

# The White Plains Democratic City Committee

invites you to join us at our

## 2020 Annual Dinner

### Celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Women's Suffrage

**Date:** October 18, 2020

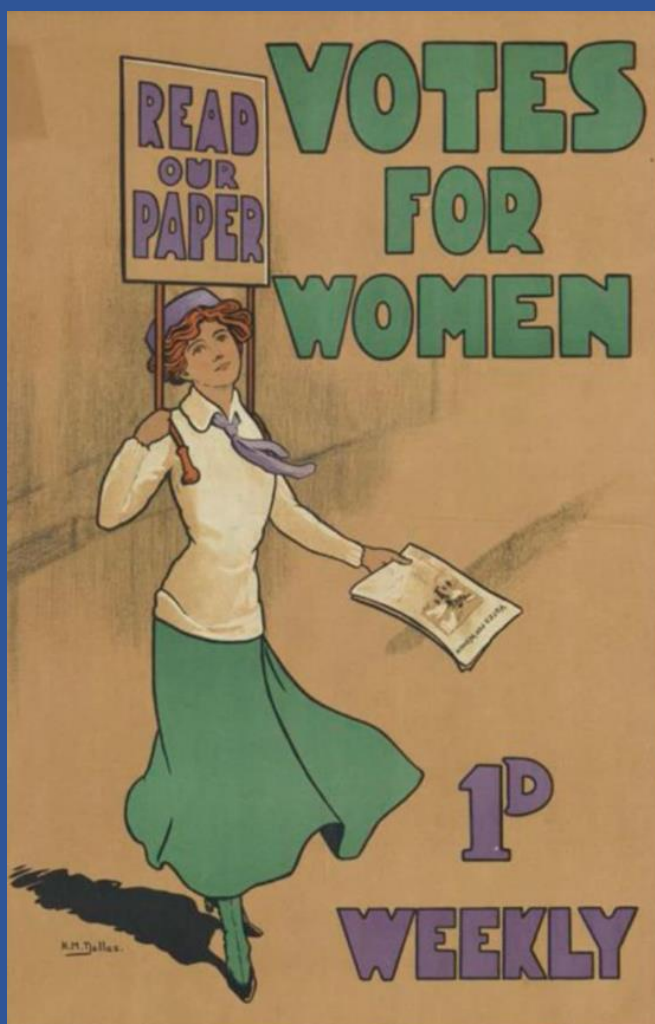
**Time:** 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m

**Location:** via Zoom [link](#).

**RSVP:** Victoria Presser  
[vpreser@aol.com](mailto:vpreser@aol.com)

**Price:** Patron - \$250  
Sponsors - \$200  
Friends - \$140

**ActBlue:** <https://bit.ly/3iTIuLe>



**Special Guest: Hillary Clinton**  
Former Secretary of State

#### Keynote Speakers:

**Hon. Chuck Schumer** –  
US Senate Minority Leader

**Karen Hill** – CEO, Harriet  
Tubman Home; Member of the  
National Women's Suffrage  
Centennial Commission

#### Honorees:

**Cheryl Melton**, District Leader –  
*Marilyn Stagg Award for service  
to the White Plains Democratic  
Party*

**Lorraine Buonocunto**, Founder  
& Director, White Plains  
Ecumenical Food Bank –  
*Ted Benjamin Award for  
Community Service*

#### Honorary Host

Hon. Nita Lowey

#### Patrons

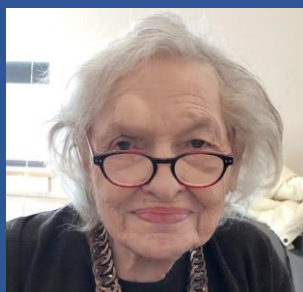
Hon. Bill Alexander • Joy and Paul Bergins • Hon. Ben Boykin • Black Democrats of Westchester • Hon. Justin Brasch • Hon. David Buchwald • Don Buchwald • Kenneth Burr • Thomas DeCaro • Jeremiah Frei-Pearson • Hon. Nadine Hunt-Robinson • Tim James • Hon. John and Susan Kirkpatrick • Hon George Latimer • Kathy Marks • Hon. John Martin • Hon. Shelley Mayer • Hon. Amy Paulin • Hon. Victoria Free Presser • Hon. Jenn Puja • Hon. Tom Roach • Hon. Bill Ryan • Hon. Anthony A. Scarpino, Jr. • William Serratore • Saad Siddiqui • Bonnie H. Silverman • Hon. Beth Smayda • Dr. Gregory Robeson Smith • Hon Andrea Stewart-Cousins • Stephen Walfish • Nicholas Wolff

#### Sponsors

Suzanne Berger • Hon. Harry and Rebecca Bright • Hon. Chris Burdick • Hon. Terry Clements • Lila Kirton • Hon. Joe Montalto • Diane Travers

