



Eighth Annual
Clara Lemlich Awards



May 1, 2018 6:30 – 8:30pm
Puffin Gallery for Social Activism
Museum of the City of New York
Fifth Avenue at 103rd Street

Honoring those who, in the words of the poet Marge Piercy,
*jump into work head first
without dallying in the shadows...
who do what has to be done, again and again.*

Praise Song for the Day

--Elizabeth Alexander

A Poem for Barack Obama's Presidential Inauguration

*Each day we go about our business,
walking past each other, catching each other's
eyes or not, about to speak or speaking.*

*All about us is noise. All about us is
noise and bramble, thorn and din, each
one of our ancestors on our tongues.*

*Someone is stitching up a hem, darning
a hole in a uniform, patching a tire,
repairing the things in need of repair.*

*Someone is trying to make music somewhere,
with a pair of wooden spoons on an oil drum,
with cello, boom box, harmonica, voice.*

...

Say it plain: that many have died for this day.

....

Praise song for struggle, praise song for the day.

*Some live by love thy neighbor as thyself,
others by first do no harm or take no more
than you need. What if the mightiest word is love?*

*Love beyond marital, filial, national,
love that casts a widening pool of light,
love with no need to pre-empt grievance.*

*In today's sharp sparkle, this winter air,
any thing can be made, any sentence begun.
On the brink, on the brim, on the cusp,*

praise song for walking forward in that light.

“I’ve Got Something to Say” 2018 PROGRAM

Welcome Sarah Henry, MCNY Deputy Director

Welcome Esther Cohen and Rachel Bernstein

Poem Chesray Dolpha

Puffin Gallery for Social Activism Perry and Gladys Rosenstein
and Neal Rosenstein

Honoree Doreen Wohl introduced by Sasha Matthews

Mayoral Proclamation Julia Gruberg

Honoree Alix Kates Shulman introduced by Tanya Beltram

Clara Lemlich Michael Miller, her great grandson

Honoree Evelyn Jones Rich introduced by Natatia Griffith

Honoree Mirene Ghossein introduced by Kayhan Irani

A Triangle Fire Story Sonia Goldstein

Honoree Anne Cunningham introduced by Manhattan Borough
President Gale Brewer

Triangle Fire Memorial Rose Imperato

Bread and Roses and Solidarity Forever
New York City Labor Chorus and audience

The Clara Lemlich Awards

The Awards honor women who have been working for the larger good their entire lives, in the tradition of those who sparked so many reforms in the aftermath of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire over one hundred years ago.

“I’VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY” shouted the 23-year old Clara Lemlich in her native Yiddish during a tense, crowded meeting of garment workers in Cooper Union’s Great Hall in 1909. Rising from the audience, she interrupted Samuel Gompers and the other union leaders on stage. Her speech inspired the crowd, leading to an unexpected vote to strike, and to what would become known as the Uprising of 20,000.

Born to a Jewish family in the Ukraine (then part of the Russian Empire), Lemlich migrated to the U.S. in 1903, found work in the garment industry, and soon became active in the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union. The 1909 strike led to reforms, but the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory was a hold-out, and refused to implement safety improvements.

The fire that took 146 lives on March 25, 1911 was seen across the country as a tragedy that could have been avoided, and it sparked a movement that pushed politicians to accept a new notion about the responsibilities of government. Lemlich continued to be active in the labor movement until she was pushed out for her leftist politics. She continued to work for women’s suffrage, led a boycott of butcher shops to protest meat prices, campaigned for unemployment relief, and fought for tenants’ rights.

One hundred and seven years later we are proud to honor her legacy and to honor those who follow proudly in her footsteps.

2016 LEMLICH AWARD HONOREES

Doreen Wohl, born into an English Quaker family in 1932, came to United States in 1954 to work with the American Friends Service Committee and later with the National Council of Churches. Her work with migratory farm workers harvesting beans in Pennsylvania, sugar beets in North Dakota, cherries and pickles in Michigan, and cotton in Texas, immediately exposed Doreen to the underside of the American dream.



From 1956 to 1990 Doreen worked with South Side Settlement House in Columbus Ohio and University Settlement and Kingsbridge Heights Community Center in New York City developing family day care, after school youth programs, and residential summer camping.

For twenty years between 1992 and 2012 Doreen transformed the West Side Coalition Against Hunger Emergency Food Program. Guiding the organization into a participatory cooperative, with customer volunteers and supermarket style food selection, it aims to change our perceptions of hungry people by working in partnership with them. The program offers social service counseling, entitlement enrollment and a chef training program, and customer volunteers are involved in all aspects, including serving on the board. By 1997 WSCAH was actively sharing its “Customer-Cooperative Supermarket Model” broadly, and that outreach continues; the model has been implemented in New York City and across the United States.

