GALA
COMMEMORATIVE JOURNAL
FRIDAY, MAY 18, 2018
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**HONOREES**

THE STATEN ISLAND MUSEUM IS PLEASED TO PRESENT THE 2018 LENG & DAVIS AWARD TO:

RALPH BRANCA ◆ DEBBIE-ANN PAIGE ◆ JEE RA

FOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO STATEN ISLAND AND THE MUSEUM

**EVENT SPONSORS**

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Dear Friends:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am very pleased to welcome you – our loyal friends and supporters – to this year’s Gala. It is an honor to be with you as we celebrate the Museum and its commitment to preserving and interpreting the natural world, history, and culture of Staten Island.

This past September, we welcomed Janice Monger as the institution’s new President & CEO. We are excited by her vision for the Museum and partnering with her as we look to the Museum’s future.

Tonight, we are thrilled to present this year’s Leng & Davis Award to three great friends of the Museum who exemplify its founding principles and contribute to its growth.

Ralph Branca, my predecessor as chair of the Staten Island Museum Board of Trustees and President and CEO of Victory State Bank, who guided the museum through the renovation and opening of the state-of-the-art facility at Snug Harbor.

Debbie-Ann Paige, public historian and educator whose archival research has led to a deeper understanding of the Museum’s collections and provided scholarship for exhibitions, revealing important stories in Staten Island’s African-American history.

Jee Ra, president of the Korean Community Development Center and ambassador connecting the Museum to the Korean community through partnering on an annual Lunar New Year festival, drawing over 300 attendees to experience Korean culture.

We thank you all for being here to celebrate the Museum and the achievements of the honorees.

Enjoy your evening! We look forward to seeing you at the Museum soon.

David L. Businelli, Board Chair
The Staten Island Museum was founded in 1881 as the Natural Science Association of Staten Island when a group of 14 young naturalists had the foresight to pool their collections and research efforts out of a concern that “the rapid growth of the community has already obliterated many of our most interesting natural objects.” Their goal was to keep a record for future generations and to advocate for environmental preservation. In 1905, the Museum added art and local history to its mission. Because of its scope, the Museum has been called a “mini Smithsonian.” The natural science collection traces the Island’s biodiversity from the 1850s to today and includes North America’s largest cicada collection, as well as Native American artifacts dating back to 10,000 BC. The art collection spans all civilizations. Archives and the library contain maps and atlases, wills and deeds, family bibles, military enlistment records, and numerous other documents, papers, and historic records dating back to the mid-17th century.

As the oldest cultural organization on Staten Island, the Museum has been instrumental in the creation of the local park system and of many other cultural organizations. These include the New York Botanical Garden (co-founder Nathaniel Lord Britton became its first director), the S.I. Botanical Garden, the S.I. Zoo, and the S.I. Historical Society. In 1965, Snug Harbor, with its 19th century Greek-Revival buildings, was saved from demolition by the joint effort of the Museum and the newly formed Landmark Commission.

The Staten Island Museum opened its flagship, state-of-the-art facility on the grounds of Snug Harbor in 2015, following a $24 million renovation. The Museum presents its permanent collection and changing exhibitions, currently Infinite Compassion: Avalokiteshvara in Asian Art (presented in collaboration with the Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art; exhibit closing June 10, 2018). The original museum building near the Staten Island Ferry in St. George (1918) houses the natural science collection and is accessible by appointment.

For 137 years, the Museum has remained true to its mission, and shares the founders’ enthusiasm for the Island’s environment, arts, and history, serving over 40,000 people each year.

**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO**

This evening marks my first gala since becoming President & CEO of Staten Island Museum in the fall. I am incredibly honored to lead the borough’s museum! It has been heartening and motivating to experience the outpouring of community support upon my appointment and for this event. Thank you to all who have shared why you care about the museum and what matters to you about our mission and history as we plan for the future. I look forward to hearing more. My deepest thanks to you for being here and contributing to our annual fundraiser to ensure the Museum continues to bring enriching art, history and natural science programming.

Tonight we are proud to recognize three wonderful individuals – Ralph Branca, Debbie-Ann Paige, and Jee Ra – whose contributions represent the kind of service we want to amplify. Together, they demonstrate the depth and breadth of investment in culture and history necessary to sustain and enliven the Staten Island Museum and the local community.

So many exciting programs and exhibitions are on the horizon. We can’t wait to bring them to the community and want you to be involved.

