

Klara B. Sauer, Woman of the Year 2003



Klara B. Sauer is best known for her 20 years as Executive Director of Scenic Hudson Inc. where she used her considerable leadership skills to protect this region's natural spaces. Originally, Scenic Hudson grew out of the efforts to save Storm King Mountain. The case provided the underpinning for the passage of the National Environmental Protection Act. Ms. Sauer became director just after the protection of Storm King was achieved. During her tenure, Scenic Hudson expanded from a single mission focus to a multi-faceted programmatic and geographic approach, encompassing the entire river corridor from Albany to New York City. It pioneered the creation of the Hudson River

Valley Greenway and advocated for the Hudson's designation as an American Heritage River. Eighteen new parks were also created in the 10-county region.

Ms. Sauer helped reshape the focus of the national environmental movement by encouraging collaboration with the forces of business and government. Scenic Hudson is now viewed as a partner in resolving environmental problems not an adversary. As a result of her efforts, the Hudson is alive again for communities and people all along its shores. Also, many natural spaces have been saved for the enjoyment and benefit of us all.

Born in Germany, Klara Sauer started college at Dutchess Community College at age 33 and received her B.A. in Urban Studies from Vassar College at age 39. She followed with an M.P.A. from Marist College. She worked as a Senior Planner for Mid-Hudson Pattern for Progress and was a Vice President for Planning & Allocation for the United Way of Dutchess County. Currently, she is a Principal in The Athena Group, a management consulting group, which assists non-profit and government agencies.

Among her many volunteer activities, Ms. Sauer is the chair of the Dutchess Community College Foundation. She has served on many other community boards, including those supporting education, health, the arts, and music.