

News

Bush Appoints Local Democrat

By Wendy K. Kreitzman

Years of hard work paid off for Lee Seeman. President George W. Bush just re-appointed Ms. Seeman to the US Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad. This will be her third continuous term on the commission.

Ms. Seeman, a trustee of the W.F. Albright Institute for Archaeological Research in Jerusalem and a New York State Democratic committeewoman for the 16th assembly district, was first appointed by



Lee Seeman sworn in to continue as a member of the US Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad: (l. to r.) Commission Chairman Warren Miller, Kirstie Tucker (representing the White House), and Lee Seeman.

and then re-appointed during President Clinton's second term in office. Through her work on the commission, Ms. Seeman was instrumental in the building of one of the largest Holocaust remembrance monuments in Poland.

"My re-appointment represents hard work," Ms. Seeman told the Great Neck Record. Working on the commission at her own expense (there is no pay for this position), her travels include three trips to Wyszkw, Poland to help guide construction of the renowned monument.

The Wyszkw monument was made by retrieving 250 stones from an empty cemetery in the area and building them into a wall. It took several years to raise the necessary funds. Ms. Seeman was there for the dedication, along with Polish government officials, 32 Holocaust survivors from Israel, and several of her fellow commissioners.

There are 21 commissioners appointed to the US Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, all approved by President Bush, all to be bipartisan appointments. Seven members come from Senate recommendations, seven from Congressional recommendations, and seven are recommended by the President.

Lee Seeman was recommended for re-appointment by her good friend, US Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton. Recognizing Ms. Seeman's devotion and years of dedicated work for the commission, Senator Clinton pushed for Ms. Seeman's re-appointment. Ms. Seeman was also pleased to have the support of Congressman Gary Ackerman, Congressman Peter King, New York State Senator Michael Balboni and New York State Assemblyman Thomas P. DiNapoli.

The commission was created by Congress in 1985, recognizing that this country is "a nation of immigrants that has its values rooted in lands distant in miles and time." The commission's charge is "to encourage the preservation and protection of communal properties specifically the buildings, monuments, collections, and cemeteries connected with the heritage of Americans from the more than 22 countries that comprise eastern and central Europe and the former Soviet Union."

The task of the US Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad is aptly described in its purpose as written in the law that created the commission: "Because the fabric of a society is strengthened by visible reminders of the historical roots of the society, it is in the national interest of the United States to encourage the preservation and protection of the cemeteries, monuments, and historic buildings associated with the foreign heritage of the United States citizens."

A longtime Great Neck resident, Lee Seeman and her husband, Murray (former mayor of Great Neck Estates) moved to the peninsula in 1956. They have four children and seven grandchildren.

Over the years, the Record has published many fascinating stories of Ms. Seeman and her travels to preserve history and this country's heritage abroad. We will continue to follow her progress. Though she is still working on perpetual care for the Wyszkw project, she is also looking toward the future and new challenges. Next, she would like to work on historical preservation in Lithuania, "specifically Vilnius," and in "places like the Ukraine."