

2004 Inductees



Anne D. Gioia:

A prominent fundraiser in the fight against cancer
Philanthropist, fundraiser and former teacher, Anne D. Gioia has garnered local and national attention for turning a personal tragedy into a crusade to save lives. Since losing her daughter, Katherine, to cancer in 1989, Mrs. Gioia has helped energize the community to support Roswell Park Cancer Institute. Her creation, the Roswell Park Alliance, a volunteer organization she co-founded with sister-in-law Donna Gioia, has grown into one of the most successful fundraising organizations in Western New York, raising over \$68 million for research and improving quality of life for patients. She also authored a book on cancer for children and their families. Looking to the future, she is chairing the Institute's \$21 million campaign to build the Center for Cancer Genetics & Pharmacology.

Toyomi Igus-Simon:

Author and role model who inspires children
Toyomi Igus has been called an inspiration to those who know her, but her influence extends far beyond them. The entertainment, enlightenment and example she provides thousands of young people through her work and her life are profound. Her success in communications and marketing in both the public and private sector makes her an extraordinary role model for girls. In the development, writing and editing of award-winning children's books and materials she has celebrated our diversity in ways that have expanded the vision and encouraged the dreams of children of all races and classes. Her gifts, enjoyed by today's young, will be shared with generations to come.



Kate Kimball, 1860-1917:

An influential leader in the Chautauqua movement
Kate Kimball has been described as the "soul" of the Chautauqua movement. She was also its heart. Starting in 1878 as an 18-year-old secretary with the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, she devoted a lifetime to turning a concept of home learning into a dynamic program that transformed the lives of thousands of people whose access to formal education was limited. The correspondence reading program that she so diligently and lovingly managed for 35 years was a most successful manifestation of Chautauqua's mission to enrich the lives of "the many not the few." Her contemporaries were awed by her personal charm, intellectual inspiration and unselfish spirit.

Carol Ostendorf Hoyt, 1939-2003:

A renowned political and social activist
Carol Hoyt served the public as well as her family. A mother of four, business woman, community volunteer, political and social activist she developed a public persona as one of Western New York's most influential citizens and she became a role model for two generations of women. A founding member of the Coalition for Action, Unity and Social Equity, she was a passionate advocate for civil rights, fair housing and international peace. She was involved in political campaigns and was an advisor to the former Buffalo Common Council President George Arthur. Her commitment to community set an example her children have chosen to follow and a standard that many others aspire to.



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Melinda R. "Mindy" Rich:

A community treasure in business and service

Mindy Rich's leadership style is a model for how women use their creativity and communication skills to influence both the business world and their community. As Executive Vice President of Innovation, Mindy is a driver of Rich's "culture of innovation", plays a key leadership role with several departments and serves as the President for Rich Entertainment Group.

Mindy also creates and oversees many of programs that define Rich's presence as a leading corporate citizen. She is a partner in community campaigns to curb drug and alcohol abuse, find a cure for cystic fibrosis, advance the status of women and promote volunteerism. She is generous of her time and energy, serving on several public and private boards, and her role in enhancing this area's quality of life has been recognized by numerous awards.

Sister Mary Johnice Rzakiewicz, CSSF:

She created a haven for a community's needy

Sister Mary Johnice has served her native Buffalo East Side community with passion and humility for nearly 30 years. She began her career as a primary school teacher and later became a pastoral associate in St. Adalbert's Church reaching out to its elderly and homebound parishioners. After the parish school closed she founded the St. Adalbert Response to Love Center.

Opened in 1985, it is a special place for the marginalized, poor and needy where more than 95 nuns, staff and volunteers offer a food pantry, dining room, thrift shops, and a haven for refugees.

She works closely with AmeriCorps and Hospice and was a spiritual counselor to the Sept. 11 rescue workers and families.



Helen Urban:

Her mission is to fulfill the needs of others. Helen Urban says she represents the ordinary women who are doing what women always have done: see a need and try to fill it. When she saw new mothers without clothing for their babies, she asked United Church Women to start Bundles for Babies. When, as a clinic nutritionist, she saw pregnant women without adequate diets, she started a food pantry and became a founder of the Western New York Food Bank. When inner city women were looking for both companionship and sewing skills, she helped them organize the Metropolitan Sewers. She has been doing these "ordinary" things for more than 40 years -- in a most extraordinary way.