We are collaborating with our fellow organizations onsite to present site-wide programs at Snug Harbor, the next is Big Picnic on June 16. The Museum’s herbarium collection of 25,000 specimens is currently being digitized through a major project of the Morris Arboretum in Pennsylvania that will all be online for the public to view. In July, we will open Impractical Jokers: Homocoming, the first-ever museum exhibition about the four comedians from Staten Island who now have a hit television series on truTV, that will feature costumes, props, videos, and a few surprises. Our popular Summer Nights fun adult programs are back this season, and the Museum will be open late on Thursdays in July and August.

I hope you will enjoy the following selection of images drawn from our collections and programs, chosen to show the scope of our offerings.

Thank you for your part in making Staten Island Museum a vibrant cornerstone in Staten Island’s cultural landscape.

Janice Monger, President & CEO
Due to a keen interest in nature, Charles W. Leng began studying entomology in 1873. He was one of the founders of the Natural Science Association – the forerunner of the Staten Island Museum – and President of the NY Entomological Society. He served as Borough Historian and wrote hundreds of articles about entomology that were published in learned journals. In 1919, Mr. Leng was appointed director of the Staten Island Museum, a position he held until his death in 1941.

William T. Davis’s study of the flora and fauna of Staten Island is legendary. His expertise in cicadas was, and still is, world-renowned. Instrumental in establishing Staten Island’s park system, along with Charles W. Leng, Nathaniel Lord Britton, Arthur Hollick, and eight others, Mr. Davis helped form the Natural Science Association. In 1930, Mr. Davis became president of the Staten Island Museum. A prolific writer, William T. Davis collaborated with Charles W. Leng on the impressive Staten Island and Its People, as well as the still popular Map of Staten Island that features Staten Island Names and Nicknames. Together, Leng and Davis recorded thousands of local headstone inscriptions from Island cemeteries, some of which are no longer visible or standing today.

The William T. Davis Collection of photos, journals, notebooks, correspondence, flora, fauna, and artifacts remains the largest collection ever given to the Museum.

The Leng & Davis Award is annually bestowed upon individuals or entities that have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to fulfilling the Staten Island Museum’s mission through their unwavering participation, financial support, and leadership.

Ralph M. Branca is the President and CEO of both Victory State Bank and its holding company, VSB Bancorp, Inc. Mr. Branca is a founding director and incorporator of Victory State Bank, which formed on Staten Island in November 1997, and VSB Bancorp, Inc., which formed in 2003. Victory State Bank is Staten Island’s only local commercial bank, serving the business and professional communities on Staten Island. Victory State Bank offers construction and commercial lending and deposit products coupled with unparalleled personal service. Mr. Branca was one of the primary architects in creating Victory State Bank, and he has been instrumental in its growth from a one-branch operation with no deposits to a $350 million bank with five branches, all located in Staten Island. Prior to working for Victory State bank, Mr. Branca was recruited to manage the accounting and investment functions of River Bank-America and to assist in its liquidation. Prior to River Bank, Mr. Branca worked at Hamilton Federal Savings in charge of accounting, investments and strategic planning and he was the key man in the conversion of Hamilton into a public company.

Mr. Branca serves as the Chairman of the Staten Island Economic Development Corporation, Vice Chair of the Friends of Seamen’s Society, board member of the Building Industry Association of NYC and Seamen’s Society for Family and Friends. He is the Past Chairman of the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce, Past Chair on the Seamen’s Society for Children and Families, Past Chair of the Staten Island Museum, Past President and Executive Board Member of the Staten Island Boy Scout Council.

Ralph was born in Astoria, Queens. He graduated from Stuyvesant High School, received his Bachelor of Science in Physics from the City College of New York (CCNY) and his Masters of Business Administration in Finance and Investments from Bernard M. Baruch College. He is a member of the Beta Gamma Sigma, an international finance honor society.
Jee Ra was born in South Korea and moved to Argentina with her family when she was twelve years old. After graduating from high school in Buenos Aires, she came to the United States to be a fashion designer. She studied patternmaking at FIT but found that the fashion industry was not for her. Following her marriage, and while raising her children, two daughters and a son, Ms. Ra returned to school and earned her teaching degree from the College of Staten Island. Jee then taught Spanish at Susan E. Wagner High School for fifteen years, retiring in 2016.

As a Korean woman teaching Spanish to American students, Ms. Ra found teaching to be a very rewarding experience, allowing her to communicate with people from all different backgrounds and cultures. For example, the Korean Fan Dance Club, which Ms. Ra formed in 2002, is now comprised of students from all ethnicities performing a traditional Korean dance.

