

Audubon

ADVOCATE

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2004 Thomas W. Keesee, Jr. Award Presented to Marian O. Heiskell

By Nina Whiting

ON NOVEMBER 3, 2004 at the Yale Club of New York City, Audubon New York and Patricia Keesee awarded Marian O. Heiskell the Thomas W. Keesee, Jr. Conservation Award. This was the fourth year the Keesee award celebration has been held, and was the most successful to date, raising \$150,000 to support Audubon New York programs, which include education, conservation science and advocacy for New York's great natural heritage.

The ballroom of the Yale Club was filled with over 100 of Marian's family

and friends, including her brother Arthur Sulzburger, her daughters Jacqueline Dryfoos and Diana Heiskell. Audubon New York's Board was in attendance, led by Chairman Constantine Sidamon-Eristoff, Luncheon Chairman Margot Ernst, and Audubon's "For the Birds" volunteer and board member Gini Stowe. It was announced that these three leaders of Audubon New York would join the National Audubon Society board in January.

Also in attendance were the three past Keesee honorees, Donal O'Brien,

Jack Bierwirth and Samuel Pryor, III.

David Miller, Audubon New York Executive Director emceed the day's event and both he and Audubon President John Flicker gave glowing tributes to the work Marian has done to benefit Audubon over the years. The keynote speech was given by award winning playwright John Guare (*House of Blue Leaves, Six Degrees of Separation, Lydie Breeze and A Few Stout Individuals*) who described his attempts to figure out which bird "our Marian" most closely resembled. After much thought and detailed descriptions of many species—some common, some rare—it was determined that Marian and the unsung but historically heroic Pigeon, known also as the Dove, have many honorable traits in common (a copy of his remarks can be obtained from the Audubon state office).

Throughout the years, Marian has been a tireless advocate for birds and



Marian Heiskell and Patricia Keesee after presentation of the award



(F) Donal O'Brien, 2001 Keesee Award recipient, Marian Heiskell, Patricia Keesee and John Flicker (B) Jack Bierwirth, 2002 Keesee Award recipient, Constantine Sidamon-Eristoff, Audubon New York Board Chairman and David J. Miller, Audubon New York Executive Director

the the environment. Marian has been involved in Audubon's *Listen to the Sound* program since it began in 1989. She has served on the Board of Audubon New York since 1996, and served on the board of National Audubon from 1982 to 2001. Besides her work with the Audubon family, she has served on the board of directors of the New York Times Company from 1963 – 1997, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Ford Motor Company, Merck, the New 42nd Street Inc., the 42nd Street Development

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Pale Male

By David J. Miller

IT WAS A CHILLY DECEMBER afternoon when a work crew arrived at 74th and Fifth Avenue to do what they thought was a routine job to remove a bird's nest. It was the nest of a very famous Hawk, who has raised 23 chicks in this location over the past ten years. He was the main character in a book entitled *Red Tails in Love* and was the subject of a documentary, which aired internationally, named "Pale Male," after him. The workers shrugged off the yelling of one of Pale Males most devoted fans, Lincoln Karam, who has been monitoring the



bird's mates and fledglings for years. Little did they know that if they only heeded his warnings, it could have prevented what was about to occur.

The response to the removal of Pale Male's nest was quick, passionate and

organized. By the following morning television crews and Audubon officials from the New York City chapter and State office, including E.J. McAdams and myself, were on site. Our message, which aired on national network news as well as the metropolitan television, radio and print media was simple. We called the act a travesty and as Mary Tyler Moore said, "heartless." We expressed the connections Pale Male had made to New Yorkers and the need for a solution to bring his nest back. People yearn to be connected to nature, especially in urban areas and Pale Male was the perfect medium.

Over the next seven days, a remarkable thing happened. The story took off and thousands of concerned birdwatchers and organizations worked

together with clocklike precision. There were television interviews, radio interviews, and daily news stories, including a front-page national story in Saturday's New York Times. There were vigils held each night by the New York City Audubon Society and even a Pale Ale's for Pale Male petition signing party organized by Audubon New York and National Audubon's Public Policy office at a neighborhood pub, with free glasses of Ale for all who would support Pale Male's cause.

In a week's time, Audubon collected over 10,000 signatures for the petition through our web sites and events, received over 4,400 letters of protest that were sent to the buildings Co-op board, which ordered the removal of

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