless man who leans effortlessly against a road on cemetery grounds that is

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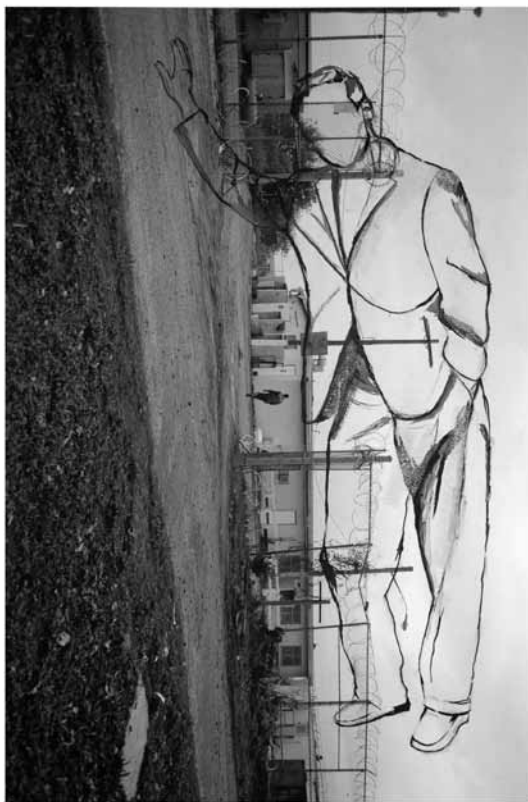
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up-ended, running lengthwise. Another picture is an aerial view of a partially filled adult mass grave with two small buildings; it could be an ordinary construction site with a shoreline edge except for the curious, large rectangular gauge in the earth.

The obscure history of Hart Island is intricately woven into Hunt's work. New York City opened the 101-acre cemetery in 1869 and some 850,000 have been buried there since the Civil War. The island has been a Civil War prisoner of war camp, a tuberculosis hospital and a boarding school. Hunt first became interested in Hart Island when she first saw century old photographs taken by Jacob Riis, a well-known journalist, who captured assembly-line, underground grid-like burials at Hart Island in 1888. Hunt's curiosity peaked in 1991, she was especially curious about the deceased who were poor, victims of AIDS or drug addicts. She found herself knocking at the door of New York City's Department of Correction, the city agency that has overseen the burials for at least 100 years and where ones gets permission to visit the island. When Hunt and fellow photographer Joel Sternfeld got to the island they discovered prison workers stacking simple pine coffins in deep trenches.

That city prisoners today still bury the dead in potter's field is a throw-back of the old penal code, which required penitentiary workers to bury the dead for redemption. Today, the DOC budget for yearly burials on Hart Island is approximately \$500,000 which pays for transporting inmates by ferry, the only way to get to Hart Island, keeping up the grounds, a supervisor and heavy equipment operator. In the show, a heart rendering and chilling testimonial by an inmate on a burial crew in 1992 says "But one thing I've learned from Hart Island is that I don't want to die nobody with nothing or no-one to



Richard Ferrick, buried 1982 -2011 Melinda Hunt, The Hart Island Project

care about me. Hart Island is the best rehabilitation I've ever had."

The practice of naming the dead on Hart Island has always been elusive. If the names of the dead were known, they were written on the coffins and recorded by hand in ledgers, which Hunt managed to retrieve by filing a Freedom of Information request. The haphazard system of recording the deceased (many older burial records were destroyed in a 1977 fire) reflects the blatant disrespect for the dead. Last year, some

1,146 people - including 476 infants - were buried by city inmates on Hart Island. Coffins are placed in mass graves holding 150 adults; 1,000 tiny infant coffins fill another mass grave.

