

# The Scarsdale Bowl: New Historical Details Uncovered

By **LESLIE CHANG**  
*Associate Village Historian*

In 1943, 12 civic leaders hosted a dinner honoring their peer, George Clifton, for his contributions to the Scarsdale community, where they each chipped in for a silver gift to mark the occasion. Little did they know that the token of appreciation—a silver bowl—would come to symbolize the Village’s highest civic honor for decades to come. On April 24, the Scarsdale Foundation will award its 86th Scarsdale Bowl Award to Andrew Sereysky at its annual dinner. The Bowl’s history, with some newly unearthed details, highlights the importance of the yearly event as a unifying force in the community.



The original Scarsdale Bowl, purchased at Tiffany & Co. in 1944.

The Scarsdale “Bowl” was almost going to be a Scarsdale “Bag.” In a Scarsdale Inquirer story from January 30, 1953, Committee member S. Spencer Scott recounted how the first award was going to be a “handsome traveling bag” until he suggested a silver bowl. Scott thought it would be more of a keepsake, and would “always be treasured by its recipient.” His foresight was right, and this wasn’t his only strategic vision that improved Scarsdale. He also spearheaded fundraising for building the Scarsdale Public Library, hence the Library’s Scott Room. It’s notable that Scott, who is just one example of the visionaries and passionate volunteers who have received the Bowl award, had been President of Harcourt Publishing, then known as Harcourt, Brace & Co.



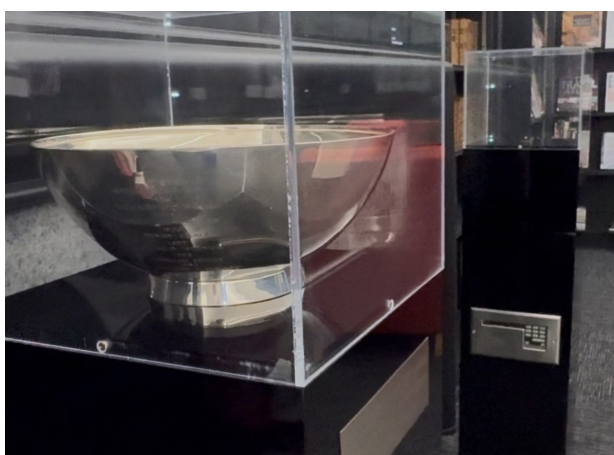
S. Spencer Scott (left) receiving the 1953 Bowl Award. He was the originator of the idea to gift a silver bowl, and also the person for whom the Scarsdale Public Library’s Scott Room is named. Shown with 1956 winner, George M. Waugh, Jr. Credit: Scarsdale Public Library.

The year after the first award dinner, the same 12 men made contributions to the Scarsdale Foundation for the purchase of a permanent Scarsdale Bowl from Tiffany & Co. The names of recipients are inscribed on the Bowl each year, and a smaller replica is given to each award recipient. The original Tiffany Bowl is a reproduction of a design from c. 1700 created by a Boston silversmith named Joseph Conyers. The Colonial Era design is a fitting nod to Scarsdale’s colonial heritage.



S. Spencer Scott, recipient of the 1953 Scarsdale Bowl, and other previous winners at the Scarsdale Bowl Award Dinner at Scarsdale Golf Club, 1953. From left to right: Malcolm Pirnie, J. Lester Van Name, George B. Clifton (first-ever Bowl winner), S. Spencer Scott, George M. Waugh, George Hugh Smyth, Arthur F. Driscoll, Robert M. Irish, Lester W. Nelson, Cleveland A. Dunn. Credit: Scarsdale Public Library.

By 1992, the Bowl ran out of space for new awardee names. A second Scarsdale Bowl was purchased from Tiffany’s, and the annual engraving tradition continues. Each year, the Foundation shuttles the Bowl to Wilson & Sons Jewelers for hand engraving. Wilson’s, a downtown Scarsdale fixture since 1932, has supplied the engraving and the awardee replica bowls for decades. Today, both Bowls have their own display cases at the Scarsdale Library in the Quiet Reading Room/Local History Center at Scarsdale Public Library



The two Scarsdale Bowls reside at Scarsdale Public Library, except when the newer bowl is at Wilson & Sons Jewelers for its annual engraving.



Bowl winners’ names were inscribed around the outside until 1984, when the Foundation fit a few more names along the inner edge. 1991 winner Jeanne Richman was the last name listed before a new Bowl was purchased.

The Bowl Dinner has evolved from an invite-only “elder statesmen’s” black-tie dinner to an inclusive and festive affair open to all Scarsdale residents. Women first served on the Committee in 1973, but were not invited to attend the dinner until the following year. In 1975, Harriette Krantz was the first woman to receive the prestigious award. Today, the Chair and the Foundation President mindfully select Committee members that reflect the diversity of the Scarsdale community.



Harriet Krantz at the 1971 Bowl Dinner at the White Plains Hotel, the year she became the first woman to receive the honor. A few highlights of her distinguished civic work include being President of the Scarsdale and Westchester County League of Women Voters, a founder of the Scarsdale Adult School, Trustee of the Village of Scarsdale, President of the Scarsdale Library Board, and other leadership at the County and State levels. Shown with 1971 winner, Samuel Duboff. Credit: Scarsdale Public Library.

Past award recipients include busy chief executives, industry leaders and parents, yet they have all prioritized their civic work to drive positive change in Scarsdale. “The collective contributions of the awardees in the last 82 years is immeasurable,” said Randy Guggenheimer, past President of the Scarsdale Foundation and current President of the Scarsdale Historical Society. “Volunteerism built this Village from our fire stations and library to our award-winning schools and the Scarsdale Adult School. The Award Dinner celebrates volunteers like Andrew Sereysky who give their time and talent for the sake of the public good.”



At the 2016 Scarsdale Bowl Dinner, left to right: Lauren Meyers, Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, 2016 Bowl Winner Susie Rush and David Rush. Credit: Scarsdale Inquirer.

*The Scarsdale Foundation invites all residents to the upcoming Scarsdale Bowl Dinner. More information can be found on the Scarsdale Foundation’s website.*