



Smithsonian  
***Donald W. Reynolds Center for  
American Art and Portraiture***  
***National Portrait Gallery***

# News

**Media only:** Bethany Morookian Bentley (202) 275-1768  
Andrea Baer (202) 275-2087

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## **Virginia Outwin Boochever**

### **Fact Sheet**

#### **Her Service**

Virginia O. Boochever graduated from Smith College in Massachusetts in 1941 and joined the military to become one of the first female commissioned officers in the Navy Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service or W.A.V.E.S. She earned the rank of lieutenant while stationed at the Navy Personnel Command in Washington, D.C. She was assigned to various recruitment duties and was featured in World War II enlistment posters. In addition, Mrs. Boochever volunteered with the Washington, D.C.-area unit of Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic and was a local school board member. Later, Mrs. Boochever volunteered at the National Portrait Gallery for 19 years as a docent and was knowledgeable about history, biography, painting and sculpture.

#### **Her Contribution**

Virginia O. Boochever left a lasting legacy at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. with a \$2 million endowment to fund a portrait competition designed to encourage contemporary portraiture among emerging and mid-career artists. The Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition will be held triennially. The 2006 competition drew 4,000 entries of painting and sculpture from across the country.

#### **Her Life**

Virginia O. Boochever was born in 1920 in Newark, N.J., and raised in Maplewood, N.J., where her father was the owner and president of a medical supply company. Mrs. Boochever was married to Louis C. Boochever Jr., a U.S. Foreign Service officer who died in October 1998 at the age of 78. In the years following World War II, she accompanied her husband on his assignments in Luxembourg; Paris; Belgrade, Serbia; Rome; and Brussels, Belgium. A dedicated volunteer and philanthropist, Mrs. Boochever died Dec. 26, 2005, at a hospital in Brunswick, Maine. She was a former resident of Bethesda, Md.

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