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Susan Lucci // Photo by Bernadette Starzee

Garden City Hotel celebrates AAA Four Diamond Award

The iconic Garden City Hotel celebrated its new designation as a AAA Four Diamond hotel with help from another Garden City icon.

Emmy Award-winning actress Susan Lucci, a Garden City resident who worked at the hotel in the 1960s, was guest of honor at a ceremony today in which AAA presented the Four Diamond Award to Morris Moinian, president of the Fortuna Realty Group, which purchased the hotel in 2012.

Lucci, who is best-known for her decades-long role as diva Erica Kane in ABC's "All My Children," poked fun at her alter-ego in addressing members of the press and local businesspeople assembled at the hotel.

"My first job ever was as a waitress here and, like Erica Kane, I learned in about a minute and a half that I would rather be the hostess, so then I was," Lucci said.

While working at the hotel, Lucci met her husband of 47 years, Helmut Huber, who was an executive chef there at the time. Lucci said she frequents the hotel's Red Door Spa and that her daughter's wedding reception was held at the hotel.

"We could not find a more beautiful spot, and the service is on par with the best service I have received anywhere in the world," she said. "And where else do you have proximity to Manhattan while being able to take a walk on tree-lined streets in a parklike setting?"

As president of the tourism group Discover Long Island, Kristen Jarnagin spoke at the event, saying she was proud that Long Island both had "such a wonderful role model" in Lucci and that it could "claim such a beautiful property" as the Garden City Hotel.

"Getting the Four Diamond rating is about more than just being beautiful – it speaks to the high level of service and attention to detail from the moment you arrive, from the valet service to the housekeeping staff to the chefs," Jarnagin said. "I congratulate every employee who played a part in this award."

Only 1,587 hotels of about 28,000 rated by AAA in North America and the Caribbean – or about 5.7 percent – have achieved the Four Diamond rating, said Jill Rosenberg, manager of group and executive travel services, who presented the award on behalf of AAA.

"The Garden City Hotel has been an iconic landmark for the Village of Garden City for more than a century, and this prestigious award enhances its value to our community," said Garden City Chamber of Commerce President Thomas McCambridge, who attended the event.