Alix Kates Shulman, writer and activist in the civil-rights, anti-war, and radical feminist movements, was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1932. In the early 1960s she was active in CORE’s 7-Arts Chapter; during the Vietnam War she was arrested attempting to close down an Army induction center; she helped plan the first national demonstration of the women’s liberation movement, the 1968 Miss America Protest in Atlantic City.



She was arrested again in 1985 for preventing CIA recruiters from entering the University of Colorado, Boulder campus; in 1991, while teaching in Honolulu, she organized a Pacific branch of No More Nice Girls to mount an abortion speak-out and street theater actions; and in 2012 she helped organize Occupy Wall Street’s four Feminist General Assemblies.

Her first feminist publication was her widely attacked 1970 article “A Marriage Agreement,” proposing that men and women split childcare and housework equally. Among her books are *To the Barricades: The Anarchist Life of Emma Goldman*; the “feminist classic” novel *Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen*; *Burning Questions*, a novel about the rise of women’s liberation; and *A Marriage Agreement and Other Essays: Four Decades of Feminist Writing*. Currently she is co-editing, with Honor Moore, the anthology *Writing the Women’s Movement: American Feminism, 1963-1991*.

Evelyn Jones Rich has devoted a lifetime as advocate and activist in the fight for right and justice against those who would deny equal opportunity based on race, religion, gender, national origin, and sexual preference.



Born into a working class family in Philadelphia, Evie joined Students for Democratic Action (SDA) at Bryn Mawr College and has embraced the principles of liberalism/progressivism ever since. Active in student government, Evie also joined the National Student Association (NSA), The Young Adult Council (YAC) and the World Assembly of Youth (WAY) in fighting segregation and discrimination in the early 1950s.

Representing the U.S. at international youth conferences, Evie met young men and women from colonial areas in Africa and Asia, many of whom went on to play leading roles (presidents, UN delegates, etc.) in newly independent nations or to become leaders of liberation movements in Southern Africa during the 1960s.

Introduced to the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) by her future husband, Marvin, Evie used the power of non-violent direct action to improve her advocacy and activist skills. They have guided her through a career as educator, foundation executive, and advocate for senior citizens.

There have been many causes along the way. They include taking teachers to Africa to develop realistic curricula for U.S. elementary and secondary schools, lobbying the NY State legislature for adequate school funding with the Educational

Priorities Panel, testifying before local and state legislatures on a host of issues from redistricting, to health care and aging concerns and helping elect progressive candidates to political office with Americans for Democratic Action (ADA). Evie continues doing all this today while caring for her husband insisting that she's retired but she is not tired.

Mirene Ghossein was born in Beirut, Lebanon in 1935. She holds an MA in Philosophy from The Lebanese Academy and a PhD in Comparative Literature from Columbia University.



At age 17, she started working with a Lebanese group whose goal was "to do something for those who can't do anything for themselves." The group's members came from all walks of life, various religions and ideologies. The lesson she hasn't forgotten is this one: we are all born equal only if we can prove it, by making the other part and parcel of our vision and work. It is possible to get along with anyone, if personal interests don't get in the way.

She came to the US in 1958 with her husband, had four children and was a full-time mom for 18 years. She worked for many years with the Washington based Arab-American Cultural Foundation, organizing literary and artistic events for Arab poets and visual artists from the Middle East and the US.

Friend and translator to many Middle-Eastern artists, she co-translated many books, mostly poetry, with Samuel Hazo, and with Kamal Boullata including *If Only the Sea Could Sleep, love poems by Adonis*.

Mirene devoted a great deal of time to WESPAC, a forty year old Westchester, NY, peace and justice organization which honored her for “tirelessly bringing people together through culture.”

Other groups which cherish her contributions include AAUG (Arab-American University Graduates) and with Alwan for the Arts, an Arab-American cultural organization. She is always trying to remember the place of the "other" in one's life.

Anne Cunningham has worked on women’s rights, civil rights, affordable housing and aging issues throughout her life. She helped found one of the first battered women's shelters in Brooklyn, seeing the need after assisting struggling individual women she encountered on the streets. Active in women’s issues from the 1970s on, she was president of the first chapter of NOW on Staten Island, a colleague of Bella Abzug, and active with the New York Feminist Federal Credit Union.



AC has been a strong advocate for justice in local NYC politics for decades, and is a familiar face on the Upper Westside of Manhattan, where she was the mastermind behind the monthly housing clinics at Godard Riverside. She has worked for many years with City Council member Helen Rosenthal on housing issues, and with Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer. Today she continues to be actively engaged, tirelessly advocating for low income tenants and counseling people on housing every Wednesday afternoon at the Hamilton House senior center. Watch out – wherever you meet her, she’ll have a flyer for you.

