

# Happy 100th Cayuga Heights, a home of high achievers

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(Photo: File photo)

A happy 100th birthday weekend to the Village of Cayuga Heights, which entered the municipal world of Tompkins County on June 12, 1915.

At 1.8 square miles, 3,800 residents and about 120 white-tailed deer that are a source of unending village discussions, Cayuga Heights punches well above its weight as a community of high achievers.

For about a dozen Nobel Prize winners, about as many Pulitzer Prize recipients and six MacArthur Award winners, the village was or remains their home. That's on top of numerous best-selling authors, inventors, artists, entrepreneurs and philanthropists.

Famous names of science, literature, medicine and the arts continue to be associated with numerous village homes. Many newcomer buyers of a Cayuga Heights property find the house they buy is never really theirs. Instead, the home will carry the name of a famous previous resident or owner, such as astrophysicist Carl Sagan, African-American scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr., or authors Pearl Buck or Author Vladimir Nabokov.

A few Cayuga Heights factoids tell the tale about this unusual place:

- Education: About 85 percent of residents have at least a bachelor's degree. That's more than double the 33 percent of New Yorkers with a four-year degree.
- Advanced degrees: Estimates on advanced degrees in Cayuga Heights vary, but several sources put the percentage of village residents with a master's degree at 25 percent, 7 percent for professional degrees and 29 percent for doctorates.
- Politics: Very blue. Cayuga Heights voters gave Democratic presidential candidates 2-to-1 margins in every election since 2000.
- Work: 50 percent of adult residents work in education, and 25 percent teach at a nearby campus — most often Cornell University.
- Income: Average household income in 2015 for Cayuga Heights is \$114,000 according to data from The Nielsen Company. Median household income — the mid-point of all village household incomes — is \$76,966, well above the \$51,393 median income for Tompkins County.

The village will be blowing out the candles on its birthday cake with exhibits for the rest of the year, but this weekend's big event is a self-guided tour from noon to 4 p.m. Saturday of nine homes and gardens. Registration for the tours starts at 11:30 in Marcham Hall, the village municipal building at Community Corners.

The centennial tour was organized by the Cayuga Heights Historic Preservation Committee, village historian Bea Szekely and Historic Ithaca. The groups are also helping residents research the history of their homes and the lives of the people who lived there. That's an impressive effort of community historic preservation that will enrich Cayuga Heights residents for the next 100 years.



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