"Being a trilingual person, I feel the responsibility to represent each culture in me in this diverse community where I live," said Jee. "I have especially enjoyed working with the Staten Island Museum. The entire staff has passion and appreciates the importance of learning and sharing the unique and beautiful culture of Korea."

Today, Ms. Ra serves as the principal of the Korean School of Staten Island, is the program director of the Korean Community Development Center, and serves on the advisory board of the Greater Youth Symphony of Staten Island.

Debbie-Ann Paige is a public historian specializing in local African American history, co-president of the newly chartered Richard B. Dickinson Staten Island Chapter of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS) and professional genealogist. She has worked on numerous local history projects including: In Pursuit of Freedom with the Brooklyn Historical Society; From Farm to City with the Staten Island Museum; the designation of the Louis Napoleon House as a site to freedom with the National Park Service Underground Railroad Network on behalf of the Sandy Ground Historical Society; and the recent City Council street renaming of the corner of Fairview Avenue and Knox Place as "Samuel A. Browne Way" in the Castleton Hill section of Staten Island. Debbie-Ann has appeared as a historical interpreter on the Emmy winning show "Secrets of New York," and is working closely with Frederick Douglass Memorial Park to transcribe their historical records. She facilitates public history forums throughout Staten Island focused on the historical perspectives of race relations and lectures as an adjunct at the College of Staten Island.

Additionally, Debbie-Ann is a policy analyst with the Council of State Governments Eastern Regional Conference working with state policymakers on issues relevant to veterans' affairs and staffs the organization's new initiative Council on Communities of Color (CCC). For the past two years, Debbie-Ann has also served as an advisor to The Daniel Society, Center for Law and Justice.

Debbie-Ann holds a BS in Business Studies from Southern New Hampshire University, and both a BA and MA in History from the College of Staten Island. She and her husband of 34 years resettled in Staten Island after Ernest retired from the USN 2004. Their son Eric lives in Brazil and daughter English lives on Staten Island. They recently welcomed two sweet kittens (T’Challa and Shuri) into their home.
UNTITLED

ARTIST: BYRON BROWNE
AMERICAN (B.1907-D. 1961)
DATE: 1952
MEDIUM: GOUACHE ON PAPER
GIFT OF DR. EMANUEL KLEIN
A1958.8.21

IMAGINATION STUDIO: PRINTMAKING
STATEN ISLAND MUSEUM PROGRAM
HALLOWEEN HARBOR
DATE: 2017
Philip O. Gravelle (American, b. 1877-d. 1955)
Gravelle combined the power of a microscope with the accuracy of a camera to expose the microscopic world of elements unseen by the naked eye. His work in early forensics enabled the side-by-side comparison of bullets and their chambers to determine if a bullet was discharged from a particular gun. Industrial manufacturers used his expertise to identify problems with their products or production lines. His passion for exploring nature led him to explore the symmetry and structural design found in microscopic plants known as diatoms.

An Arrangement of Marian Diatoms and Calcareous Plates from the Skin of Holothurians

Artist: Philip O. Gravelle
Date: c. 1950
Medium: Photograph
Gift of F. Gordon Foster

Photograph

Gift of F. Gordon Foster
Watercolor with Multicolored Dots and Letters

Artist: Betty Bressi, American, (b. 1918-d. 2014)

Medium: Watercolor on paper

From the Estate of Betty Bressi

2015.21
FISH
DATE: CA. 1950
MEDIUM: BARK PAINTING
GROOTE EYLANDT, N.T.
TREE BARK, PIGMENT
GIFT OF MR. & MRS. ALAN GERDAU

IMARI RIBBED TEAPOT AND COVER
DATE: CHINA, LATE 18TH CENTURY
MEDIUM: PORCELAIN, IMARI PALETTE
THE EDITH AND ALFRED SUSSKIND COLLECTION | A2014.312

The Dr. Atlas Foundation applauds and congratulates Ralph Branca for his commitment to the care and welfare of Staten Island institutions.
ARCH - HOMAGE VII

ARTIST: Helen Levin, American, (b. 1940)
DATE: 2011
MEDIUM: acrylic on canvas
GIFT OF THE ARTIST
A2011.6.1

THE OWL

ARTIST: Max Ernst, German (b.1891-d.1976)
MEDIUM: Lithograph on Paper
GIFT OF DR. Emanuel Klein
A1958.8.14

