

Sonia Braniff honored as Woman of the Year

The Richmond County Association for the Developmentally Disabled has named Sonia Braniff of Stapleton as its Woman of the Year. The organization will honor Mrs. Braniff at its 8th annual Zodiac Ball May 24 in the Shalimar, New Dorp.



Sonia
Braniff

"I have seen R.A.D.D. grow from a membership of 10 to 70 plus and have seen its services for young adults expand; I feel proud that I have been a part of that growth," Mrs. Braniff said.

Wife and mother, the honoree has been an active advocate for the rights of the handicapped, since she gave birth to a child with cerebral palsy 18 years ago.

In the lead in developing services for the special child, outside of the institution, one of her earliest tangles with bureaucracy was over the importance of early diagnosis and evaluation of all childhood disabilities. Her involvement resulted in the founding of the Staten Island Developmental Center, currently based in Clifton.

Appointed by President Ronald Reagan to the Presidential

Advisory Committee on Health and Human Services, she also holds an appointment, originally made by former Gov. Hugh Carey, to the board of visitors to the Staten Island Developmental Center.

Mrs. Braniff also helped create tours for the handicapped in the Staten Island Children's Museum. As coordinator for the Board of Education's Project R.O.P.O (Reach Out to Parents Office), she trains and disseminates information to parents of high school-age students.

She has been a guiding force enabling R.A.D.D. to become a vibrant resource in the community. As a member of R.A.D.D.'s executive board, Mrs. Braniff has been able to provide information to parents regarding educational, vocational and advocacy program which are available for their children. She has been associated with R.A.D.D., which provides disabled young adults with recreational, educational and cultural activities, since its inception eight years ago. Her leadership in promoting services for the handicapped child outside of the institution earned her a place on the roster of the Staten Island Advance's Women of Achievement.