

Taking

Southampton memorial to honor same-sex marriage pioneer Windsor

BY BART JONES

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Edie Windsor made history with a lawsuit that went to the Supreme Court and opened the door to legalized same-sex marriage in the United States.

Now, six years after her death, the former Southampton resident's legacy is being carried on by her widow, with events including the renaming of a street in front of Washington Square Park in Manhattan in her honor.

Also in June, which is Pride month, a memorial to Windsor will be unveiled in front of Southampton Town Hall.

Judith Kasen-Windsor, who was Windsor's wife for the last year of her life, said the legendary gay rights leader's impact lives on.

"Her legacy is activism and to never give up and be strong," Kasen-Windsor said.

ONLY IN NEWSDAY

Pride Month

Southampton Supervisor Jay Schneiderman, who helped spearhead the memorial at Town Hall, said Windsor was "a giant, even though small in stature in physical size. She took on an incredible challenge to overturn the Defense of Marriage Act and go up against the United States of America and win."

"She changed so many people's lives by laying the foundation really for same-sex marriage," he added.

Windsor legally married her longtime partner, noted psychologist Thea Spyer, in Canada in 2007. When Spyer died in 2009, the Internal Revenue Service denied Windsor the unlimited spousal exemp-



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Edie Windsor in 2015, as the Supreme Court affirmed the right for all to marry including, for the first time, same-sex couples.

pride in Edie's courage

WHAT TO KNOW

- **The late Edie Windsor**, a Southampton summer resident who made history by helping to open the door to legalized same-sex marriage, will be honored throughout June's Pride Month.
- **A street sign with her name** and that of her long-time partner, Thea Spyer, will be unveiled near Washington Square Park in Manhattan.
- **A large heart made up** of 260 smaller interlocking hearts will honor her in front of Southampton Town Hall.

tion from federal estate taxes that married heterosexuals received.

The government said she owed \$363,053 in taxes.

Windsor sued, arguing that the Defense of Marriage Act, which recognized only marriages between a man and a woman, was unconstitutional.

"This was not about the taxes, this was not about the money," Kasen-Windsor said. "This was about the fact she was with a woman for 43¾ years . . . considered themselves a married couple, but not recognized by the government."

In 2013, the Supreme Court ruled in Windsor's favor. It was the start of the downfall of laws limiting marriage to heterosexuals.

Love, and now fame

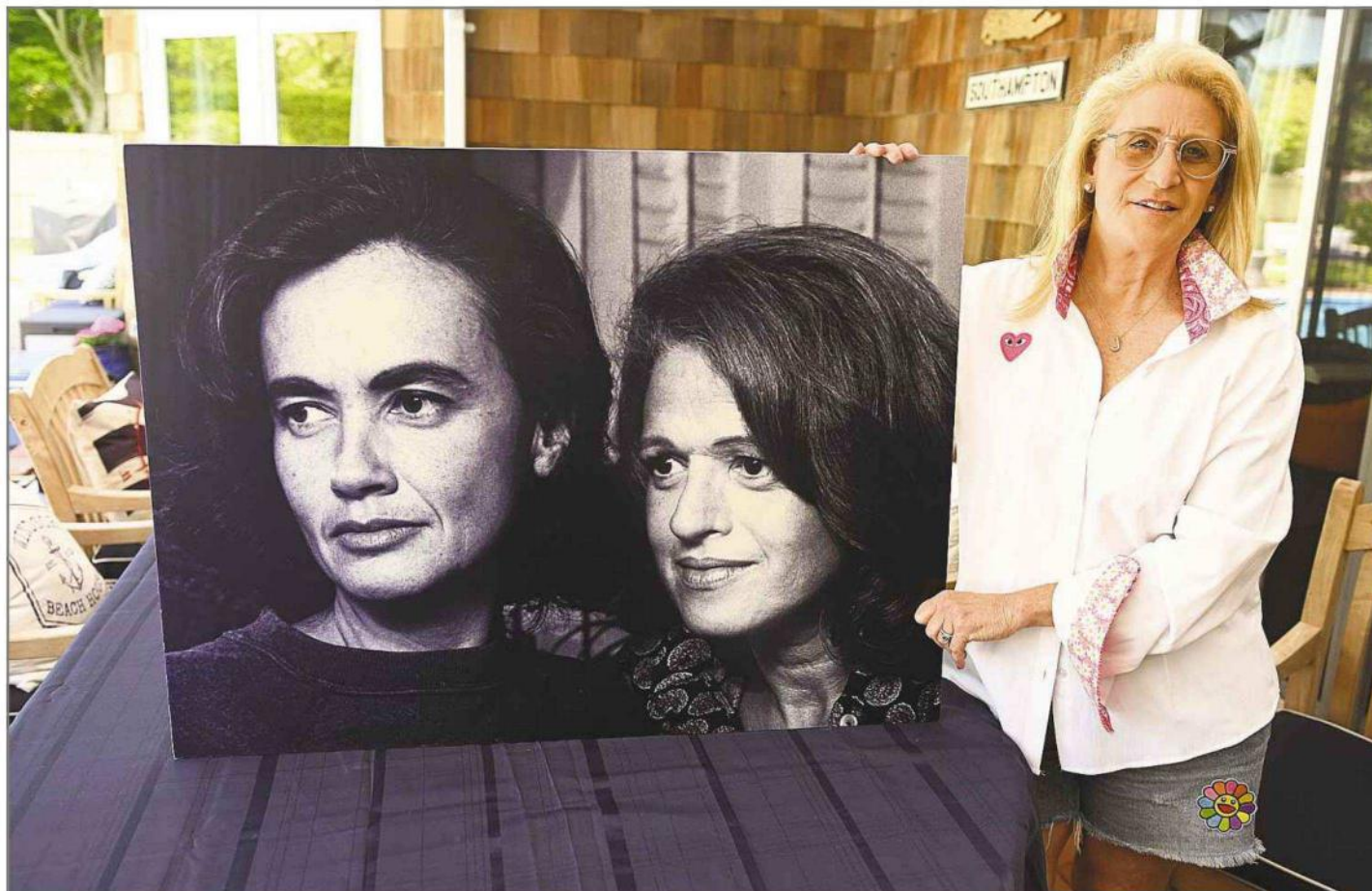
Windsor became a national celebrity. President Barack Obama called to congratulate her. She was grand marshal of New York City's LGBT Pride March and a runner-up to Pope Francis for Time magazine's person of the year in 2013.