2017 LEMLICH AWARD HONOREES

Aisha al-Adawiya *strengthening the voice of women in Islam*
Vinie Burrows *actor working for civil rights and peace*
Lidia Correa *community activist and garment union organizer*
Mary Douglas *hospital and hospice volunteer*
Ingrid Frank *human rights and peace organizer*
Lubow Wolynetz *preserving Ukrainian cultural traditions*

2016 LEMLICH AWARD HONOREES

Teresa Chan *Chinatown community organizer*
Etta Dixon *Brooklyn community organizer, dancer, wellness guru*
Bea Klier *climatologist, science educator, women’s leadership*
Naomi Replansky and Eva Kollisch *literary and cultural creators*

2015 LEMLICH AWARD HONOREES

Winifred Armstrong *environmental and economic policy activist*
Julie Azuma *advocate for Japanese Americans and autistic children*
Sylvia Gutierrez Grant *hospital workers 1199 union organizer*
Lillian Lifflander* *peace activist*
L. Ann Rucker *environmentalist*
Gloria Sukenick *feminist and tenants’ rights organizer*
Mimi Stern-Wolfe *organizing with music*

2014 LEMLICH AWARD HONOREES

Barbara Bailey *NYC Labor Chorus co-founder*
Marilyn Frankenstein *social justice through mathematics*
Jane Kalmus *voter registration*
Judy Lerner *peace and women's rights activist*
Joan Levine and Sarah Martin *environmental community organizing in West Harlem*
Agnes Wong *garment worker organizer and Chinatown community activist*

2013 LEMLICH AWARD HONOREES

Molly Klopot *lifelong activist for peace and justice*
Natalie Gordon *social worker, NORC advocate*
Lois Gray *labor scholar, educator and activist*
Glendora Folsom Buell *philosopher, judicial activist*
Julia Rosario Jorge *labor activist*
Marian Thom *labor activist, bilingual paraprofessional*

2012 LEMLICH AWARD HONOREES

Judy West *jazz singer, tenant organizer*
Jackie Steiner *musician, anti-fascist activist*
Betty Reardon *feminist peace educator*
Juanita Nelson* *war tax resistor*
Connie Ling *garment worker organizer*
Connie Hogarth *agitator for civil rights and the environment*

2011 LEMLICH AWARD HONOREES

Kathy Andrade *pioneer immigrant activist*
Virginia Baron *still fighting for peace and for women*
Dorothy Burnham *grass roots civic leader*
Monnie Callan *lifelong union organizer*
Dorothy DeVouse *defender of parents*
Frances Goldin *tireless literary agent*
Kathy Goldman *empowering the poor, feeding the hungry*
Shui Mak Ka *Chinatown garment worker organizer*
Elaine Katz* *keeping Yiddishkeit alive*
Lillian Kimura *advocate for WWII internees*
Rebecca Lepkoff* *humanitarian photographer*
Rita Margules *Clara Lemlich's daughter, housing organizer*

Annie B. Martin* *pioneer chemist, unionist, and activist*
Louise Meriwether *dedicated peacenik, powerful writer*
Charlene Mitchell *peace movement agitator*
Shirley Novick* *centenarian troublemaker*
Ethel Paley *created patient advocacy organization*
Lillian Pollak *novelist of radical politics*
Suki Terada Ports *professional AIDS agitator*
Lillie Pope* *educator and activist*
Maria Portalatin *educator/activist for Latin American rights*
Wendy Rodriguez *parishioner activist*
Marie Runyon *intrepid tenant leader*
Mary Sansone *lifelong activist and community organizer*
Maddy Simon *music and culture orchestrator*
Jessie Taft Smith* *union campaigner*
Sylvia Thompson* *community rabble rouser*
Eleanor Tilson* *feminist healthcare expert*
Ida Torres* *labor stalwart*
Joan Wile *songwriter and granny militant*

* deceased

SPEAKERS

Lemlich Family Clara Lemlich's daughter **Rita Margules** received a Lemlich Award in 2011, and she and other family members have enriched the "I've Got Something to Say" ceremony in each year since.

Sarah Henry is the Museum's Deputy Director and Chief Curator. She works closely with the Puffin Foundation and the development of the Activist Gallery as well as the Beyond Suffrage gallery.

Esther Cohen writes, teaches, raises money, curates, art directs, and works hard to secure roses for every struggle. She is the former executive director of Bread and Roses 1199/SEIU, a co-founder of Labor Arts, and author of five books. She writes a poem a day at esthercohen.com.

