

## Harry Chapin (1942-1981)

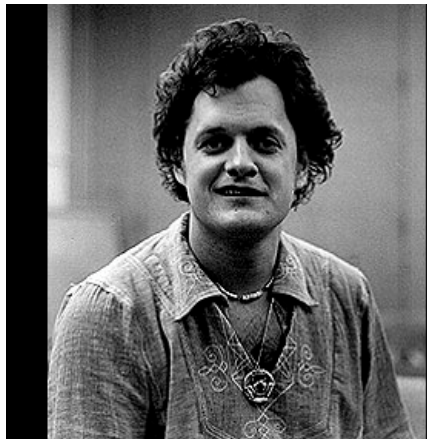
### *Singer/Songwriter and Humanitarian*

Singer/songwriter Harry Chapin, who won fame for his recordings of *Cats in the Cradle*, *Taxi*, and other anthems of the 60s and 70s, sunk his roots in Huntington Bay. Chapin chose the Huntington area for his home, according to family friend Leslie Ramme, because “it had and still has everything that they were looking for. It is suburban, but close to the city. It is multi-cultural. A center for the arts with great support for the arts.”

Chapin’s legacy is more than his story-telling style of singing about the relatedness of human beings. He tirelessly campaigned for Long Island’s cultural institutions. He was a benefactor and board member of such organizations as the Eglevsky Ballet Company and the Performing Arts Foundation playhouse. He gave the profits from more than half of his performances to charity.



The Huntington Arts Council is among those who benefited from Chapin’s generosity. The Heckscher Park stage where the Arts Council hosts its Summer Arts Festival is named the Chapin Rainbow Stage. Chapin’s friend, former Congressman Thomas J. Downey, wrote “as a Long Islander he wanted us to have our own cultural identity – ‘to see all the colors of the rainbow.’” Chapin wanted the arts to “be performed by and for Long Islanders,” Downey added in his remembrance in *The New York Times*.



Although Chapin’s activist efforts and energy often were focused on Long Island, his vision of social justice also had a wider reach. His commitment to eradicate World Hunger resulted in the creation of the national World Hunger Year. He started Long Island Cares, an organization still working to eliminate hunger at home. Downey noted that Chapin often said “we have all the potential to move the world – and the world is ready to be moved.”

Chapin was killed in a 1981 Long Island Expressway accident on a day he was scheduled to give a concert in Nassau County’s Eisenhower Park.