

# Press Release

## COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



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### **Whitehouse Playground Ribbon Cutting Celebrates the Life of Sayville Teacher, Scientist, and Philanthropist**



**Pictured: County Executive Steve Bellone and Councilwoman Kate Mullen (far right), Jack Whitehouse (middle), Legislator Lindsay, Frank Krochinski, and Phil Berdolt (far right) with the Whitehouse Family**

(SAYVILLE) – Suffolk County Legislator Bill Lindsay and Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone were on hand to dedicate and officially name the newly constructed Cherry Avenue Handicapped Accessible Playground, the Betty Whitehouse Playground. The 77 foot by 65 foot play structure that includes several slides, ramps, and recreational equipment, sits adjacent to the Baymen Soccer Fields owned by Islip Town.

Alongside members of the Whitehouse family, the naming dedication ceremony was also attended by Town of Islip Councilwoman Kate Mullen, Suffolk County Parks Commissioner Phil Berdolt, Suffolk County Office for People with Disabilities Director Frank Krochinski, Sayville Chamber of Commerce President, Rob Blair and Past Presidents, John Cox and Kay Cameron and over 35 residents and business owners.

”It was an honor to join the Whitehouse family to officially open this inclusive playground in West Sayville,” said Legis. Bill Lindsay. “Mrs. Whitehouse was first and foremost a wonderful person who made a tremendous impact on our community as a teacher, scientist, civic leader, and volunteer. This park is emblematic of the impact that she made on the children and students of our area and will be an everlasting tribute to her dedication to advancing the lives of all residents.”

Betty Whitehouse was a polarizing force in the Sayville community as a community leader who feverously volunteered her time to make her community a better place for all. As a child Betty had summered in Sayville where she met her future husband John, a resident of the Cottages of St. Ann’s. She married John in July 1944 immediately prior to his deployment to the Western Pacific as a pilot.

In June 1940 Betty graduated high school from Berkeley Institute in Brooklyn. She then graduated from New York University with a degree in physical education in June 1944 and furthered her education with a Master’s degree in science education from Adelphi University. Betty was a pioneer ahead of her time, not only earning an advanced degree in science education, but perpetually promoting science, technology, and math programs to young men and women throughout her life as a teacher and author.

In 1957 Betty began her teaching career in Sayville as a Middle School Science teacher at the old Jr. High School on Greene Ave. In 1969 she helped to acquire Planetarium Title III funds to build a planetarium and develop an astronomy curriculum from Kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Making her mark on the community didn’t just end there, for many years she also presented very popular free planetarium programs during the holiday season and continued on to publish a series of children’s books on astronomy.



**(Pictured L to R): Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone, Suffolk County Legislator Bill Lindsay, George Whitehouse, Carrie Whitehouse, Jack Whitehouse, Chelsea Whitehouse Biondolillo, Taylor Whitehouse, Elaine Whitehouse, and Islip Town Councilwoman Kate Mullen surround Betty’s plaque within the Playground)**

After her retirement in 1982, Betty continued to donate her time and resources to the community as a civic leader with Boy and Girl Scout troops, and youth sailing clubs, the Sayville Food Pantry, Sayville Library, Sayville Common Ground, Sayville Garden Club, and St. Ann’s Church. She was an original participant in the now 81 year old local Wet Pants Sailing Association and a longtime member and past President of the Sayville Rotary Club where she successfully converted Rotary Park into The Common Ground and saved the Shoreham Beach property and converted it into an Islip Town Park.

“Betty Whitehouse was a respected educator and a pillar in the Sayville community,” said Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone. “She devoted her time to teaching and inspiring students and community members alike. Betty leaves behind an incredible legacy as a scientist, author and educator who was way ahead of her time. It is only fitting that this playground, which is the first handicapped accessible playground in Sayville, is dedicated to such an amazing woman.”

Kay Cameron, former Greater Sayville Chamber of Commerce President and current Board Member rallied the many communities groups that Betty founded and participated in to raise funds to plant a memorial stone in the Playground which reads,

“We dedicate this park to the memory of Betty Whitehouse. Humanitarian, Astronomer, and Teacher. Betty was tireless in her generosity to Sayville’s children and its citizens.

Author, Civic Leader, and Volunteer to almost every Sayville Civic Group. Betty was first a wife, loving mother, and grandmother who made a lasting impact on our community. She is missed. Think of her as you gaze up towards the night sky.”

Betty is survived by her children John (“Jack”) and his wife Elaine, Helen Bannon and husband Peter, Elizabeth Manley and husband Bill, James and wife Carrie, George and wife Alyssa, 12 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren, one of whom, Jack, was in attendance for the dedication ceremony.

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\*Suffolk County Legislator Bill Lindsay is the Chairman of the Economic Development Committee, Chairman of the Parks & Recreation Committee, and Vice Chairman of the Government Operations, Personnel, Information Technology, and Housing Committee. Bill represents the 8<sup>th</sup> legislative district which consists of Bayport, Blue Point, Bohemia, Holbrook, Holtsville, Oakdale, Sayville, West Sayville parts of North Patchogue and Ronkonkoma.