



Local Women Of Leadership Past and Present



MARIA LUISA WHITTINGHAM

MARIA LUISA

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Maria Luisa

Maria Luisa Whittingham and the store that shares her name have been Nyack institutions for more than 30 years, as central to the village as her South Broadway location. Being a business owner in Nyack means more than just tending the shop. As Whittingham has so clearly demonstrated, it means tending the community as well. She is well known for working together with other merchants to maintain each others' business health, frequently referring customers to neighboring stores. It was a long journey to Nyack for Whittingham, who was born in the Bronx, raised in Puerto Rico until she was 10 and then relocated with her family to Queens. With a degree from the Fashion Institute of Technology and experience in the New York garment industry as a clothing designer and in production management, Whittingham opened Maria Luisa in 1987. It was a simple, 400-square-foot space downstairs, in the back, of the Nyack Antiques Mall building. Today, some 30 years and 1,100 square feet later, Maria Luisa Boutique caters to a loyal local clientele while serving day-trippers and tourists alike. When you step into the Nyack, NY Maria Luisa Boutique storefront, you'll find mindful and ethically curated items. Today, she attributes her success to a combination of hard work and an appreciation for what she has and has achieved. This attitude of appreciation and gratitude extends to the community that has long supported her. And her support of Nyack has been there from the start. Just a small mention of her community efforts gives a glimpse into her dedication to a variety of causes and organizations. She has been a member and served as treasurer for the Arts, Crafts and Antique Dealers Association, and is a former board member of the Nyack Center. She has been a Nyack Chamber member since 1987 and a member of the Nyack NAACP since 2001 with positions, among many, including her current position as branch treasurer. She is a co-founder of Nyack Merchants United, a grassroots group that came about in 2020 as a platform for Nyack merchants to connect and is also a current board member of the newly formed Nyack Business Council. Honors, not surprisingly, have come to Whittingham. In March 2008 she was named A Woman of Vision and Leadership for her community involvement by The Nyack Center. She is also a 2010 graduate of LEADERSHIP ROCKLAND, a 2011 "Friend of the Year" honoree of Friends of the Nyacks and a 2012 recipient of the annual RBWN Woman of the Year award by the Rockland Business Women's Network. She has also just been honored by the Center for Safety & Change, formerly the Rockland Family Shelter. In 2014 Maria Whittingham was named the 2014 Rockland County Entrepreneur and Community Activist of the Year at the annual Social Justice Day Luncheon. You may read more at [@marialuisaboutique.com](http://AboutMariaLuisaWhittingham)