



New York State Assembly Member

Rebecca A. Seawright

Presents

11th Annual Women of Distinction Awards Ceremony

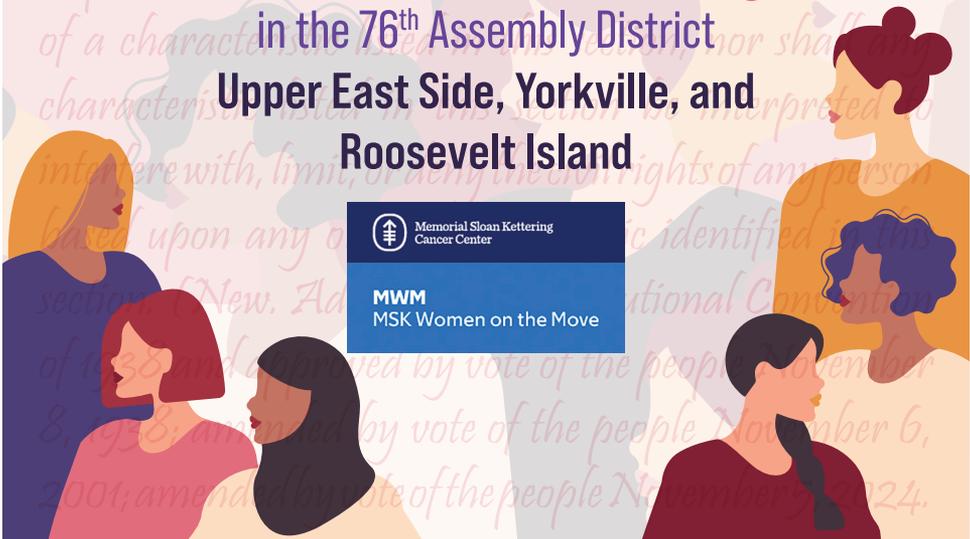
in the 76th Assembly District
Upper East Side, Yorkville, and
Roosevelt Island



Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

MWM

MSK Women on the Move



From Assembly Member Rebecca A. Seawright



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Thank you for joining us at our Eleventh Annual Women of Distinction Celebration.

We are privileged to celebrate and honor these outstanding women for their commitment and contributions to our great State of New York. The 2025 Women of Distinction honorees represent the full spectrum of achievement across professional and community work.

I know each of their stories will be inspiring. From doctors to educators and small business owners to non-profit leaders, these women are extraordinary. As the lead sponsor of the Equal Rights Amendment in the Assembly, I am immeasurably grateful to voters across the state for approving the addition of the Equal Rights Amendment into the New York State Constitution. With this change, our constitution protects all New Yorkers from discrimination based on sex, sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ethnicity, age, disability, pregnancy, and pregnancy outcomes. Finally, after decades of tireless work by activists, legislators, and voters like you, New York is one big step closer to fulfilling the promise of liberty and justice for all. We did it together!

We will continue to push forward, unwavering in the pursuit of equality and for the advancement of women. Congratulations and a hearty thank you to the 2025 Women of Distinction for your contributions to our community and the State of New York.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca A. Seawright". The signature is fluid and cursive.

REBECCA A. SEAWRIGHT

Tuesday, April 22, 2025
Rockefeller Research Laboratories
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
430 East 67 Street

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright

**Presentation of the
Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance**

Girl Scout Troop 3233
Knickerbocker Greys

Welcome

Shelly Anderson
MSK Hospital President

Keynote

Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez
Commissioner
New York City Department for the Aging

Performance by

The Queer Big Apple Corps

Presentation of Awards

Beatrice Ajaero
Georgette Anagnostaras
Dr. Esther Babady
Dr. Rosalind Berlow
Elaine Blaustein
Elena Chersky
Dr. Sarah Chu
Dr. Dolly Chugh
Dr. Elizabeth Danto
Christina Delfico
Bianca Ellis
Doreen Esposito