Two years later, on June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court made same-sex marriage a constitutional guarantee nationwide.

This month, Windsor will be the focus of several honors.

The street sign at Fifth Avenue and Washington Square North will be unveiled on June 20 with the names of Windsor and Spyer.

Kasen-Windsor, who married Edie Windsor in 2016, said the location of the sign — in



Judith Kasen-Windsor holds a photo of Thea Spyer, left, and Edie Windsor. Windsor's advocacy opened door to legal same-sex marriage.



New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, left, and Edie Windsor, during a rally in Greenwich Village in 2013.

front of the famous arch at Washington Square Park — was important for two reasons.

Windsor and Spyer lived in an apartment nearby for decades, she said. And Washington Square Park long has served as a gathering spot for protesters of numerous causes going back to the gay rights

Stonewall riots in 1969.

"It was important for me to have her and Thea there because they are a representation of civil rights for everybody," Kasen-Windsor said. "It wasn't just about LGBTQ people. It was about everybody having the rights and the freedom."

The memorial in Southamp-

ton will consist of one large heart made up of about 260 interlocking hearts made of bricks, Schneiderman said. The names of Windsor and Spyer, along with the date of their marriage, will be on the heart at the center, with all the others radiating out from it.

Special place in town

Town officials often perform civil weddings at Town Hall, Schneiderman said, so the memorial will be a spot where couples can get married if they want.

It will be dedicated June 26, the anniversary of the Supreme Court ruling legalizing same-sex marriages nationwide.

People can pay \$1,000 to have their names engraved on one of the hearts, he said. The proceeds will pay for the project, as well as an expected \$200,000 donation to the Edie Windsor Health Care Center in Hampton Bays. The center specializes in the treatment of LGBTQ people but is open to anyone.

One person who has bought

a heart is Tom Kirdahy, a Tony-winning Broadway producer who was married to the late well-known playwright Terence McNally.

"Edie was one of the most joyful, passionate, intelligent, kind people I've ever met," said Kirdahy, who grew up in Hauppauge. "She was literally a profile in courage. She changed the world for all of us, for the good."

"I wouldn't have been able to marry my husband were it not for Edie's courage," he added. "I think about her every day of my life."

Windsor's story will be further memorialized through the distribution of her archives — photographs, letters and other materials sitting in 250 boxes in her longtime summer home in Southampton, Kasen-Windsor said.

The materials, which an archivist hired by Kasen-Windsor is sorting through, will be given to New York University, the New-York Historical Society, and the Obama Foundation and Library in Chicago.