

The Puffin Foundation Ltd.

"...continuing the dialogue between art and the lives of ordinary people."

Northern New Jersey Sanctuary Coalition

October 19, 2025

Gladys Miller-Rosenstein: Welcoming the Stranger Awardee Speech

I.

It is so lovely to be here and see so many family faces and new friendly ones.

I am deeply honored to be the recipient of this recognition from the Northern New Jersey Sanctuary Coalition, an organization that we at the Puffin Foundation think so highly of, one that stands for all the principles we believe in so strongly, dignity, hope, and the opportunity to build lives.

II.

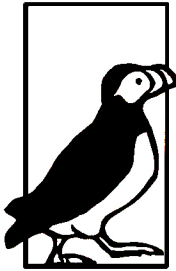
My late husband Perry Rosenstein established The Puffin Foundation approximately 35 years ago. To foster tolerance, peace, and protect human rights—most of all “to make this a better world to live in.”

Perry served in the Navy during World War II. He studied to be a teacher after the war but refusing to sign the Loyalty oath (mandatory at that time) that did not come to pass.

He put his overwhelming worth ethic into high gear and started a business, which became successful.

III.

Perry was a progressive activist from a very early age, volunteering to work for progressive groups—joining in all parades that were marching for positive change, finding ways to help fund progressive organizations. When his business became successful, he decided to put his beliefs into action and open his own Foundation with a mission in so many ways similar to the Coalition’s mission.



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IV.

Perry named the Foundation in honor of his first wife who loved birds and who had worked with an activist on Sea Island, and island off the coast of Maine to help bring the Puffin birds, who were being destroyed, back to the island where they had been born.

Making Puffin decoys and placing them with the help of other concerned people throughout the island, the decoys worked, the larger birds were frightened away, and today the Puffins have returned to their island.

V.

Perry and I met shortly after our mates died. Both of us being progressive thinkers, loving opera, dance, art, travel, and tennis, finding it so easy to be together, married in 1990.

I retired from 25 years of teaching, which had truly been a labor of love, and went to work with Perry and a wonderful team of inspired people, to help develop the Foundation. We were helped greatly by progressive organizations and foundations and were soon ready to advertise our availability to give out grants.

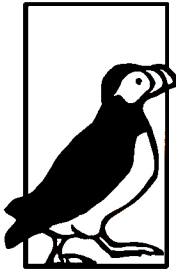
Our first year we gave out 18 grant awards and were delighted. Since then, we have given out thousands of grants throughout the United States and to other countries around the world.

VI.

One of Perry's happiest accomplishments was being able to open an "Activist" gallery in the Museum of the City of New York, which has developed into one of the most visited galleries in the museum, showing how "Activism even by one person" can make positive change.

We are so lucky to have Neal Rosenstein, Perry's son, standing in his father's shoes as President of the Foundation. Being truly his father's son, he is doing an outstanding job of keeping Perry's vision alive.

Thank you again for this honor. It reflects the work of countless dedicated people working for a just and inclusive world and is a tribute to my husband's legacy.



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VII.

Thank you for your dedication to those who need it most and reminding all of us that when we act in the service of others with sympathy, commitment, and hope, it is so meaningful.

We are inspired by your work, and it is an honor to be working with you. Hopefully, during these difficult times, we can make that positive change.

Thanks also goes to our good friends Moishe and Rachel Benai who introduced you to us.