Verna FitzPatrick
Merle Hendricks
Stephanie Herlihy
Nancy Houghton
Ellen Karis
Susan Kaufman
Patricia Mays
Rosanna McCoy
Adriana Mero
Sharon Pope-Marshall
Donna Sbriglia-DeChecchi
Amy Setesak

Assembly Member
Rebecca A. Seawright
76th District



Rebecca A. Seawright represents the Upper East Side, Yorkville, and Roosevelt Island in New York's 76th Assembly District. Since her 2014 election, and as the first woman to serve the district, she has been a strong voice for over 140,000 constituents, securing hundreds of millions of dollars in state funding for public schools, senior centers, parks, and non-profits.

She holds the leadership position of Chair of the Aging Committee, appointed by the Speaker in 2025. Previously, she served as the Chair of the People with Disabilities Committee, Chair of the Majority Steering Committee, Secretary of the Majority Conference, and Chair of the Task Force on Women's Issues. Nominated by her colleagues, she serves as a Director of the Legislative Women's Caucus and collaborates in the Bipartisan Pro-Choice, Jewish, Environmental, and Gun Reform Legislative Caucuses. As a member of the Ways and Means, Codes, Higher Education, and Judiciary committees, Seawright is motivated to protect her constituents' interests in our great State of New York.

Inspired to renew the movement for the federal Equal Rights Amendment to constitutionally anchor our rights, she was the Assembly lead sponsor of the ERA to our New York State Constitution. Voters ratified the amendment as a ballot referendum in the 2024 general election.

A champion for high-quality public education, Seawright strengthens our schools and has obtained more than \$1 billion in new state support. She sponsors the Teach LGBT curriculum bill to ensure the NYS Education Department develops curriculum on the historical treatment and contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in America.

Continued on next page



Continued from previous page

A fighter for people with disabilities, she advocates for direct support professionals and is the lead sponsor of legislation to establish a direct support wage enhancement. Her legislation for people with disabilities has been signed into law to increase representation of I/DD individuals on our state's planning council and update outdated and harmful language in state statutes. Leading the 44th Annual Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day with hundreds of advocates at the Capitol, Rebecca passed a package of bills to improve the lives of people with disabilities statewide. This includes legislation for which she is the lead sponsor to establish a Blue-Ribbon Commission to improve the service delivery system for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Rebecca fights for our community through major environmental and sustainability initiatives. She is a leading advocate for affordable housing and landmark housing reform laws to abolish vacancy decontrol and restrict rent hikes. A proponent of strong democratic values, Rebecca strongly supports reforms to run elections efficiently, accurately, and with integrity to protect our voting rights. Notably, for the 2020 General Election and the 2021 New York City Primary, Rebecca made national headlines by successfully securing additional early voting and Election Day poll sites.

Her bills have been signed into law, requiring those convicted of hate crimes to undergo tolerance training as a condition of their sentence and rehabilitation; reinstating the Clean Waterways Fund; capping annual fees from lenders; implementing a study on consumer financial literacy; streamlining boards of election; requiring health insurance policies to include 3-D mammography at no cost to the consumer; encouraging greater representation of women on corporate boards; and identifying how many policy-making positions are held by women in the state government.

She formerly served for 8 years as Chair of the Board of the Feminist Press at the City University of New York, the oldest nonprofit literary publisher of feminist literature. Currently, she chairs the CUNY Law School Board of Visitors. In 2023, Speaker Heastie appointed her to the City University of New York Construction Fund Board of Trustees.



Shelly Anderson

Hospital President



Shelly Anderson, MPM, is the Hospital President of Memorial Sloan Kettering. She joined MSK from Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH) in Boston, where she was a member of the executive leadership team since 2011, and most recently served as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer.

