

**LONG ISLAND****Rauch Foundation will leave big shoes to fill as it shifts its focus, local leaders say**

Nancy Rauch Douzinas, seen here at LIU Post in Brookville in 2018, is stepping down as the leader of the Rauch Foundation, which will be led by her two daughters. Credit: David L. Pokress

**By Ted Phillips**

[ted.phillips@newsday.com](mailto:ted.phillips@newsday.com)

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The Rauch Foundation, which has provided millions of dollars in funding to Long Island organizations, will leave big shoes to fill as it shifts its focus to New England, people who worked with the foundation said Tuesday.

President Nancy Rauch Douzinas, who has spent more than three decades trying to bring together people and organizations from Long Island's tangled patchwork of overlapping jurisdictions with a regional approach, is stepping down in April. Her two daughters will take the reins of the foundation.

"The biggest accomplishment we had was getting Long Islanders, from different sectors, from business to labor to nonprofits to educators ... to come together, convene them, work together, think together," Douzinas told Newsday, adding the foundation tried to learn lessons from around the country. "Other places were taking a regional approach and that's what we had to try to do on Long Island, to really make change," Rauch Douzinas said Tuesday.

A key component of that approach was the creation of the Long Island Index, which gathered data about housing, transportation, employment, industry, the environment, health and education to help decision-makers think about the region and plan for the future.

The idea behind the index was that "If you have good data, you get leaders from different sectors, you study the good data, you come up with a plan, you fund different groups, [then] you have a chance to make bigger change," she said.

In 2018, the index became a part of Newsday.

The nonprofit has distributed more than \$20 million in grants on Long Island since 2015 and made an additional \$1 million in donations to groups in Nassau and Suffolk in 2020 for pandemic-related work, according to the foundation.

The foundation isn't completely leaving Long Island but Rauch Douzinas said "we're looking for new leadership to sprout on Long Island."

Her daughter Eva Douzinas will serve as the foundation's next president and another daughter, Ruth Douzinas, will remain on its executive committee. The foundation's New York City office will be relocated to Woodstock, Vermont.

"She [Rauch Douzinas] is a terrific Long Islander who really got people in the public and private sectors thinking about our needs, our challenges, and how important it is to form coalitions and partnerships to address them," said Kevin Law, chairman of the Empire State Development, the state's primary business-aid agency, and former president of Long Island Association. The creation of the Long Island Index filled a void because no one was looking at demographic data holistically before she came along, Law told Newsday.

The reduced Long Island footprint of the foundation means "Other entities are going to have to pick up the slack," Law said.

Elaine Gross, founder and president of Syosset-based ERASE Racism, said the foundation is their biggest single funder and took a risk on supporting them.

"A small nonprofit like ours that is working on issues related to structural racism does not get people beating down the door trying to support them," Gross told Newsday.

"It's definitely a tremendous loss for our region," Health & Welfare Council of Long Island's president and chief executive Rebecca Sanin said. Sanin said the foundation has provided essential funding for social services.

"It's very difficult to be poor in a suburban environment," she said. With the foundation shifting its focus Sanin said she hopes "that there are other philanthropists and funders that start to look at Long Island as America's first suburb and recognize that we can solve the challenges that we face, but it takes funding to do that."



## **The Rauch Foundation**

- Established in 1961 by Louis Rauch and Philip Rauch, Jr.
- Funding is the legacy of Philip Rauch, Sr.'s auto parts company, Ideal Corp.
- The foundation focuses on "ideas and organizations that spark and sustain systemic change."

*SOURCE: Rauch Foundation*

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