

BARBARALEE DIAMONSTEIN-SPIELVOGEL

Biography

Throughout her career, Dr. Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel has served as a leading voice on some of the defining urban issues of our time, including the preservation of the historic built environment of our country. She serves as a model for civic and cultural engagement, having demonstrated unparalleled commitment to the arts, architecture, design and public policy through roles that have brought her from the writer's desk to The White House, where she was a White House Assistant, and helped create the White House Fellows, the Presidential Scholars Program, and the first and only White House Festival of the Arts in 1965. She was appointed by President Reagan to the Board of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, where she served as Chair of the Subcommittee of the USHMM that commissioned their Art for the Public Space; was a Founding Director of the Friends of the High Line; and, in 2007, was appointed to the New York State Council on the Arts, where, in 2016, she was appointed as Chair and CEO by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo. She served in that capacity until 2018.

Appointed by Mayor John V. Lindsay as the first Director of New York City's newly-created Cultural Affairs Department in 1966, she was instrumental, the following year, in bringing the first public art exhibit (an installation of sculptures by Tony Smith) to Bryant Park, the first public performance to Central Park by the Metropolitan Opera, and the first week-long festival of films about New York at the Regency Theatre. One of her important contributions during her tenure was to codify the inclusion of cultural institutions in the New York City annual budget process; under her leadership, the 15 cultural institutions housed in City-owned buildings or on City-owned property that had been receiving their City support from the Bureau of the Budget, were added to the agency's budget.

In addition to her extensive work involving the visual, performing and literary arts, Dr. Diamonstein-Spielvogel has dedicated herself to the preservation and enhancement of New York City's cultural life, serving as the longest-term Commissioner of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, spanning four mayoral administrations from 1972 to 1987. She then served as the Chair of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Foundation from 1987 to 1995, where she created and underwrote the placement of Historic District street signs, descriptive markers, and maps in each of New York City's then 84 (now 151) Historic Districts, which have since become models for similar initiatives throughout the United States.

Since 1995, she has served as Chair of the Historic Landmarks Preservation Center. As well as her extensive preservation work and advocacy, Diamonstein-Spielvogel has continued her involvement with national and local cultural affairs. She was appointed by President Reagan to the Board of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, served as Chair of the Subcommittee of the USHMM that commissioned their Art for the Public Spaces; served as a member of the New York City Art Commission of New York City (now the Public Design Commission), and as a member of the New York City Commission of Cultural Affairs for more than a decade.

In 1996, she was appointed by President Clinton to the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, which advises on matters of design affecting the appearance of Washington, D.C., in particular, the architecture of public buildings, parks, and memorials. In 2002, she was the first woman to be elected as Vice Chair of the CFA in its century-long history. From 2009 to 2018, as President Barack Obama's appointee, she served on the American Battle Monuments Commission, which oversees the design, construction, and

maintenance of U.S. military memorials throughout the world, where she chaired the ABMC New Memorials Committee. In July 2013, she was named to lead the ABMC delegation to Busan, Korea, and was the keynote speaker at the ceremonies commemorating the 60th anniversary of the armistice of the Korean War, attended by leaders and veterans of 21 participating nations. In 2018, she was appointed to the newly-formed American Battle Monuments Foundation.

From April 2016 to April 2018, she was appointed and served as Chair and CEO of the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo; she was originally appointed to NYSCA in 2007, and served as its Vice Chair from 2008 to 2016.

Diamonstein-Spielvogel earned her doctorate with high honors from New York University, and has shared her experience and scholarship through the authorship of twenty-four books about art, architecture, photography, crafts, design, and public policy. This included her groundbreaking work as the J. Clawson Mills Fellow of the Architectural League, with the book, *Collaboration: Artists and Architects*, which helped resuscitate a long moribund relationship, and was the subject of a significant museum exhibition, which traveled nation-wide. Her 1978 publication *Buildings Reborn: New Uses, Old Places*, introduced the concept of adaptive re-use (now integral to historic preservation) to the nation. And her book *Handmade in America: Conversations with fourteen Craftmasters* (1983), was an early examination of various crafts as art forms in their own right, rather than simply products of technical expertise.

