

# What's Poppin'?

By Audrey J. Bernard

## SoHarlem honors three fashion industry creatives at 11th anniversary celebration

BEACON, December 1 – December 7, 2022, newyorkbeacon.com

**S**oHarlem – a cultural industries incubator -- has been an essential force in the transformation of the once underutilized Manhattanville Factory District into a successful business community employing local residents. Over the past eleven years, SoHarlem has launched more than twenty successful microbusinesses encompassing everything from custom-made couture garments to fashion accessories, face masks and hospital gowns.

On Saturday, September 2022, 24, at 6 pm at The Malt House, 461 West 126<sup>th</sup> Street, Harlem, New York in the factory district, SoHarlem Founder & CEO Janet Rodriguez welcomed guests to join her, and board members celebrate SoHarlem's 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary by saluting three stellar fashion industry



Honoree JoAni Johnson who received Harlem Fashion Model Award wore a design by SoHarlem, Designer-In-Residence, Javier Valencia



Honorees Javier Valencia, JoAni and Dapper Dan



Mario Miguelito with Honoree Julian Asion

creatives -- A Hidden Gem: Designer, teacher and self-described 'fashion engineer' Javier Valencia; A Champion of Cultural Fusion: Harlem's gift to American fashion,

Dapper Dan; and Harlem Fashion Model: Consultant, model, and jewelry designer JoAni Johnson. The benefit celebration was a designer's dream as many guests wore

the designs of some of the featured designers. Guests enjoyed mouth-watering catering from Jon Weinrott of Peachtree and signature drinks named after each honoree. The Marcus Persiani Trio en-

tertained guests with smooth jazzy sounds as they shopped SoHarlem Collective's inspirational designs. Tammy Echols-Howell, creative advisor, and guest artisan. (Photos courtesy SoHarlem)



SoHarlem Board Members Marie "Puck" Meunier and Deirdre Washington



Janet Rodriguez with Board Members Emmily Del Los Santos and Marie "Puck" Meunier



Robin Verges, SoHarlem Board Member and SVP Howard Rubenstein with Bruce Nilson and Janet



Tammy Echols, SoHarlem Guest Artist & Event Director welcoming Janet and other guests



Dapper Dan who received Cultural Fashion Award flanked by Judith and Scott Metzner and Janet



Tre Milan, Design Apprentice; Olivia Smashum, Creative Entrepreneur; Janet Rodriguez, Founder & CEO with guest



Karen Ortiz, Proud Mother of Noah Ortiz, winner of \$10,000 mentorship with Dapper Dan

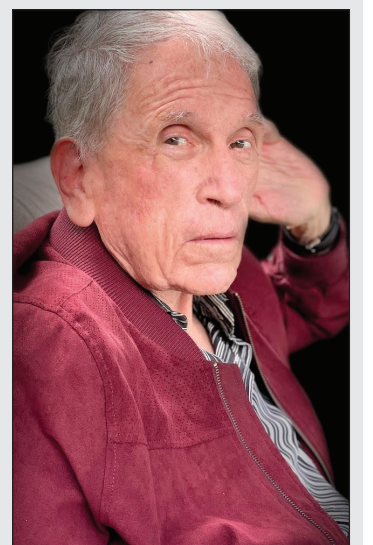


Honoree Dapper Dan wearing Tuxedo Jacket designed by Javier Valencia

### SoHarlem Remembers Ed Finder, Founding Board Member

Edwin W. Finder, who served on SoHarlem's board until his retirement and relocation to Florida passed away this summer. Ed served as Executive Assistant to the late Dr. Bernard Lander, President of Touro University, from 1995 until 2005, where he was involved in campus real estate development activities and fundraising. He served from 1985 through 1995 as Senior Project Manager at Parish & Weiner, Inc., Real Estate and Planning/Development Consultants. Prior to that, Mr. Finder was engaged in various consulting assign-

ments including the Hackensack Meadowlands Commission, the City of College Park, Maryland, City of New York, and the City of Paterson, NJ. He also represented artists engaged in stained glass and oils. From 1978 through 2006, he served as Director and Vice-President/Real Estate for the National Preservation Institute, Inc. Ed earned a BA degree from Queens College/City University of New York and Master of Urban Planning from New York University. We will miss Ed's no nonsense advise and wicked sense of humor.



Ed Finder, SoHarlem beloved Founding Board Member