As the Hospital President at MSK, Anderson is responsible for planning, executing, and leading a broad range of operational functions. This includes overseeing the operations of Memorial Hospital and ensuring seamless coordination in cancer care across MSK's expanding outpatient network, with locations in Brooklyn, Westchester County, Long Island, and New Jersey. In addition, Anderson drives the integration of patient care, operational efficiency, financial sustainability, and outstanding patient experience and outcomes across the clinical enterprise.

Anderson served as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at BWH. In that role, she was responsible for the operations of the academic medical center, a community hospital, three large ambulatory care centers, and a physician organization. Additionally, in partnership with Dana-Farber, she oversaw operations for the Dana-Farber Brigham Cancer Center. Prior to that, she served as Senior Vice President of Business Development and Innovation and Chief Strategy Officer, where she collaborated with other BWH leaders to design and execute strategic initiatives, designed and led the Active Asset Management program, and worked to innovate best practices and facilitate organizational accountability.

Before joining BWH, Anderson worked for several years in healthcare consulting. She earned a master's degree in policy management at Georgetown University and a bachelor's degree at Concordia College.



Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez

Commissioner NYC Department for the Aging



Lorraine CortésVázquez, Commissioner to the Department for the Aging, was appointed by New York City Mayor Eric Adams March 2022. As Commissioner, Cortés-Vázquez has worked to create equity and increase diversity in all older adult centers across the city, she also implemented the first of its kind Aging Cabinet for Older New Yorkers to unify city agencies to work together and tackle the problems affecting older adults.

She continues to work to advance the NYC Aging mission to eliminate ageism, ensure the dignity and quality of life of older adults and support caregivers as she did with the previous administration under Mayor Bill de Blasio. Before being appointed as Commissioner, Lorraine served as Senior Advisor to de Blasio in the Mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. Prior to serving in the Mayor's Office, Cortés-Vázquez was Senior Vice President of Corporate Relations and Government Affairs at EmblemHealth, where she was responsible for EmblemHealth's relationships with key government, community and industry stakeholders, better positioning EmblemHealth for new growth opportunities. Cortés-Vázquez was also the Executive Vice President for Multicultural Markets and Engagement at the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) where she developed a comprehensive 5-year strategic plan. At AARP, she ensured that the interests of multicultural age 50-plus audiences were integrated into everything AARP does, with the goal of increasing multicultural presence among AARP membership and increasing AARP's involvement in those communities. Before joining AARP, Cortés-Vázquez was New York State's 65th Secretary of State, and the first Hispanic appointee to serve in that role. She also served as Vice President of Government and Public Affairs at Cablevision Systems Corporation, a leading media, entertainment, and telecommunications company. She brought to this position a distinguished career in the

Continued on next page



Continued from previous page

nonprofit, government and corporate sectors that extends more than 30 years. Her work in the nonprofit sector has gained her national recognition and numerous awards. From 1998 to 2004, Cortés-Vázquez served as President of the Hispanic Federation, a nonprofit network of Latino health and human service agencies with a footprint throughout the East Coast. She has extensive experience creating community partnerships to leverage civic participation and increasing the visibility of educational initiatives. In the early 1990s, she served as Executive Director of ASPIRA of New York, the nation's oldest and largest nonprofit Latino youth leadership development and education advocacy agency. Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez obtained her undergraduate degree from Hunter College and earned a master's degree from New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. She is a Toll Fellow and has earned certificates from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and Columbia University's School of Professional Studies. She is dedicated to her family, particularly her nieces, nephews, and grandsons.