Her reach extends into other media as well, where she has acted as interviewer/producer for seven television series about the arts, architecture, design, crafts, and public policy for the Arts & Entertainment Network, and many other programs for other national networks, such as CBS and NBC. Many of her television interviews were also shown at the Leo Castelli Gallery, and nearly 200 of her interviews are now available on iTunes U and YouTube, having been digitized by the Diamonstein-Spielvogel Video Archives at the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Duke University.

She is the curator of eight international museum exhibitions, each based on one of her books. *The Landmarks of New York* (the first publication to present a comprehensive listing of New York City's landmarks), in common with five of her other books, was also the basis of an exhibition, circulated to 82 countries on five continents, in an unprecedented tour sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. Her 23rd book, *The Landmarks of New York*, (now in its Sixth Edition, published by NYU Press, October 2016), a 912-page, illustrated encyclopedic history of NYC's architectural treasures, was accompanied by a multi-city traveling museum tour, with extensive outreach programs, throughout NY State including Buffalo, where it opened the National Trust for Historic Preservation annual conference, and Syracuse, Ithaca, Binghamton, Albany, Southampton, Rye, Manhattan, Brooklyn, and The Bronx; after traveling to several additional NYC venue, it was permanently installed at the Conrad R. Duberstein Courthouse, in downtown Brooklyn. Her most recent publication, *Notable New Yorkers: The HLPC Cultural Medallions Program*, was issued in November 2018, and documents the history of her street signage programs, and the Cultural Medallions Program, created to highlight and record the diverse history of NYC, and its most notable residents. She is also the author of dozens of magazine and newspaper articles and columns. These writings cover a wide variety of topics: travel, diversity, violence, gender issues, and race relations, and in some instances were the basis for more in-depth and lengthier publications.

Throughout her career, Diamonstein-Spielvogel has been involved in board service for national and local institutions and organizations. Her commitments include the Fresh Air Fund; the Friends of The High Line (Founding Director); the Brooklyn Academy of Music; the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts; the New York State Historic Archives Partnership Trust; the Drawing Committee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Acquisitions Committee of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum; the Board of the Museum of Modern Art (as an ex officio member); the New-York Historical Society; Municipal Art Society; New 42nd Street Theatre; the New York Landmarks Conservancy; the Film Anthology Archives; Big Apple Circus; the Central Park Conservancy; American Friends of the Georgian Group; and national groups, such as PEN America; the American Council on the Arts; Museum of African Art (Founding Member); the Bicentennial Commission (Chair); the Corcoran Gallery of Art; the White House Endowment Fund; and the Trust for the National Mall (Founding Director). She was elected to the Board of the Diplomacy Center Foundation in 2021.

For her lifelong dedication to community improvement and cultural affairs, in 1994 Diamonstein-Spielvogel was the first woman to be honored with the Pratt Institute Founder's Award, and in 1995 was awarded the annual Visionary in the Arts' Award from the Museum of Contemporary Crafts/The Museum of Arts and Design in New York. In 1998, she was the recipient of the Ralph Menapace Award of the Upper East Side Historic District. She also received the first Miami Beach Art Deco Preservation Award; was the first woman to be elected, in 2001, as an honorary member of PEN-Slovakia; and in 2003, received the Gen. Milan R. Stefanik Award for contributing to the advancement of public knowledge about the Slovak nation and people. In 2004, The Slovak Republic's Ministry of Foreign Affairs decorated her for "her remarkable personal contribution to the development of a civil society in Slovakia." In 2005, she was named an Honorary Member of the American Institute of Architects, and was awarded the Humanitarian Award of the Jewish Women's Foundation in New York. In 2008, she received the Lifetime Achievement Award from Partners for Livable Places in Washington, D.C. In 2008, together with Murakami and Julian Schnabel, she was named a "Legend" by Pratt Institute.

