

Shelter Islander Honored By Greenport Hospital: Helen Rosenblum Remembered For Her Dedication To Others

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Two Island heroes, the late Ben Jones and Helen Rosenblum. Ms. Rosenblum was recently honored for her work as an Emergency Medical Services volunteer. (Credit: Reporter file)

One of Shelter Island's most impressive figures in the realms of town government, volunteerism and community service has been honored by the Eastern Long Island Hospital Foundation in Greenport.

The foundation dedicated its new Emergency Room Ambulance Ramp Entrance in memory of Helen J. Rosenblum on Tuesday, April 8, on what would have been her 79th birthday.

The new project was funded by Edward J. Boyd, a super volunteer himself, who is active in the Southold Fire Department and is chairman of the Suffolk Regional Emergency Medical Services Council (REMSCO). He was also Ms. Rosenblum's companion of nearly 30 years.

At the dedication ceremony, Mr. Boyd noted that Ms. Rosenblum “was well known and highly regarded for her untiring efforts to better the lives of all she encountered, regardless of whether they were two-legged or four-legged. Her love of people and of animals serve is an inspiration for all of us.”

The dedication, he added, was made to keep Ms. Rosenblum’s memory of public service alive. “Helen was a very dedicated person who always put the interests and needs of other people ahead of herself. I think that it’s only appropriate that this revamped ambulance entrance is in her memory. She was an EMT-CC and assistant chief of the Shelter Island Red Cross Ambulance. She participated in a lot of calls and was part of the county-wide EMS system. She was a member of the Suffolk REMSCO and Suffolk Regional Emergency Medical Advisory Committee, which are the advisory committees for all of the fabulous work that goes on in Suffolk County, which is close to 200,000 calls a year.”



The dedication of the facility at Eastern Long Island Hospital in honor of Helen Rosenblum, From left, Paul Connor, Devin Kelt, Linda Sweeney, Dr Lloyd Simon, Tara Kramer, Suzie Marriott, Pat McArdle, Dr Lawrence Schiff, Courtney Meringer, Ed Boyd, Bill Messner, Paul Romanelli, and Lory Tortelli. (Credit: Nicole B. Brewer)

Just one example of Ms. Rosenblum’s commitment to help others in need was demonstrated on a cloudless, sun-filled September day in 2001, when she and teams of Island EMS volunteers climbed into two ambulances fully loaded with emergency medical supplies and drove west when the fires and smoke of the World Trade Center were still rising.

The teams — composed of Ms. Rosenblum, Mr. Boyd, Faye Rodriguez, Chris Drake, Ed Kotula, Peter McCracken, Bud Fox, Ken Klenawicus and Ben Jones — weren’t sure what they would find in the city. It was just necessary to go immediately and do what they could to help.

She grew up on the Upper East Side of Manhattan before leaving to study at Skidmore College, and later at George Washington University, where she finished with a B.A. in American Studies. After college, she worked in motion picture distribution for more than a decade, before deciding to follow in her father's footsteps and become an attorney. She graduated with a J.D. from Fordham University in 1983.

After spending weekends on Shelter Island for several years, Ms. Rosenblum made the Island her permanent home in 1985. She opened a private practice here, eventually expanding to have offices in Southold and Riverhead, and served as the Shelter Island town attorney from 1986 to 2001.

In 2004, she was elected to serve as a Town Justice of Shelter Island, where she presided until 2020. In addition to hearing thousands of cases as a judge, Ms. Rosenblum presided over the East End Regional Intervention Court, or "Drug Court," where she helped drug offenders rehabilitate themselves and embrace more meaningful lives.

As Town Justice, Helen also married hundreds of couples and was proud she was able to marry many same-sex couples once it became legal to do so.

She was also an honorary Fire Department member.

At the dedication ceremony, Mr. Boyd said, "It was a lot of work, and she was very dedicated. I'm sure on a beautiful day like this, which is also her birthday, she would be very pleased to see all of you here to acknowledge what we've done."