

## Elizabeth Egbert Memorial Tribute

By Cheryl Adolph

Earlier this year, it was my honor to accept an award on this stage, for Elizabeth, in celebration of Women in History Month. The proclamation from Council Member Debi Rose acknowledges the extraordinary women who have shaped our city since its earliest days. How fitting this award was for Elizabeth. There was a vision of growth for the Staten Island Museum that through Elizabeth's leadership became a reality. Her steadfastness, tenacity and ability to work through challenges for the past 12 years, has brought this Museum home to Snug Harbor. We appreciate the support we have received through the City and the community, who believed that Staten Island should have a place to showcase its treasures, that feature what is unique about our borough, and what unites us with the region and the globe.

Today, I am back on this stage, to answer the age-old question of how to say "goodbye" to a friend. Was Elizabeth my friend? Yes, she was my friend. And so much more. Mentor, confidant, collaborator, and partner in crime all come to mind.

Was Elizabeth awesome? Yes, Elizabeth was awesome. But not in the present day use of the word. Awesome like a huge wave crashing in the ocean. Awesome like a terrific storm and the calm that follows. Awesome in the sense of being filled with wonderment. Yes, Elizabeth was awesome.

Elizabeth loved beautiful things. She loved the beauty that can only be found in the natural world, and this beauty inspired her as an artist and a sculptor, and as a thoroughly engaged person who truly understood the complexities and interconnectedness of our modern world.

For 21 years, it was my privilege to be in Elizabeth's company, starting with the day I arrived at the Staten Island Children's Museum to interview for a position. Elizabeth later told me she decided to hire me before we even spoke, because, as she said, "she liked the cut of my jib."

Elizabeth was a deeply intuitive person. Intuitive about people and about life. All of her exceptional qualities carried over to her business life and for that, anything she set her mind to, came to fruition.

Now, because of Elizabeth's tenacity and vision, the Staten Island Museum is embarking on an historic expansion that was once only a dream. Now it is becoming a reality in which we can all

share. This is her legacy, she was the champion, and this legacy is one I know we can all dedicate ourselves to making the greatest of successes, in her honor.

I recently described Elizabeth as my “guiding star,” which prompted a friend to share the following quote from the poet Hannah Senesh:

**There are stars whose radiance is visible on Earth though they have long been extinct. There are people whose brilliance continues to light the world even though they are no longer among the living. These lights are particularly bright when the night is dark. They light the way for humankind.”**

So, I am going to keep looking to that light. And I am choosing not to say goodbye, because Elizabeth’s words and her wisdom will be with us always, her gifts and her talents, blessings that transcend time and can never die.

Elizabeth would challenge us to be inspired, to take risks, to “go for it,” to “do it now.” Words she lived by, and words that will live on in us.

Thank you.