

Black History Blooms at Southampton African American Museum's Annual Fundraiser

The annual fundraiser honored community leadership while supporting the museum's exhibitions, programs and continued growth

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, July 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Southampton African American Museum (SAAM), brought culture, community and philanthropy together for its annual Bubbles & Bloom Brunch at the Southampton Inn.

The museum's signature summer fundraiser welcomed supporters, artists, philanthropists and cultural leaders for an elegant afternoon celebrating African American history, art and creativity. The floral-inspired gathering featured brunch and champagne, live entertainment, an interactive Bloom Bar, an awards ceremony, a curated auction and VIP gift bags.

Guests were invited to embrace the event's theme by wearing floral-inspired attire or incorporating flowers into their summer looks. Inside the Southampton Inn, the Bloom Bar gave attendees an opportunity to create personalized floral arrangements as keepsakes from the afternoon.

Brenda Simmons, co-founder, president and CEO of the Southampton African American Museum, welcomed guests and spoke about the importance of sustaining the museum as a permanent cultural institution on the East End. Funds raised through the brunch will support SAAM's exhibitions, educational initiatives, public programming and work to preserve and share



Logo Southampton African-American Museum (SAAM)



Dede Gotthelf, Claude Weir, Yvette Weir, Jean Shafiroff, Brenda Simmons, Sharon Joseph (Photo Credit: PMC / Sean Zanni)

the region's African American heritage.

"This gathering reflects the spirit of the Southampton African American Museum: history, creativity, community and a shared commitment to ensuring that these stories remain visible for generations to come," Simmons said. "The support received through Bubbles & Bloom helps SAAM continue presenting meaningful programs while welcoming new audiences into the museum."

Event chair Jean Shafiroff joined Brenda Simmons in welcoming attendees and recognizing the supporters whose leadership has helped advance the museum's mission.

A centerpiece of the afternoon was the presentation of SAAM's annual awards honoring individuals whose achievements and service have strengthened the arts, culture and wider community.

The 2026 honorees included Dede Gotthelf, recipient of the Visionary Supporter of the Arts Award; Claude and Yvette Weir, recipient of the Champion of the Arts Award; and Sharon Joseph, recipient of the Community Empowerment Award.

The curated auction offered artwork, luxury items and distinctive experiences, giving guests another opportunity to contribute to the museum's continued development. Entertainment was provided by Dwayne Kerr, adding to an afternoon that balanced celebration with a focus on cultural preservation and community investment.

The fundraiser concluded a weekend of programming presented as part of Art & Soul:



Brenda Simmons, Deborah Ballard, Debbie Woods
(Photo Credit: PMC / Sean Zanni)



Brenda Simmons, Ann Welker (Photo Credit: PMC / Sean Zanni)

Hamptons, a celebration of Black art, history and creativity held from July 17th - July 19th. Weekend events included a screening of Crossroads followed within a discussion led by Brenda Simmons with Director Horane Henry, Producer Victorious De Costa and Actress Okema T. Moore; a guided art crawl; and the opening of Damien Davis' exhibition, Hedges and Edges: Barbershops, Community Gardens, and the Architectures Care. The museum also hosted an evening of live music, Caribbean cuisine, artist conversation and dancing.



Atmosphere (Photo Credit: PMC / Sean Zanni)

Notable guests included: Brenda Simmons (SAAM Founder & CEO), Jean Shafiroff (Event Chair), Dede Gotthelf, Claude & Yvette Weir, Sharon Joseph, Legislator Anne Welker, Village Trustee Rob Coburn and Village Trustee Willa Bernstein.

2026 Event Partners and Sponsors included ART & SOUL: Hamptons, Southampton Inn, Bespoke Flowers, New England Sweetwater, White Rain, Tea Fortē, Beautiful Amore Skincare, Pause by BBraxton, Cambridge Chemists and British M.

About The Southampton African American Museum (SAAM):

The Southampton African American Museum (SAAM) began in 2005 under the name The East End African American Museum and Center for Excellence. Until now, it has functioned as a virtual museum—hosting events and exhibits in public spaces throughout Southampton Village—most notably the Annual Southampton African American Film Festival.

SAAM moved to a new location at 245 North Sea Road in Southampton, NY. Affectionally called "The Barbershop," the building was a local gathering place for area African Americans from the 1940s until its closing. In 2010, the Village Historic Preservation Board designated it as the first African American historic landmark in the Village of Southampton, and the process was started to transform it into a permanent space.

For more information please visit: www.saamuseum.org

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