MR. Henryk Behnke & Mr. Sterling Gilreath

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE HONOREES
UNTITLED
ARTIST: Jack Demyan
DATE: 1992
MEDIUM: Acrylic on canvas
GIFT OF ANDREW AND ELIZABETH DIBELLO A2006.51

DINA MARIE FILIPPINI

OPENING CEREMONY
SRI LANKAN DANCE ACADEMY
OF NEW YORK

INFINITE COMPASSION
AVAKORITISHAVARA IN ASIAN ART
ARTIST: WILLIE CHU
DATE: 2016
MEDIUM: PHOTOGRAPH

GMA ELECTRICAL CORP.
A Defile

Artist: Donald Judd
American (b. 1928-d.1994)
Date: 1957
Medium: Acrylic on Canvas
Anonymous Gift

Carol McCarthy
ALGOGY
ALGAE AND CORALLINES OF THE BAY AND
HARBOR OF NEW YORK
ARTIST: C. F. DURANT
MEDIUM: ILLUSTRATION
STUDY OF MARINE PLANTS, ZOOPHYTES AND
THE ENTIRE MARINE SUB-KINGDOM OF ANIMALS
GIFT OF MISS EMMA DURANT
L1915.857

SHARK TOOTH FOSSIL
CARCHARODON MEGALODON
MEDIUM: MIocene
S1420.300
GARY REICHARD &
OSWALDO PEÑA
Congratulations to our Chairman Ralph Branca on this well deserved honor.

Fossil Dragonfly
Species Unknown
Jurassic Period
(201 to 145 million years ago)
Solnhofen, Bavaria, Germany

Artist: Vinnie Amesse
Medium: Photograph
EARTH CAMPGERS
DATE: 2015

ALAN, BARBARA AND NAOMI TEPPER

CROSSING
ARTIST: NED GANNON
DATE: 2004
MEDIUM: OIL ON LINEN

EARTH CAMPERS
DATE: 2015

ALAN, BARBARA AND NAOMI TEPPER
ON TO ROCHESTER!
THE WOMAN VOTER
DATE: OCTOBER 1914
GIFT OF MR. AND MRS. C. ARTHUR HOLLLICK
3758

BOUND HERBARIUM ALBUM
ARTIST: MRS. DAVID LOW
DATE: 1865
GIFT OF HANS L. STECHER
LUNAR NEW YEAR
STaten Island Museum Program
In Collaboration with the Korean Community Development Center
DATE: 2018

ART PARTY: STATEMENT JEWELRY WITH A TWIST
STaten Island Museum Program
DATE: 2018
Profile of a Man in Brown, Beige, and Black

Artist: Joseph Solman, America (b.1909-d.2008)
Date: 20th century
Medium: Serigraph on paper
Gift of Dr. Emanuel Klein A1958.8.13b

Abstract: Black, Blue, Grey

Artist: Victor Vasarely, Hungarian (b.1906-d.1997)
Medium: Serigraph on paper
Gift of Dr. Emanuel Klein A1958.8.14
Elegy of Ihpetonga: Abstract

Artist: Pablo Picasso, Spanish (b.1881-d.1973)
Date: 1949
Medium: Lithograph on paper
Gift of Dr. Emanuel Klein

The Altmann Family
The Angiuli Group LLC
Broadway Stages
Famous David’s Wood Floors
SACRED APIS BULL
DATE: EGYPT, XXVI TO XXX DYNASTY
MEDIUM: BRONZE
GIFT OF MR. D. WALLACE MACDONALD IN MEMORY OF MRS. FRANCIS MACDONALD

MICHAEL J. GASTALDI, DDS
CONTINUED SUCCESS! ELIZABETH & HELEN GRAMATELLI INTEGRITY SENIOR SERVICES K. & S. INDUSTRIAL CORP.

QUARRY
ARTIST: ARNOLD HOFFMAN
RUSSIAN (B. 1886-D. 1976)
DATE: 20TH C.
MEDIUM: OIL ON CANVAS
GIFT OF MR. ARNOLD HOFFMANN, JR. AND MR. ARTHUR HOFFMANN

KONE ELEVATORS AND ESCALATORS MINKEL SAFE & LOCK CO., INC. MODERN OFFICE SYSTEMS, LLC POST EXTERMINATING
Elizabeth Egbert (1945 - 2014)

Ingrid Michaelson

In memory of my mother, Elizabeth Egbert, whose passion for the museum lives on in the wonderful staff and board members.

Pseudaeris Frog Pond Nature Walk
Annadale, Staten Island (Detail)

Medium: Photograph
Date: 1925