Rachel Bernstein, a founder of LaborArts, taught in the graduate program in public history at NYU for decades, and works on public

history projects with the Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives at NYU and the Brooklyn College Graduate Center for Worker Education in lower Manhattan. She is author, with the late Debra E. Bernhardt, of *Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives: A Pictorial History of Working People in NYC*.

Chesray Dolpha Theatre Artist. Oprah Fellow Winner. Teacher. Mother. Black Lives Matter Protester. Passionate Being and co-creator of Those African Chicks podcast. She's an AfriGen from Cape Town.

Perry and Gladys Rosenstein are directors of the Puffin Foundation, dedicated to "...continuing the dialogue between art and lives of ordinary people." The Puffin Gallery for Social Activism at MCNY hosts the Lemlich Awards tonight.

Neal Rosenstein is the Vice President of the Puffin Foundation; find out more about their programs at puffinfoundation.org.

Sasha Matthews attends 8th grade at a New York City public school; local bookstores started selling her first self-published comic when she was in 5th grade. She launched the "Everyday Superheroes Project" after the 2016 election, to raise both her spirits and money for the American Civil Liberties Union. See more at her website RumbleComics.com.

Julia Gruberg is Community Coordinator at the Mayor's Center for Faith and Community Partnerships, part of the Community Affairs Unit, working with houses of worship and community-based organizations on City programs and initiatives.

Tanya Beltram, writer and activist born and raised in the Bronx, Tanya holds masters degrees in Fiction and in Poetry. She has recently returned to her beloved city to continue advocating for writers' rights, and to work on her new book: RAW.

Michael Miller is Clara Lemlich's great-grandson. He is President of the Debate team and of the Senior Council at Bronx High School of Science, and will pursue Political Science, International Affairs and Social Justice in college in the fall. He plays center field for his school's Varsity Baseball team.

Natatia Griffith is Deputy Director of Budgets for the MTA, and a longtime member of the New York Coalition of 100 Black Women, which she served as president from 2004 -2007; she served on the NYC Commission on Women's issues 2007-2013.

Kayhan Irani is a writer, producer, and educator who creates art, media and live events to build community and engage audiences in social justice issues. She was one of ten U.S. artists named as a 2016 White House Champion of Change for her art and storytelling work.

Sonia Goldstein is a lifelong activist. She's an artist, writer, mother, and grandmother and still gets arrested, though she recently celebrated her ninetieth birthday.

Gale Brewer is the 27th Borough President of Manhattan, elected in November 2013. She represented the Upper West Side in the NY City council for over a decade, working to pass legislation helping domestic workers, requiring NYC publications to be made available via the Internet, and much more.

Rose Imperato has been a guiding light and driving force with the Triangle Fire Coalition since its founding in anticipation of the 2011 centennial. She currently works as an administrator at CUNY's Murphy Institute.

The **New York City Labor Chorus**, with 75 members representing over 20 labor unions and District Councils, was founded in 1991. The Chorus promotes union solidarity by expressing through song the history and ongoing struggles of workers for economic and social justice. Its dynamic repertoire combines the power and culture of union music with the great gospel, jazz, classical and folk traditions.



Find out about today's issues and help build the memorial at rememberthetrianglefire.org

We invite you to visit the Puffin Gallery for Social Activism upstairs in this Museum.



The Puffin Foundation, Ltd.



May is Labor History Month - celebrate at the Workers Unite! Film Festival

May 4 – 24

WorkersUniteFilmFestival.org

Video of Lemlich honoree from 2011 – 2017 is available at LaborArts.org, and video from tonight's event will be posted in June. You can also find online exhibits like "Civil Rights History Walks into the Classroom" and "Defending the Social Safety Net".



The eighth annual Clara Lemlich Awards are generously funded by The Puffin Foundation and The Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation. They are hosted by LaborArts, the Puffin Gallery for Social Activism at the Museum of the City of New York, and the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition, and were organized by Rachel Bernstein, Esther Cohen, May Chen, Sherry Kane, and Rose Imperato. Many thanks to Judith Fitzgerald, videographer, Gary Schoichet, photographer, and Anne Newman Bacal, Minju Bae, Larry Bush, Shanika Carlies, Hassanatou Diallo, Renata Del Riego, Rachel Horowitz, Terry Schwadron, Ruth Sergel, Phoebe Taylor Vuolo, Liz Young, the NY Labor History Association, and *Jewish Currents*. We are grateful for the continued expert support of MCNY staff, particularly Samantha Fleck, Sarah Seidman, Francesca Bertolini and Jacob Tugendrajch.



Prints of Clara Lemlich as an Everyday Superhero – drawn by young cartoonist Sasha Matthews – will be presented to this year's Lemlich Award honorees.