In 2010, she received a lifetime achievement award by the Citizens Committee of New York. In October 2010, Duke University initiated the Diamonstein-Spielvogel Visiting Filmmaker Series to address significant contemporary topics of social, political, economic, and cultural urgency from a global perspective. And in 2015, she initiated the Diamonstein-Spielvogel Artist-in-Residence Program at Duke University, to provide an annual on-campus residency; in November 2016, she initiated a three-year pilot of the Sanford Innovator-in-Residence Program, also at Duke University.

In addition to her earned doctorate, she is the recipient of four honorary doctorates: the first two were from The Maryland Institute of Art (1990) and from Longwood University, Virginia (1996); she was the commencement speaker at both commencements. In 2011, she received an honorary doctorate LL.D. from the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY and was their commencement speaker to a 6,000-person audience at Radio City Music Hall, NYC. In 2017, she received an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Purchase College, SUNY, and spoke at the commencement.

She was named a "Landmarks Lion," a lifetime achievement award from the NYC Historic Districts Council, the citywide advocate for New York City's historic districts, in 2011. The following year, the Jay Heritage Center in Westchester, NY (named for John Jay, first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court) awarded her the first John Jay bronze medal for lifetime contribution to the arts, architecture, and public policy, presented by Congresswoman Nita Lowey. And in June 2012, she was honored, along with Arianna Huffington, by the Women's Forum of NY, a 600-member organization comprised of

some of the most outstanding women in NYC elected to membership in diverse fields, who awarded her their 2nd Annual Lifetime Achievement Award.

In 2013, she became the Founder/Chair of NYC Landmarks50 Alliance (www.nyclandmarks50.org), a voluntary consortium of over 180 member organizations, collaborating to commemorate the 50th anniversary (April 19, 2015) of the passage of the NYC landmarks law. She continues as Chair for the NYC Landmarks55 Alliance, to commemorate the 55th Anniversary in 2020.

In September 2013, she was elected a New York State Democratic National Committee Member. In May 2015, she was appointed to the Advisory Board of the Gracie Mansion Conservancy. In June 2015, she was named to the Advisory Committee of the National Eisenhower Memorial; the Memorial, designed by architect Frank Gehry, will be built adjacent to the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

In November 2015, Dr. Diamonstein-Spielvogel was honored by the Historic Districts Council as one of the Pride of Landmark Lions recognized as part of the 50th Anniversary celebration of the New York City landmarks law. And in December 2015, she received the St. Nicholas Society Medal of Merit, and was also honored that same month by the New York Preservation Archive Project as the recipient of their inaugural Preservation Award. She served as Co-Chair of the King and Country Gala Benefit for the Brooklyn Academy of Music on April 3, 2016; on April 28, 2016, she received the NY Landmark Conservancy's Lucy G. Moses Preservation Leadership Award, given to outstanding individuals in the field of historic preservation. On September 14, 2016, she received the Annual Preservation Award from the American Friends of the Georgian Group, and on November 19, 2016, was honored at the ArtsWestchester Gala "Celebrating Women."

She and her husband were honored by The Acting Company with The Joan Warburg Humanitarian Award on November 12, 2018, and by the Clarion Society, on March 5, 2019, for their leadership in the arts. On October 22, 2019, she received the Ellen Stewart Centennial Medal, together with Philip Glass, given by the LaMama Theatre. She is to be honored by St. Bartholomew's Conservancy at their Gala Organ Concert, for her activist leadership in historic preservation (date TBD); the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum will honor her and her husband on April 17, 2021, dedicating the Sol Lewitt Room to them.

She is married to the leading international business executive, and former U.S. Ambassador to The Slovak Republic, Carl Spielvogel.