

Clara Lou Gould, Woman of the Year 2006



A native of the Hudson Valley, Clara Lou Gould was born in Cold Spring, New York, where she was educated in local schools. After graduating from the College of New Rochelle with honors in English she was employed in New York City in the publicity department of Viking Press book publishers, and by Harold Ober Associates, literary agents (whose clients included such authors as Pearl S. Buck, Agatha Christie, Langston Hughes, etc.)

On moving to Beacon, she began her community service with the Highland Hospital Auxiliary (now St. Francis Beacon). She served as treasurer, president, and chair of several major fund raising campaigns, some of them as co-chair with her husband, Robert, and also served in almost every area of volunteer service. She is still a member of the Auxiliary.

When Beacon's Health Department became part of the Dutchess County Health Department, Mrs. Gould was appointed by the County Legislature as the first Beacon representative on that board, and later served as President.

She is a past Director of the Third District of the Federated Garden Clubs of New York State, former State Awards Chairman and former State Asst. Treasurer, and National Council Flower Show Judge. She worked for years on the Beacon beautification committee and is a member of Tioronda Garden Club. She worked with the club to create a Patriots Garden, which received a Federation award in 2004.

Clara Lou Gould was sworn in as Mayor in January 1990, the first woman to be elected to that office, and is now in her fifth term, the most terms any mayor has served. She worked to have Beacon designated one of the initial model communities of the Hudson River Valley Greenway. Later she represented the Greenway at a meeting in Washington State to encourage the Greenway program there. She was part of a Greenway delegation to the Czech Republic in 1994 to visit their Greenway. That trip resulted in a student exchange from the Czech Republic to Beacon.

In 1996, Beacon was the winner of the inaugural Hudson Valley Quality Community award in the city category, selected by a nine member Planning Group. In 2005, Beacon was designated a Preserve America Community.

Clara Lou Gould has been the recipient of a number of awards, including Dutchess County Arts Council, Southern Dutchess Exchange Club Commitment to Community, Greater Southern Dutchess Chamber of Commerce Community Service, Ursula Laurus Citation from College of New Rochelle, Girl Scout Community Service Award, NAACP award for community

contributions, Rotary Club for service above self, DAR Community Service award, Wal Mart Hometown Leadership, Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Award, and Community Foundation of Dutchess County award for community service.

Current memberships include Hudson Fulton Champlain Commission (Chair), Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council, National Heritage Area Management Council, Boscobel Board of Directors, Greater Southern Dutchess Chamber Board, Kiwanis Club of Beacon-Fishkill, Southern Dutchess NAACP, Dutchess County Community Development Advisory Board, Howland Cultural Center, Stony Kill Foundation, Children's Home of Poughkeepsie Board Associate Member, Pattern for Progress, Tioronda Garden Club, and St. Francis Hospital Beacon Auxiliary.

Past memberships include Dutchess County Arts Council, St. Francis Hospital Foundation, Board of Directors Fishkill National Bank, D. C. Economic Development Committee, and D.C. Board of Health.