Beatrice Ajaero



Beatrice Ajaero has lived on Roosevelt Island for her entire life. She studied classical, choral, and world music in East Harlem, District 5. As the founder of Nneji, Astoria's only West African eatery, Beatrice has partnered with Food1st Foundation to send over three thousand meals to Western New York and tens of thousands of meals across NYC and Long Island. In collaboration with Rethink Food, Nneji continues to prepare two thousand plant-forward meals each month for the Jacob Riis Senior Center. Nneji, with support from idig2Learn and the Church of the Good Shepherd Vestry, has been providing two hundred free meals each month to the Roosevelt Island community through The Open Table. Nneji also supports All Saints Episcopal Church's The Community Meal, led by Ms. Robin Rule, in Levy Hall. In 2024, Nneji provided over 4,000 meals to mosques across New York City in partnership with the Interfaith Center of New York. An avid supporter of community development in Western New York, Beatrice is currently working to develop 14 vacant parcels to provide housing stability to Buffalo's East Side residents, Southtown Farmers, and beyond. Beatrice recently took a position as a public school teacher at a high school in the South Bronx, where she uses her language capabilities in conversational Spanish, Arabic, and French. Beatrice's efforts to honor diverse faith traditions have allowed her to share her work in several communities. Her West African background guides her efforts to work with community projects and partnerships. One of six siblings, she strongly values her Roosevelt Island upbringing, rooted in a "love thy neighbor" perspective.



Georgette Anagnostaras



Georgette Anagnostaras' Father was a Greek, Fine-Arts Painter and Guitarist, born in Greece. Her mother, born in Paris, was a French Nurse who met her father in New York City. Georgette was born into a compassionate family on the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

Georgette attended PS 190 now 290 in Yorkville, NY. She then attended Rhodes Prep School in Manhattan. Georgette had a passion for marketing and was accepted to Pace

University in New York City where she completed her BA in Liberal Arts. She also decided to attend the Colorado Outward Bound School course for a 10-day hike through the Canyonlands.

While seeking new opportunities for work, Georgette decided to work for the airlines and accepted a role with TWA/AA for 25 years. She began as a Customer Service Agent at LaGuardia Airport in New York City. She also worked on special assignments and emergency cases.

When Georgette met her husband, Jim, she decided to pioneer in a new direction with him. They bought a 100-year-old horse farm in Jefferson, New York, which they operated for 10 years. After the real estate market changed, they returned to New York City. Georgette decided to extend herself to vulnerable Seniors in need of physical assistance.

When her husband fell ill, diagnosed with Cancer, Georgette gave 100% to help him get well. After a year of getting better, and then getting worse, he passed away.

Georgette inspires people and leaves them with hope, love, and determination.



Dr. Esther Babady



Dr. Esther Babady is a board-certified clinical microbiologist. She serves as the Chief of the Clinical Microbiology Service, an Attending Microbiologist and Member (Professor), and the Director of the Post-doctoral Clinical Microbiology Fellowship Program in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and the Department of Medicine (Infectious Disease Service) at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. She received her doctoral degree in Biochemistry

and Molecular Biology and completed a post-doctoral fellowship in Clinical Microbiology both at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. Dr. Babady is a Senior Editor for Microbiology Spectrum and Associate Editor for the Journal of Molecular Diagnostics. She is also a member of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Clinical Laboratory Improvement Advisory Committee (CLIAAC) and past president of the Pan-American Society for Clinical Virology. Her research focuses on the rapid diagnosis of infectious diseases with a focus on molecular methods including PCR and next generation sequencing. She has published extensively on the development, validation and evaluation of molecular methods for infectious diseases diagnostic and their impact on cancer patient outcomes. She is an elected fellow of the Infectious Disease Society of America and a fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology.



Dr. Rosalind Berlow



Dr. Rosalind K. Berlow is a quintessential New Yorker born in Brooklyn on Christmas Day 1933. Except for college (Art History major, a year in Paris and six years in San Francisco), she has lived her 91-years-and-counting in New York. Rosalind attended grade school in Brooklyn and High School in Queens.

After college, Rosalind worked as a receptionist at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a research assistant at the NBC Film Library, and a recording secretary for membership at the Museum of Modern Art. With a PhD in Medieval History from the City University of New York, Rosalind taught ancient and medieval history at Hunter College. She was hired by the newly opened Touro College in Manhattan as a teacher and coordinator of its required Humanities core. With Touro College seeking accreditation, her familiarity with students, faculty and programs led her to being appointed as Dean of the College. Once Touro received accreditation, Ros stepped down and returned to teaching in the classroom.