#### Friends

Evelyn Alicea-Santiago • Victor Avendano • Ellen Berger • Cecilia Bikkal • David A. Brezler • Hon. Andrew K. Brotmann • Jennifer Buchwald • Renee Marks Cohen • Terry Degatano • Paulette Francis • Andy Grossman • Hispanic Democrats of Westchester • Hon. Veronica Hummel • Hon. Dennis Krolian • Ted Kuczinski • Lauren McCallion • Robert S. Ondrovic • Karen Pasquale • Hon. Dennis Power • Charlene Raynor • Alex Roithmayr • Barbara and Paul Schwarz • Scott Stefan • Michael Stolzar • Elaine Summers • Allen Weintraub • Hon. E. Loren Williams



#### **Lorraine Buonocunto**

White Plains resident Lorraine Buonocunto, executive director of the Ecumenical Emergency Food Pantry, has been feeding the hungry for the past 40-plus years.

In 1979, after retiring from her career as an x-ray technician, she became involved with SHORE, which helped the homeless find housing. She saw that their clients needed food as well as housing, so she and her friends loaded a station wagon with food and drove it into downtown White Plains to feed people. That is how the Ecumenical Emergency Food Pantry began.

A year later, the Pantry found a home at St. Matthew's Church, and Lorraine became the executive director, a volunteer position she holds to this day. The Pantry now operates out of the Thomas Slater Center, where it serves more than a thousand people every month. Lorraine not only runs the Pantry, she also works with various government agencies and community groups to raise funds and promote the program and to keep things running smoothly.

Lorraine lives by the belief that, "You have to feed the body but you also need to feed the soul" and she helps people in many other ways: by hiring homeless men to work at the pantry, helping them transition into permanent jobs; connecting others to housing opportunities; and introducing a pastor, rabbi or priest for counseling. In 2012 Lorraine was named the Hunger Hero Volunteer by the Food Bank for Westchester (now Feeding Westchester). Lorraine's heart is huge, and her positive impact is immeasurable. She does whatever it takes to help those who need it.

#### Ted Benjamin Award

A WWII veteran who won a Bronze Star for his heroism in the Battle of the Bulge, Ted spent most of his life in more cerebral activities. He was a publisher by profession and a confirmed Democrat, in the days when registering as a Democrat in Westchester was a courageous step.

Ted brought his skills in writing and public relations to the civic activities near and dear to his heart: the Concerned Citizens for Open Space, which he chaired. Today's and tomorrow's White Plains residents can thank Ted Benjamin's efforts for preserving light, air, and open space for everyone. Ted served as Chair of the Open Space Committee for the 1997 Comprehensive Plan. His wife, Barbara, carried on his tradition for many years. She passed away in 2009.

#### **Cheryl Melton**

Cheryl Melton is a true Profile in Courage – and in determination and leadership. And for well over two decades, she has brought that courage, determination, and leadership to the work of the White Plains Democratic Party.

Working at the Westchester County Medical Center's Ruth Taylor Institute as Charge LPN Nurse, she also became involved in her union, CSEA, and won election in 1992 as president of CSEA's Unit 9200 covering Westchester -- the first African-American and the first woman to hold that office.

Cheryl went on to serve on the CSEA Board of Directors for three terms, as Local 860 president, and as second vice president of the region. She presently serves as president of CSEA Westchester Retiree Local 921. As a union leader, Cheryl fought for the rights of working women, including adequate day care; established the CSEA's Hispanic Advocacy/Advisory Committee; and created a resource library to help union members take civil service exams.

During this time Cheryl also began applying her organizing skills, dedication, and passion for justice to the White Plains Democratic City Committee. Her motivation was simple: "I believe in the values that the Democrats stand for." Starting as a District Leader in the mid 1990's, Cheryl has brought in large numbers of designating petition signatures, opened polls, and handed out campaign literature at the train station. For nearly 20 years she has served on the Nominating Committee, contributing her wisdom and shrewd judgment, as well as her long experience in community service. The WPDCC is indeed fortunate to have Cheryl Melton on the team.

#### Marilyn Stagg Award

Born Marilyn Bagnato in Mount Kisco, Marilyn attended White Plains High School. She married Mickey Stagg, with whom she raised four sons, who all attended White Plains public schools, giving Marilyn the opportunity to serve on and eventually preside over the Post Road School's PTA. Marilyn's long working career was spent as the company comptroller for Barry Howard & Associates, a design firm.

Marilyn revitalized the White Plains party apparatus, bringing to it her impressive energy, talent with people, and organizational skills. Her enthusiasm and leadership infused everyone who encountered her with positive energy. Her handling of petitioning, voter registration, phone-banking and election-day activities remains the model for our campaign activities to this day.