

# Referencing her rewarding and dedicated work

*Eileen Kavanagh is named a Woman of Distinction*

By JEFFREY BESSEN

**BRIGHTWATERS** — A woman who has spent nearly 39 years with the Bay Shore-Brightwaters Library was honored by the community she serves for her distinctive service during a ceremony last Friday.

Eileen Kavanagh, the library's director for 18 years, was celebrated as a New York State Woman of Distinction, an honor she earned earlier this year, but due to the state Senate's shutdown in June, the Albany ceremony was cancelled.

The event took place in the library, where Kavanagh was praised by the man who nominated her, State Senator Owen Johnson (R-West Babylon).

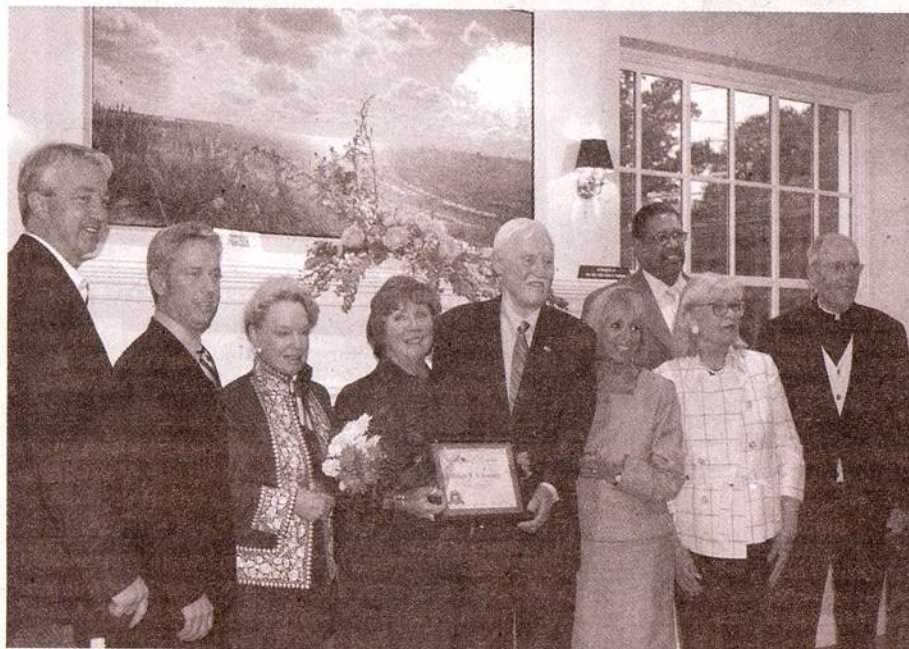
"I observed her during the process of building this library and she certainly is an inspiring figure," said Johnson, whose name graces this library's auditorium, and who remembers reading many books in a library when he was young.

Kavanagh, along with the library board and with state financial assistance through Johnson, oversaw a nearly two-year, \$10.5 million renovation of the Bay Shore-Brightwaters Library.

For that work, coupled with her years of running a library that literally opens its doors to a community that strongly supports it, Kavanagh was chosen for this selective honor that she believes reflects the residents she serves.

"The community is worthy of this," said Kavanagh in a few quiet moments before the ceremony. "This is a community that loves and supports its library and has for well over a hundred years."

It is a library that brings together the two communities it serves—Bay Shore



**Bay Shore-Brightwaters Library Director Eileen Kavanagh was named a New York State Woman of Distinction. From left are Assemblyman Phil Boyle (R-Bay Shore), Islip Town Councilman Steve Flotteron, Bay Shore School Superintendent Evelyn Holman, Kavanagh, State Senator Owen Johnson (R-West Babylon), County Treasurer Angie Carpenter, Bay Shore Chamber President Donna Periconi, Assistant Library Director Rodney Marve and Monsignor Emmet Fagan.** IB/Bessen

and Brightwaters—by providing an array of services and programs that spans age groups from children to seniors.

Currently, the library is collecting information from its patrons through a survey, "More than just bricks and mortar" based on four questions: Why do you visit the library? Why don't you visit the library? What is most important to you about the library? Suggestions, thoughts and concerns about the library? It also asks whether patrons would participate in a fo-

cus group regarding the library's future.

"We hope we can build them a building they can enjoy well into the future," said Kavanagh, who added that libraries on Long Island are established through the communities they serve.

For the Bay Shore-Brightwaters community that is not only definitely true, but the library is also much loved by the people who work there. In addition to Kavanagh's longevity, there are four staff members who are celebrating 40 years of

working at the library, and one who has been there for 25 years.

One of those is Assistant Library Director Rodney Marve, who began his library career as a Bay Shore High School student in 1969 and, encouraged by Kavanagh, went into library science.

Marve called Kavanagh "my mentor" and "good friend over the years" and the library as a place he enjoyed as a youngster, since vision issues and surgery prevented him from participating in sports.

Having worked with Kavanagh throughout the years, Marve said there is not another person who puts their heart and soul into something as much as she does.

"I think it's a hoot, it's great! She's not one for tooting her own horn," Marve said about the honor, as he stood in the middle of the library, halfway between the Brightwaters Porch where the ceremony took place and the Bay Shore porch where the refreshments were. "I am so very proud of her and I am happy as I could be."

Though the past remains strong at the library the pull of the future has Kavanagh looking forward to bringing more adult programs to an expanding patronage.

And despite having this honor and having previously been named a Bay Shore-Brightwaters Distinguished Citizen four years ago, Kavanagh still gets a kick out of doing her job.

"I am happy to get up every morning for work and find a community so responsive and appreciative," said Kavanagh, who began as a reference librarian here in 1970. "It is our endless ambition to serve the community. It is rewarding work." ■