When Touro opened a law school, she became a member of its first student body. Rosalind graduated Touro Law School as valedictorian, first in her class. Upon graduation, she spent five years in real-estate departments of major law firms, then became an attorney for the Port Authority. She was active in many organizations.

In 1991 she started a private practice and worked per diem as an administrative law judge for the Taxi and Limousine Commission and Environmental Control Board. When the COVID pandemic struck, she retired.

Rosalind was married for a loving 28 years with her first husband. She stood by him as he fought a fateful illness. Then she was married for 30 years to her second husband. Rosalind has a loving family and friends. She plays the piano and sings in a chorus.

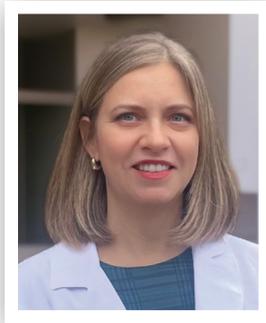


Elaine Blaustein



Elaine Blaustein has been a resident of the Upper East Side since 1975. Her daughter was raised here and attended the wonderful public schools and after-school activities. Elaine is a retired educator of the New York City Department of Education. She worked in underserved neighborhoods. Her career included special education, staff development, mentoring and training teachers, and helping parents navigate the curriculum. She continues to explore, enjoy, and love this community.

Elena Chersky



In December 2016 **Elena Chersky** earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Wagner College's Evelyn L. Spiro School of Nursing. Since 2017, Elena has been a Clinical Nurse III in MSKCC on the M19 inpatient unit. With eight years of bedside nursing experience, she has served as a charge nurse and mentored novice nurses as a preceptor. Elena actively contributes to the Geriatric and Practice Council Committees. She recently graduated from Wagner College with a Family Nurse Practitioner degree. She lives by the personal motto: "Be the nurse you want as a patient."



Dr. Sarah Chu



Dr. Sarah Chu is a nationally recognized policy expert on the role of science and technology in the criminal legal system. As Director of Policy and Reform at the Perlmutter Center for Legal Justice at Cardozo Law (PCLJ), she leads initiatives to (1) ensure oversight, transparency, accountability, and ethical implementation of forensic science and investigative technologies, and (2) improve systems to deliver justice and freedom to the wrongfully convicted.

Prior to PCLJ, Dr. Chu spent 15 years at the Innocence Project directing policy efforts on forensic science, forensic medicine, and police investigative technologies. She served on the Scientific Inquiry and Research Subcommittee of the National Commission on Forensic Science and received the Legal Aid Society's Magnus Mukoro Award for Integrity in Forensic Science.

Deeply engaged in her community, Dr. Chu has served on Manhattan's Community Board 8 since 2006, holding leadership roles and currently, co-chairs the Social Justice Committee. She proudly serves on the board of directors of Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, promoting the preservation of the neighborhood's architectural legacy, livability, and sense of place.

Dr. Chu holds dual bachelor's degrees in Biochemistry/Cell Biology and Communication and a master's in Biology from UC San Diego, a master's in Epidemiology from Stanford University, and a doctorate in Criminal Justice from John Jay College/CUNY Graduate Center. She also completed a fellowship at the Harvard Medical School Center for Bioethics.



Dr. Dolly Chugh



Dr. Dolly Chugh is a behavioral scientist and professor at NYU Stern and the NYU Prison Education Program. She teaches courses on leadership in organizations, being a good boss, conflict resolution and negotiation, and power and influence to both traditional and incarcerated student populations. A respected voice on leadership, bias, and inclusion, she has also written the acclaimed books: *The Person You Mean to Be: How Good People Fight Bias*, *A More Just Future: Psychological Tools for Reckoning with*

Our Past and Driving Social Change, and the forthcoming *The Good Boss Project*. Her popular TED Talk and *Dear Good People* newsletter grapple with what it means to be a “good-ish” person with a joyful tone and evidence-based approach. She is especially known for translating rigorous academic research into ideas that are actionable and accessible for broad audiences both on the page and on the stage. Dolly has been recognized with NYU’s Distinguished Teaching Award and the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Faculty Award. She has been in Yorkville since 2020 where she volunteers with the Grassroots Groceries community fridge and lives with her husband and two college-aged daughters, plus Cocoa Bean the Wonder Puppy.



