

Long Island Volunteer Hall of Fame

Archive Project

Inception to Induction

Nassau County Museum of Art

Year of Founding: 1989

Issue(s) Addressed: Arts, Education, Volunteerism

Induction Category and Year: Cultural Arts, 2002

Founder(s): Catherine Davison

Personal Quote: The nominator for induction, Constance Schwartz, the Director at the Nassau County Museum of Art, wrote of Catherine Davison in 2002, "The docent program was the matrix of the volunteer program begun at the NCMA by Mrs. Davison. The volunteer program now encompasses over 300 volunteers and is growing steadily. It was her initiative and far-sightedness which continues to make our volunteer program such a successful endeavor."

History: Catherine Davison, otherwise known by her nickname "Katusha," has been involved with the Nassau County Museum of Art since its inception in 1989 as a founding board member. She also instituted the Nassau County Museum of Art's volunteer docent program by using her work with the Metropolitan Museum of Art as model. Originally based around twenty docents offering weekly lectures, her creation, as of her induction in 2002, quickly expanded to ninety docents who gave talks to the public five days a week. Alongside these lectures, the docent program has also expanded to include tours for students as well as other organized groups and community outreach for the disabled, seniors, hospitals and libraries. Altogether, her critical role with the volunteer docent program formed the foundation for the Nassau County Museum of Art's other volunteer initiatives.

Catherine has played a central role in the museum field. In addition to her work with the Nassau County Museum of Art, she also served as the founding chairperson for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's volunteer group and served on its major gift committee, the Fund for the Met. She has also been active with the Morgan Library and has directed the Florence Gould Foundation in its promotion of Franco-American art exchanges.

Since her induction, Catherine has served as both Vice President and President on the Nassau County Museum of Art's Board of Trustees. She continues to be active with the museum and lives with her husband Danny on his family's Peacock Point property in Locust Valley.

Agency Mission: The Nassau County Museum of Art preserves, enhances, and interprets its collections for the people of Long Island, the State of New York and beyond. It fosters a deeper understanding for arts among Long Island's residents.

Scope of Activities: Located only twenty miles from New York City and formed from a nineteenth century mansion on Long Island's Gold Coast, the Nassau County Museum of Art offers one of the largest suburban public art collections in the United States. It highlights a wide variety of works from the nineteenth century to the present. In addition to its indoor galleries, the 145-acre campus offers an outdoor sculpture gallery, in conjunction with its many gardens. Each year, it presents four major exhibitions with works selected by its curatorial staff. Alongside its main exhibits, it offers lectures, workshops, discussions, and art classes to heighten understanding and appreciation for the arts. In addition, it continues to emphasize community outreach as well.

Volunteer Involvement: The Nassau County Museum of Art relies largely on its volunteer docent program to both give tours and lead its many programs.

Submitted by: Colin Walfield, Summer 2010

Nassau County Museum of Art's Contact Information:

One Museum Drive, Roslyn Harbor, NY, 11576.

(516)-484-9338

<http://www.nassaumuseum.com/default.php>

Disclaimer: The Long Island Volunteer Hall of Fame has created the Archive Project to record the histories of Long Island not-for-profit organizations. The entries are for informational purposes only with no intention of endorsement of any service or organization. We are not responsible for inaccuracies or omissions. The user assumes all risks related to any misinformation.