Much about Hart Island made indelible impressions on Hunt, particularly that the graves at Potter's Field are off limits - an affront to Hunt who set off to expose many of the unfair cemetery practices. In 1998 Hunt and Sternfeld published a book of photographs of Hart Island and in 2006 she produced the film *Hart Island: An American Cemetery*, which drew international attention. She also created an on-line data registry from the records she retrieved and that lists some 58,855 names in the database of those buried on Hart Island between 1980 and 2010. Hunt's work put her on the map as the go-to person for people seeking loved ones. For many, the list has ended years of searching for lost infants, thousands of military veterans, siblings and friends by those from other states and in foreign countries.

Hunt was able to get photographs from friends and family of the deceased, which gave her a visible and spiritual sense to create the work in this show. One piece shows Ann Rubin, who at 34, committed suicide in Brooklyn in 1988. Hunt faces her squarely at us, weightless over a sideways terrain gutted with tractor marks. Rubin was disinterred in 2008 and reburied on Staten Island.

Hunt is not giving up her pursuit to make Potter's Field more accessible to the public. She has appealed to the New York City Council for better documentation of those being buried on Hart Island and to make it easier for families wishing to visit the gravesites; to date visits are limited only for family members with proof of



Ann Rubin buried 1988 -2011 Melinda Hunt, The Hart Island Project

the relationship.

"Shades of New York: An Exhibition of The Hart Island Project," is a must-see show not only for Hunt's touching artistic perspective on remembering the nameless dead, but to learn about this piece of living history that has for years, been kept a secret.

"Shades of New York: An Exhibition of The Hart Island Project" Westchester Community College's Center for Digital Arts in Peekskill, 27 north Division Street, Peekskill, New York 914-606-7304. Gallery Hours: Monday to Thursday 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Abby Luby is a Westchester based, freelance journalist who writes local news, about environmental issues, art, entertainment and food. Her debut novel, "Nuclear Romance" was published last week. Visit the book's website, <http://nuclearromance.wordpress.com/>

YES Network Announcer Ken Singleton to Receive Denzel Lifetime Achievement Award

YES Network Yankees announcer and three-time Major League Baseball All-Star Ken Singleton will be honored with the "Denzel Lifetime Achievement Award in Sports" at the Boys & Girls Club of Mount Vernon's 100th Anniversary Gala at the Rye Town Hilton (Rye Brook, New York) on Saturday night, March 24, 2012. Award-winning actor Denzel Washington will make the presentation. Washington, the host for the benefit, and Singleton are both Mount Vernon products and distinguished alumni of the Boys & Girls Club.

For information and reservations call 914.668.9580 or log onto www.bgcmtvny.com.

Singleton is in his 10th season as a New York Yankees analyst for the YES Network alongside Michael Kay, and also handles play-by-play



Ken Singleton. Photo courtesy of YES Network

duties for the network.

"We are delighted to honor Ken Singleton at our 100th Anniversary Gala," said Boys & Girls Club President Danny Sawh, and Executive Director Lowes Moore in a joint statement. "His outstanding career on the baseball diamond and in the broadcast booth have distinguished him as a true champion. The Boys & Girls Club of Mt. Vernon has been a bulwark against delinquency and a recreational outlet for youngsters for a century, and we hope today's youngsters will follow in his giant footsteps."

Raised in Mount Vernon, Singleton played both baseball and basketball in high school, and also played baseball in The Bronx Federation League at Macombs Dam Park, across the street from Yankee Stadium. After receiving a

basketball scholarship to Hofstra University and playing baseball as well for one year, Singleton was drafted by the New York Mets in 1967.

In April 1972, he was traded to the Montreal Expos and, in 1974, was traded to the Baltimore Orioles. His .438 on base percentage (in 1977), 118 walks (in 1975) and 35 switch-hit home runs (in 1979) are all still Orioles single season records.

Singleton is one of only six players in Major League Baseball history to hit 35 or more switch-hit homers in a season. During his career, Singleton was named to the American League All-Star Team in 1977, '79 and '81. He was named Most Valuable Oriole in 1975, '77 and '79.

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