Dr. Elizabeth Danto



Dr. Elizabeth Ann Danto is a professor of social welfare Emeritus, at Hunter College, City University of New York. Her career in social work began in Manhattan Family Court, where she advocated for children in foster care and adoption proceedings under Judge Nanette Dembitz. She then oversaw women's health and mental health programs at the United Storeworker's Union (RWDSU) in New York City and for the Mayor's Office of Labor Relations under David Dinkins. After

twenty years in the field, she joined Hunter College and the CUNY Graduate Center as professor of sociology and social work. Today she is an international lecturer, researcher and writer. Her prize-winning book, "Freud's Free Clinics – Psychoanalysis and Social Justice, 1918-1938," made her a leading voice in the growing movement to bring insight-oriented therapies to homeless people, street people, and other marginalized populations. As a founder of the new field of community psychoanalysis, she has worked with neighborhood analysts in urban settings such as the favela psychoanalysts of Brazil. Her other books include "Freud/Tiffany," a collection on Anna Freud and her partner, Dorothy Tiffany Burlingham, and the forthcoming "Theory Has Its Pleasures - the Work of Anna Freud," to be first published in Brazil this year. Dr. Danto's work has become a standard reference in clinical social work, progressive psychoanalysis and the social history of mental health services.



Christina Delfico



An Emmy-nominated media producer, **Christina Delfico** has served as Vice President and Executive Producer with Sesame Workshop garnering over 40 awards in children's media. Christina now uses her "producing superpowers" to advocate and create programming that invites the public to reconnect with nature.

She was honored to lead a panel discussion at the United Nations on "Sustainability Practices Across Industries" to inspire others.

While Green Committee Co-Chair for the Producers Guild of America Christina helped HBO and other media giants reduce production waste. She helped a NYC public school navigate funding resources to secure nearly \$2M for a green roof.

In 2012 Christina founded iDig2Learn to provide children the chance to shift from screen time to green time. Initially creating school gardens, plants soon became the anchor to discover all life among us. Now expanded, iDig2Learn serves all ages and abilities through nature events, chef-led community meals and landscape designs that serve multi-species communities.

Christina is an avid gardener, a Forest for All NYC coalition and NYC Pollinator Working Group member. The NY Times covered her milestone 2024 project of planting NYC's first Miyawaki Method pocket forest. 1,500 native trees and shrubs will quickly become a full forest thanks to funding partner SUGi and lead contributors RIOG, GRIN, Indigenous leaders from the Lenape Center and the Yakama Nation plus hundreds of volunteers.



Bianca Ellis



The Woman of Distinction Award is a prestigious recognition, and **Bianca Ellis** was nominated by her peers on M19 for demonstrating outstanding leadership, compassion, and commitment. She embodies these qualities through her unwavering dedication to patient care and her role in advancing nursing practices.

Bianca began her career at Memorial Sloan-Kettering in 2002 as a student nurse in the CAP summer program, later working as a patient care technician while finishing nursing school and graduating from Molloy College. While working as a Clinical Nurse, she returned to school to earn her master's degree as a Nurse Practitioner in Family Health. With over twenty-three years in nursing, Bianca currently serves as Charge Nurse, mentoring novice nurses on nights and advocating for the care of Breast Reconstruction and GYN patients at Memorial Sloan-Kettering.

