

New York Social Diary
Online News Story
Friday, April 28, 2017



Online:

<http://www.newyorksocialdiary.com/social-diary/2017/the-week-just-past>

Last week, The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (The NYSPPC) hosted its 6th Annual Spring Luncheon Thursday, April 20th, at The Pierre. This annual event was part of the NYSPPC’s efforts to raise awareness surrounding *National Child Abuse Prevention Month*. The NYSPPC hosts its Spring Luncheon to raise funds for its [Trauma Recovery](#) and [Safe Touches](#) programs which help in the prevention and treatment of child abuse.

It was a good crowd, and a big one (and growing in number I’ve noticed year to year). Among the guests: **Brooke Shields**, new ACS Commissioner **David Hansell**, **Dori Cooperman**, **Diandra Douglas**, **Jean Shafiroff**, **Frederique van der Wal**, **Michael Gross**, actor **Tom Pelphrey**, **Valesca Guerrand-Hermès**, **Wendy Neuss**.



Eric MacLeish.

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This year's guest speaker was **Eric MacLeish**, the man, the attorney portrayed in the Oscar-winning *"Spotlight,"* defending hundreds of victims of sexual abuse against the Archdiocese of Boston. When he first took the podium to speak, Mr. MacLeish mentioned the film. He said that one of his daughters, after having seen it, remarked to him that the guy "who played you dad, really *got* you perfectly ... *except* he was much better looking."

MacLeish then discussed something much worse looking: his recent work as the attorney for one of the victims in the Choate Rosemary Hall private school scandal — a case that was unveiled two Thursdays ago in a report exposing decades of sexual abuse by members of the faculty. This is not a new story, as sexual abuse is not a new story. But there is something substantially different.

He said this case was especially important because "Private schools *could do enormous good by championing the way* on much needed legislation that could make a real difference in the protection of children." Here in New York, private schools do not have to report to law enforcement abuse that takes place internally. And they rarely do. It's the old-fashioned: "Don't talk about it."



Dr. Mary Pulido.

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“Right now,” he added, “if a teacher sexually assaults a student in a private school, there is no obligation to report that teacher to law enforcement. There is if he or she is a public school teacher. But not in a private school.”

In a call-to-action, **Dr. Mary L. Pulido**, the Executive Director of The NYSPCC, urged guests to call upon local legislators to change New York State’s Education Law:

“We helped author a bill that would ensure these protections for private school children. It has been passed by the Senate Children and Families Committee. In the Assembly, we’re making progress, but still have work to do. *I urge all of you to help us get this law passed.* You can call **Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan** who chairs the Education Committee or **Senator John J. Flanagan**. We want children in private schools protected!”

Honorable Carol Sherman (Supervising Judge of BX Family Court), David Hansell (ACS Commissioner), Honorable Jeanette Ruiz (Administrative Judge of the New York City Family Court), and Dr. Mary Pulido (Executive Director, NYSPCC).

The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NYSPCC) is the first — and one of the most highly respected — child protective agencies in the world.

It was founded in 1875 by **Elbridge T. Gerry**. Mr. Gerry was a lawyer and a member of a distinguished early American family. His grandfather for whom he was named was the 5th Vice President of the United States under President **James Madison**. The year before, in 1874, as a lawyer he took up the case of **Mary Ellen McCormack**, who had been abused by foster parents.



Valesca Guerrand-Hermes, Eric MacLeish, Dr. Mary Pulido, Maarit Glocer, and Elizabeth Mayhew.

The case was eventually argued before the Supreme Court. The following year Mr. Gerry, with **Henry Bergh** who founded the ASPCA, took up the cause personally and founded the NYSPPCC. Coincidentally Mr. Gerry's mansion was located on the land on which stands the Pierre Hotel where the lunch was taking place. It could be said that those of us at the lunch when looking out the window, were looking at the same site as Mr. Gerry did more than a century ago when he was in residence. Back then, the Central Park had begun creation only 30 years before.

The NYSPPCC helps the most vulnerable children of our community recover from trauma. More importantly, it helps prevent child abuse through its work with parents, teachers, children and foster care agencies. More than a century since its founding, The NYSPPCC's amazing work is used as a model for child abuse prevention centers across the nation. The NYSPPCC has investigated more than 650,000 cases on behalf of over two million children and has educated over 47,000 professionals working with children on child abuse and neglect issues. <http://www.nysppcc.org>

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Eric MacLeish and Brooke Shields.



Karl Wellner and Diandra Douglas.

Boo Grace.

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Kathy Van Ness and Frank Sommerfield.



Randi Schatz, Dr. Penny Grant, and Wendy Neuss. Dori Cooperman.

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Jessica Hart and Valesca Guerrand-Hermes.



Jennifer Creel.

Jean Shafiroff and Victor de Souza.



Valesca Guerrand-Hermes, Frederick Anderson, and Frederique van der Wal.



Regina Calcaterra and Dr. Mary Pulido.

Flo Anthony.

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Tom Pelphrey.