



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 18, 2025

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Van Cortlandt Park Alliance Hosts its Annual Springtime Shindig Honoring Two Advocates for the Park's Memorial Grove

Bronx, NY – Van Cortlandt Park Alliance is excited to announce its annual Springtime Shindig, which will take place on Thursday, May 15 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at the Lakeside Golf House in Van Cortlandt Park. This annual event promises to be an unforgettable evening with cocktails, lite bites, desserts, live music, at a picturesque setting overlooking the lake, all in support of VCPA's ongoing preservation work, cultural, and educational programs.

This year's event will honor two distinguished community members who have ensured that Memorial Grove continues to honor those who served our country and gave the ultimate sacrifice:

- Herb Barret, a Korean War veteran and advocate for the Memorial Grove, will receive the *Betty Campbell-Adams Park Angel Award*.
- James Hendon, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Veterans' Services, will be awarded the *Cultivating the Bronx Award*.

Commissioner James Hendon says, "Van Cortlandt Park holds a quiet kind of power. For our agency, it has been both a site of reflection and a space of renewal—a place where we join our veteran community to mark moments of shared remembrance. Memorial Grove sits at the heart of that reflection—a living tribute to generations of service and sacrifice. As commissioner, I've had the honor of joining veterans there for Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and moments in between. We gather beneath those trees not just to remember the fallen, but to remind ourselves of what they stood for—and what we still owe them.

In recent years, our agency has deepened that commitment with the addition of two new benches at the Grove: one honoring those who served in Vietnam, and one in tribute to the veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. These join the existing memorials to World War II and Korean War veterans, forming a continuum of memory that spans our nation's modern history. For me, this space is personal. Beyond the ceremonies, beyond the plaques, it's a park where I walk with my children—a place to breathe, connect, and teach them what service, sacrifice, and stewardship look like in real life.”

To celebrate Memorial Grove and Van Cortlandt Park, Springtime Shindig guests will have the opportunity to participate in a raffle, enjoy the beautiful surroundings, and support Van Cortlandt Park Alliance's work to preserve the natural beauty, history, and recreational offerings of this iconic park.

Tickets and journal ads to congratulate our honorees are available for purchase. Sponsorship opportunities are still open—sponsors will continue to be included on updated electronic invitations. For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit: <https://vancortlandt.org/shindig25>.

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About Van Cortlandt Park Alliance:

Van Cortlandt Park Alliance is the sole nonprofit partner working with NYC Parks to manage the park. VCPA's mission is to preserve, support, and promote the ecological, recreational, cultural arts, and historical value of Van Cortlandt Park. VCPA delivers educational, stewardship, cultural, and volunteer programs for participants of all ages, education levels, ethnicities, and backgrounds.



Herb Barret (center) with Segio Villaverde of Community Board 8 and NYC Council Member Eric Dinowitz (right). Photo: Stephanie Ehrlich



*NYC Department of Veterans' Services Commissioner James Hendon (speaking) and Herb Barret at Van Cortlandt Park Alliance's 2024 Memorial Day commemoration.
Photo: Stephanie Ehrlich*