Whether advocating for patient rights, leading innovative healthcare projects, or providing compassionate support to families, her influence extends beyond the bedside. Bianca is known for her integrity, empathy, and advocacy for better healthcare practices. Her dedication to improving lives and inspiring others to do the same makes her a deserving recipient of the Woman of Distinction Award.



Doreen Esposito



For over 20 years, **Doreen Esposito** has been a proud member of the Manhattan New School community serving the last six years as its principal. Prior to her days at the helm, she was a fifth-grade teacher at MNS, then honed her skills as the school's literacy coach and assistant principal.

Doreen has always been passionate about teaching and learning. As principal, she has been committed to creating a community of learners. The essence of her philosophy

is to encourage a child's natural curiosity, to develop a commitment to lifelong learning and to promote social responsibility as global citizens. She believes students need to believe in themselves and helped to create a supportive social-emotional curriculum embedded into the rigorous curriculum of the school. Through her work to embed social-emotional literacy into the school culture, Doreen has helped to inspire excellence in every learner! Her collaboration with families and her strong support of professional development has enriched all stakeholders' experiences.

Doreen was the recipient of a 2016 Blackboard Award from the New York Family Magazine in recognition of her outstanding work for New York City students. She also received the Education Update's Outstanding Educator of the Year in 2019 after being nominated by New York State Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright. Doreen received a Master of Arts in Childhood Education from New York University and MEd in Educational Leadership from Baruch College. She is a proud recipient of the National Blue Ribbon School 2021 Award and she was a 2020 Cahn Fellow.



Verna FitzPatrick

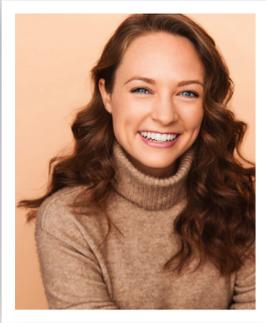


Verna FitzPatrick was born in Panama City to the late Harold and Alene Josephs. She obtained her BS in Medical Technology at Canal Zone College before moving to the United States in 1976 to obtain an MS in Public Health Administration from Russell Sage College. In 1980, she married her beloved late husband, Richard C. FitzPatrick, with whom she settled on Roosevelt Island to raise their two children, Robert and Elena. Verna began her career at the New York State Health Department. She later served

in various capacities at Bronx Lebanon Hospital, St. Elizabeth Anne Nursing Home, and in 1995 she became the administrator of Northern Manhattan Rehabilitation and Nursing Facility. Verna worked there for 21 years before retiring in 2016. Since then she has maintained active membership in several organizations that strive to serve the community. She is currently, the Vice President of her professional organization, Black Long-Term Care Executives. In that role, she spearheads an internship program that equips New York City high school students from underrepresented groups with the skills needed for careers in healthcare. Verna is also President of the Brooklyn United Methodist Church Nursing Home Foundation, Senior Warden of the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd on Roosevelt Island, Chair of the Coler Hospital Community Advisory Board, and member of the Imani Literary Group. In addition, she volunteers her time helping immigrants seeking asylum with the Asylum Support Clinic at Rutgers Presbyterian Church in Manhattan. Verna takes great joy in her children, five grandchildren, and her dog, Luna.



Stephanie Herlihy



Stephanie Herlihy was born and raised on Roosevelt Island. She started Roosevelt Island Thrift to provide a reliable and sustainable resource for residents to dispose of their clothing, shoes and books. The resources are resold, reused, repaired or recycled responsibly and a portion of proceeds are donated to children's organizations on Roosevelt Island. Her contributions to the community on Roosevelt Island were directly inspired by the growing sustainable initiatives on Roosevelt Island and are a small token of gratitude for the community that raised her. In addition to Roosevelt Island Thrift, Stephanie is an actress and works in childcare. She received a BA in Psychology and Theater at SUNY Binghamton.



