

Woman of Year covers a lot of bases (with photo gallery)

Monday, November 7, 2011

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Photographer: [Stacey Lauren-Kennedy](#)

Woman of the Year Ann Parillo smiles after being honored.

SCOTIA — As host of the long-running “Schenectady Today” on public access television, Ann Parillo is usually the one doing the introductions.

Sunday, she was the one being introduced as the recipient of the 2011 Woman of the Year award from the Schenectady Business and Professional Women’s Club.

Anneka Bull, the 2008 recipient of the award, praised Parillo for her dedication in starting the public-affairs program, which has been on Channel 16 for 14 years. In addition, Parillo also operated her own pharmacy business in Kansas, has worked as a state Medicaid investigator and instructor for the Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and served on the New York State Board of Pharmacy. She also serves on the state Board of Physical Therapy, the ElectricCity Arts and Entertainment District and Schenectady Access Cable Council, according to her biography. “You look at it and I thought ‘she must not sleep,’” Bull said at the Schenectady BPW’s annual fashion Show and Woman of the Year Celebration.

About 175 people attended the event, which was held at the Glen Sanders mansion. All proceeds from the event go toward college scholarships for girls and women who live or work in Schenectady County. Cyndie Powell, coordinator of the fashion show, said last year the group awarded \$7,000 in scholarships and organizers hoped to raise at least that much money from Sunday’s event.

## Photo Gallery Fashion show and celebration



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In accepting the award, Parillo said she was only a representative of others who are also deserving.

“There’s so many wonderful women doing great things and I’m proud to be one of them,” she said.

Parillo praised her crew, including longtime partner Gregg Millett, who has been with her the whole time. The two met when they were doing a show for singles on public access. Public access personality Carla Page had suggested a program about local issues and the rest is history. The show is all about giving people from the community a voice, Parillo said.

“We’re going to be doing our 700th show on the 29th,” she said.

Family members were on hand for the big presentation, including stepdaughter Kim Millett of Schenectady and daughter Katie Valley of Charlton, who said she was very proud of her mother’s accomplishments. “She excels in everything she does and she does a lot for Schenectady County,” Valley said.

In addition to honoring Parillo, people got to check out the latest fashions, courtesy of Fancy Schmancy of Albany, that were modeled by 14 women.

A lot of the models were wearing shoes furnished by Shush. The company, which has been in business since February, is operated out of the Schenectady house of Melissa O’Reilly.

“We have about 10 representatives in three states. We’re growing.”

O’Reilly said the merchandise is sold through “shoe parties,” where women can bond over their footwear.

“No matter your weight or age or how you’re feeling, you can put on a beautiful pair of shoes and you feel like a million bucks,” she said.

O’Reilly added that she loves being a part of the Schenectady BPW. “I love the women. I wish more women knew about it,” she said.

The mission of the organization is to advance the cause of all women through advocacy, networking and education.

Master of ceremonies Mark Grimm praised the organization for its accomplishments.

“You were for women’s rights long before being for women’s rights was cool or easy,” he said.

The event also was a chance for women to network, shop at the silent auction and vendors and learn about products and services.

Teddy Foster, a certified health coach, was talking to people about how to eat more healthy. Losing weight can help get people off medications or alleviate pain in their knees and back.

Foster had time to do a little shopping herself. “I bought a hat. It’s a good show and they’re wonderful people,” she said.

Nereida Stewart of Clifton Park was hovering at the silent auction table after putting in a couple of bids on a purse. “People are outbidding me like crazy,” she said. “She outbid me twice. I’m going to let her have it.”

Eleanor Lisuzzo of Clifton Park was also enjoying the event.

“It’s a wonderful day out to relax and have lunch and be with everybody,” she said.

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