

Earline Patrice, Woman of the Year 1988

Mrs. Patrice plays Santa and gets her own present

Just as sure as Christmas arrived today, Mrs. Earline Patrice makes sure underprivileged children in the City of Poughkeepsie have a Christmas to smile about.

On Tuesday, 569 children gathered at the Smith Street Center for Mrs. Patrice's 14th annual Christmas party.

Buoyed by donations from businesses and individuals throughout the Hudson Valley, Mrs. Patrice and her helpers handed out new and used toys to each child, heaped holiday food on everyone and gave out three used phonographs as door prizes.

"It was such a great day, something I could feel merry about," an ecstatic Mrs. Patrice said Wednesday. "The happiest time of all is to see the smiling faces and laughter of these children at party time."

Her holiday's work was not over Wednesday, however. She was still preparing packages of food for senior citizens at the Chateau Hyde Park nursing home, and getting ready to deliver special gift packages for needy families in Poughkeepsie.

Mrs. Patrice said no one need worry about her having a happy Christmas. "Six weeks ago, I got my first great-grandchild, Ernie Vines III. That's my Christmas present, the best one of all."



Mrs. Earline Patrice

From *The Branch*, September 1988:

The Woman of the Year committee announced the selection of Earline Patrice for its annual honor. Mrs. Patrice is known for her work with the City of Poughkeepsie's children, elderly, poor, and lonely. For twenty years she has given annual Christmas parties for the city's underprivileged children. These involve a toy drive, collecting money, preparing food and wrapping hundreds of presents, many of which are stored in her apartment. She is now hosting the children of people who attended her parties as children.

In spite of physical problems, including a heart murmur and arthritis, she has continued to host holiday parties on Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas with the food prepared and donated by area restaurants and the help of the Lower Main Street Civic Association. Dinner is offered "until the last person is served or-we run out."

Mrs. Patrice refers to herself as a "professional beggar" and her almost childlike enthusiasm about the help and recognition she receives has not waned with time. When she was contacted regarding the Woman of the Year award she mentioned that she had not fallen asleep until 6:00 am because of the hot summer night. Despite being awakened after only six hours of sleep, the news "made her day."

Mrs. Patrice has been honored by numerous local organizations and AAUW is proud to be among the many who recognize her tireless efforts.