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Paul Torrasi, SLA board member and former president, is named to the Skaneateles Historical Society's Boating Hall of Fame

This recognition honors Torrasi's decades-long commitment to sailing and lake protection that helps ensure Skaneateles remains one of the cleanest lakes in the country and a premier boating destination

June 11, 2026 – SKANEATELES, NY – The [Skaneateles Lake Association](#) (SLA) is pleased to announce that Paul Torrasi Sr., a longtime board member and former SLA president, has been named to the Skaneateles Historical Society's Boating Hall of Fame, Class of 2026, in recognition of his unparalleled leadership in sailing, community engagement, and lake protection over the past 40 years.

A fixture on Skaneateles Lake from the early 1980s, Torrasi's connections to the lake began with family sailing and community involvement but quickly grew into decades of service to the lake. He and his wife, Mary, began spending summers on the lake in 1983. Since then, he and three generations of his family have been deeply involved in the Skaneateles Country Club's (SCC) Junior Sailing Program, improving and expanding its training, instruction and fleet of boats, not to mention each sailor's experience. Through the years, Torrasi and his family have also helped organize major sailing events — notably the 50th Anniversary Lightning Regatta in 1988 — and his family continues to race and teach on the lake today.

Torrasi's service to protect and preserve Skaneateles Lake also dates to the early 1980s, when he and Mary first served on the board of directors of the Tri-County Skaneateles Lake Pure Water Association, which was a precursor to the present-day SLA. Since then, Torrasi has worn many hats at the SLA. Most notably, he served as the organization's president from 2011 through 2024; and during his tenure, he provided the leadership and strategic vision to help establish the following programs:

- **Milfoil Control:** Since 2006, the SLA has managed a highly successful [Milfoil Control](#) program to mitigate invasive aquatic plants, like Eurasian watermilfoil, by laying specialized benthic mats over patches of these invasive weeds. Due to the lake's purity, this program purposefully avoids the use of pesticides, which is a more common approach.

- **Boat Launch Steward Program:** From mid-May to early October, the SLA's trained boat stewards work every day with boaters at the lake's three public launches to inspect watercraft, remove plant fragments, and encourage [Clean, Drain, Dry](#) practices before entering or leaving the lake, which prevents the introduction of aggressive and invasive species like [Hydrilla](#)
- **Water Quality Monitoring:** The association actively works with research teams from SU, [ESF](#) and Cornell to research and monitor Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs). By tracking nutrient loading and water clarity, they provide early warnings and data to help mitigate toxin risks for people and pets.
- **Watershed Preservation:** The SLA works to protect [Eastern Hemlock trees](#) from the deadly Hemlock Woolly Adelgid by providing treatment to infected trees to homeowners in the Skaneateles watershed. These trees are critical "keystone" species that stabilize shorelines and filter runoff, preventing excess nutrients from entering the lake.

Torrise's tenure also emphasized partnership and community engagement. He recruited and mentored board members and volunteers, worked closely with scientists like the late Dr. Robert Werner and other local experts, and championed collaborative grants and projects, including work that helped secure state funding to establish the NYS Clean Water Plan. He continues to serve on the SLA board and several of its committees.

"Over the years, Paul's selfless leadership helped transform a small, volunteer organization into a professional, trusted hub for research, stewardship, and community education across the watershed. Our lake community will be forever indebted to him and his family," said Bob DeWitt, SLA president.

"Skaneateles Lake's water quality is what drew my family here. We love this lake. It has given us so much, but it's under constant threat from climate change, development and invasive species. So, it's imperative that we safeguard it for future generations," Torrise said.

The Skaneateles Historical Society's Boating Hall of Fame honors Torrise's longtime commitment to boating safety, sailing instruction, and the stewardship practices that keep Skaneateles a premier and protected boating destination. His family's multigenerational involvement in sailing instruction and competition — from junior sailing programs to regattas and fleet leadership — has contributed to a vibrant, community-based boating culture on the lake.

About The Skaneateles Lake Association

First established in 1969, the Skaneateles Lake Association is a 501(c) non-profit that dedicates 100% of its efforts to preserving and protecting Skaneateles Lake. One of only six unfiltered water sources in the entire country, Skaneateles Lake provides drinking water to more than 200,000 people in the city of Syracuse as well as residents of Skaneateles, Jordan, Elbridge, Salina, and

DeWitt, but it is under constant threat from climate change, development and invasive species. Subsequently, the SLA works to protect the lake from invasive species and harmful algal blooms; preserve the watershed's hemlock forests, which are critical to maintaining the overall health of the lake; and educate the public on lake-friendly gardening, landscaping and septic system enhancements.

Established, supported and led by a volunteer force of community members, the SLA has been protecting Skaneateles Lake for over 55 years. To learn more about the SLA's proven, results-oriented efforts and programs and to join our growing community of lake protectors, go to <https://skaneateleslake.org>.