

NOTABLES AND QUOTABLES

Matilda moved by portrait

By KATHY LARKIN

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"It's odd to see yourself in a portrait," said Matilda Cuomo the other night, looking at the image of a red-gowned woman that was herself as rendered by artist Fran Lew.

The portrait had just been unveiled to applause at an American Cancer Society benefit hosted by Tony Randall at the Columbus Club.

"Who says dreams can't come true?" Matilda said. "Who ever thought a girl born in Brooklyn, married to a fella from Queens who became governor, would be standing here in the Columbus Club with her own painting. And Tony Randall."

The event and the painting—which Lew created by observing Matilda and more than 100 photographs—were a salute to New York's First Lady, an ACS volunteer for the past 10 years.

"This evening is like the icing on the cake," Matilda continued. "I look around and see so many old friends. I feel like Dorothy on the Yellow Brick Road. Her friends all came along with her. No one does it alone."

The evening, chaired by Zahava Burack, also benefited cancer research for children, who are especially important persons to Matilda Cuomo. She began a career as an elementary school teacher and returned as a sub after Christopher, the youngest of her five offspring, started school.

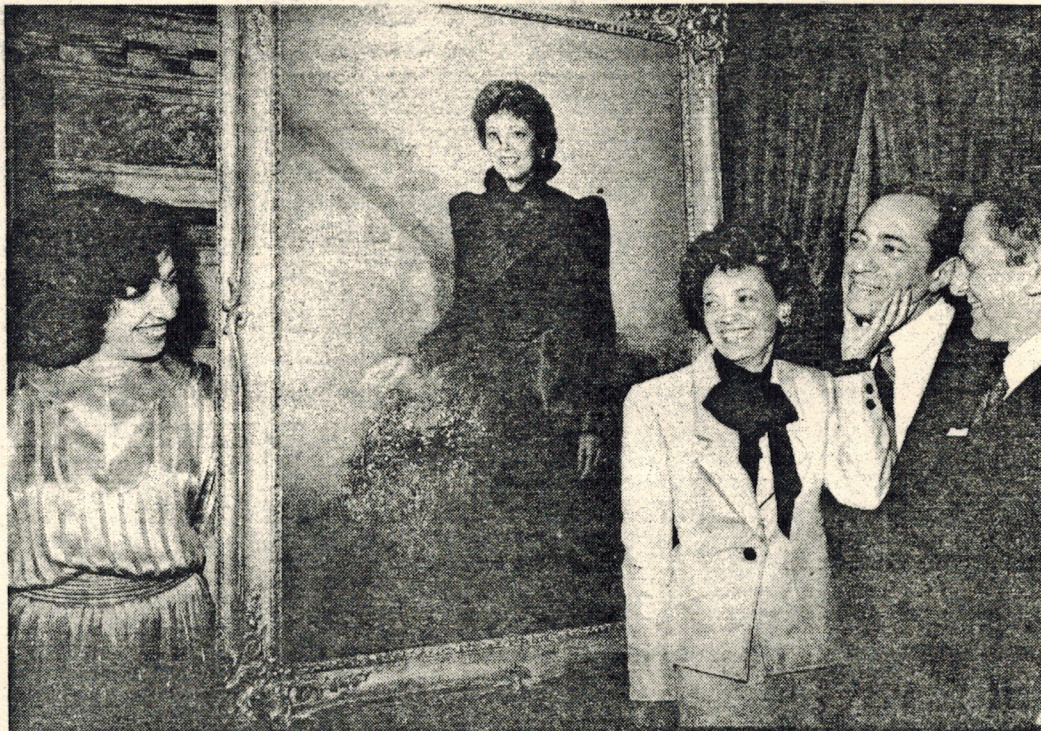
CHATTING BEFORE the portrait was unveiled to a crowd that included hubby Gov. Mario Cuomo and her mother-in-law, Imaculata, Matilda called the painting "a catalyst."

"This is the first time the five separate American Cancer Society divisions within the state have worked together to raise research money for children. That's important," she said.

"I got involved as a volunteer with the American Cancer Society when two of my dearest friends lost children to leukemia."

Later, she told the crowd, her own family has been touched by the discovery that her sister-in-law has breast cancer.

After the unveiling, the governor offered a few words on the painting. "It's superb," he said. "And I'll tell you why. Matilda has a special quality, a warmth and gentleness that not



PRETTY AS A PICTURE, Matilda Cuomo gets hubby in shape, then (r.) accepts a kiss. Others are artist Fran Lew and Chairman Tony Randall.

BILL TURNBULL/DAILY NEWS

every photograph captures. But this artist has captured it.

"And I'm a pretty good witness. I have watched Matilda grow up. We met when we were about 20 or 21 years old. She has developed a warmth over the years. It's more apparent to me now than it was 33 years ago."

MATILDA SAID THAT she believes her work with ACS is linked to her job as co-chairman of the state's Citizen's Task Force on the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

"We have just published, with a \$10,000 donation, the Family Resource Book. It was put together by other volunteers, the Suffolk County librarians. It's an annotated bibliography segmented for parents, children and professionals with advice on how to get help for child abuse, and a listing of state and national organizations that deal with it."

"We're promoting networking coalitions all over the state, starting with Nassau and Suffolk counties."

"We have guidelines to help teachers better assist us in combating child abuse and to standardize treatment. A child in Buffalo is treated the



same way as a child in Suffolk County. That was never the case before.

Yesterday, Mrs. Cuomo was at Casa Rita in the Bronx for the opening ceremony of a third "Women in Need" residence—a 16-unit building sheltering homeless mothers and their children in family settings.

Her own home, the Executive Mansion in Albany, is being set in order for visiting New Yorkers.

Cuomo added, "It fits in so well because I've invited classes from all the New York State schools for an

'Albany Experience.' We provide free overnight lodging at four places in the capital and the mansion is open for tours every Thursday."

New York's First Lady is hoping for a family vacation after the election.

MEANWHILE, THE governor now has his own library on the second floor. "A place where he can read in peace," she said, smiling. And a first-floor "Governors' Memorabilia" room is now in progress.