

## 2008 Inductees



### *Shirley St. Hill Chisholm, 1924-2005*

Shirley Chisholm, the first African-American woman elected to Congress and the first woman of her race to run for president of the United States, spent her life fighting for the rights of minorities, women, children and the poor. She was a passionate advocate of women's rights during her tenure in the New York State Legislature in the 1950s and '60s and a leader of the Congressional Black Caucus, which she helped found, as a member of Congress in the 1970s. In 1972 she entered the Democratic presidential primary winning 151 delegates. Retiring in 1982, she moved to Williamsville where she continued her work on women's issues and formed the National Congress of Black Women. She was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 1993.

### *Lucille Sayles Clifton*

Lucille Clifton, a Depew native who established her reputation as an important poet while still a student at Fredonia State College, last year received the Poetry Foundation's prestigious Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize. The \$100,000 award, one of the nation's largest literary honors, recognized Mrs. Clifton's powerful presence and voice. A former poet laureate of Maryland, she has twice been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize and is a winner of the Juniper Prize.

Beginning with her first success, *Good Times*, rated among the best books of 1969 by *The New York Times*, Clifton's work has been defined by ethnic pride and feminist principles. In 11 books of poetry, she draws from family history and African American experiences to embrace a universal humanity.



### *Mecca Swanson Cranley, RN, Ph.D., 1936-2006*

Dr. Cranley's appointment as dean of University at Buffalo's School of Nursing in 1991 capped a distinguished career as nurse, researcher, educator and community activist which was far from over. For the next 16 years, she continued her efforts to improve maternal and fetal health, expand UB's nursing education and enhance the status of the profession to which she was dedicated. Building on her earlier research achievement, the Maternal-Fetal Attachment Scale, called the "gold standard" for examining external factors that affect maternal-fetal attachments, Dr. Cranley opened doors to future research by increasing enrollment in the nurses' program, providing advanced degree options and increasing the school's prominence and professional visibility. Her efforts attracted recognition from the American Nurses' Association, the Wisconsin Association of Prenatal Care. The Wisconsin Nurses Association and March of Dimes named her a Woman of the Year.

### *Mary Jo Hunt*

Mary Jo Hunt's 30 years of community service make her one of Western New York's greatest assets. Currently her energy is directed to Leadership Buffalo, where she is executive director. Over the years, she has given her support, and that of the family foundation she oversees, to child care, parenting, education and literacy, enhancing or building the capacity of community-based organizations. Her particular devotion to early childhood education led to the founding of Success by Six and the Child Care Coalition of the Niagara Frontier. She taught the subject at Buffalo State and Erie Community colleges and consulted on Head Start programs. As a member of six public sector boards and more than a half-dozen service organizations, she is a constant reminder of the power of one.



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### *Florence Johnson*

Florence Johnson, who started her career as an exceptional education teacher, has become an exceptional educator. One of the most powerful and passionate voices in public education, she has been an effective fighter for increased funding, better school buildings, and quality education. During her 15 years on the Buffalo Board of Education, serving four of them as president, she emerged a national leader in urban education. An advocate with the National School Boards Association, her voice can be heard in the halls of Congress as well as in City Hall. Leaving no child behind, her career spans over 35 years at Buffalo State College where she has been a pioneer in mainstreaming special education students and helping disadvantaged college students meet the challenges of higher education.

### *Janet H. Sung, M.D.*

Dr. Sung is president of Windsong Radiology Group, which is Western New York's first minority-female-operated imaging center and the first with full accreditation with the American College of Radiology. Dr. Sung is a leader in medicine, technology, business and human relations. A desire to better meet the needs of patients made her an entrepreneur. She has built an imaging center which has a long list of firsts, utilizing the newest in rapidly changing imaging technology. In two decades, her practice has grown from four team members who serviced 35 patients a day to 200 team members serving more than 650 patients a day across three facilities. Always involved with her patients and the community, Dr. Sung supports the American Cancer Society's fight against breast cancer and established a \$1 Million endowment for medical school scholarships at University of Buffalo.



### *Persis Anne Parshall Vehar*

Persis Parshall Vehar, pianist and composer, is celebrated at home and abroad for her unique compositions and distinguished performances. Her more than 200 vocal and instrumental works, ranging from intimate chamber music to large orchestral pieces and four operas, have been performed to critical acclaim in major cities from New York to Los Angeles and, in Europe, from London to Austria. Her performances with orchestras, chamber groups and ensembles in Buffalo and across the country leave audiences and critics wanting more. Composer-in-residence at Canisius College, she instructs and mentors young musicians and is an inspiration to and champion of aspiring women composers. After six Meet the Composer Grants and twenty-three annual ASCAP Awards, she obviously has found that original voice that speaks to all.