Merle Hendricks



Merle Hendricks is a Nursing Professional Development Specialist (NPDS) for the operating rooms at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Merle oversees onboarding and orientation for new staff and coordinates hospital-wide education. Her career path towards nursing education was paved by her diverse clinical experiences and deep understanding of the important role that mentorship and dedication play in cultivating professional growth. Merle began her journey in healthcare as a home health aide over

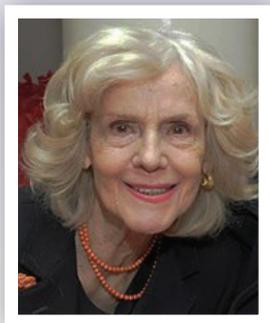
two decades ago before eventually entering the nursing profession. She obtained an Associate Degree in Nursing from SUNY Farmingdale State College, followed by a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Master of Science in Nursing Education from SUNY Delhi.

Merle's commitment to advancing nursing practice is evident by her progression up the clinical ladder, her continued interdisciplinary collaborations, and active memberships on numerous shared governance councils. Merle serves as a member of several professional organizations, including the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.

Beyond her professional achievements, Merle is a proud mother who enjoys spending time with family and traveling. She also dedicates time to volunteering and bettering the lives of those around her. She has been heavily involved in many outreach initiatives, and as a member of MSK Women on the Move (MWM), she participates in activities that support and empower women across the organization. Merle credits her passion for education and care for community to the values instilled in her as a native of Guyana, South America.



Nancy Houghton



Nancy Houghton is a passionate advocate for older adults who has worked in the field of aging for over thirty years. She has been a resident of the 76th district for over fifty years.

Ms. Houghton joined the nonprofit organization Health Advocates for Older People in 2001 and until recently served as Executive Director. Health Advocates (HAFOP), was founded in 1985 to promote safe and healthy aging through programs designed to facilitate independent living, physical well-being, and greater social interaction. Health Advocates provides free classes and presentations to 1500 seniors in New York City, offering 22 weekly exercise, wellness classes, informational seminars, and social activities in 14 locations, as well as online. In addition, HAFOP provides gently used donated equipment free to seniors in the community.

Before joining Health Advocates, Nancy served as Housing Coordinator at the James Lenox House, an affordable housing residence on Manhattan's Upper East Side. She also served as the Executive Director of the Annie Rensselaer Tinker Association for Women, a foundation that assists hundreds of retired women struggling financially to continue to live in their homes with independence, safety, and dignity. Previously, Nancy was the Registrar and Exhibition Coordinator at the Grolier Club, America's oldest and largest society for bibliophiles and enthusiasts in the graphic arts. There, she installed nine rare book exhibitions each year.

In 2018, Nancy was honored as the Outstanding Sustainer by the New York Junior League for her many years as a devoted volunteer, particularly the 17 she spent on the Early Childhood Development Committee, teaching free classes to new parents and their children during the first three years of life. She has been a member of the

Continued on next page



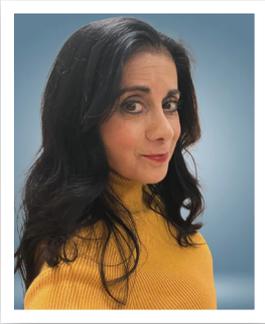
Continued from previous page

Church of the Heavenly Rest for many years, volunteering in various programs, including Altar Guild and currently serving on the Pastoral Team Committee. The Volunteer Referral Center honored Ms. Hughton at their 30th Anniversary Gala.

Nancy has a BS degree in Nutrition from the University of Alabama and an MA degree in Psychology from New York University.



Ellen Karis

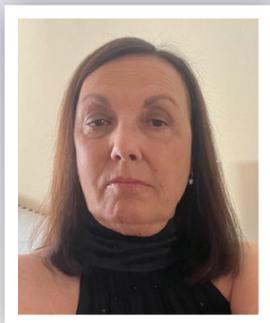


Ellen Karis is the “Greek Goddess of Comedy” and has performed Stand-Up Comedy all over North America. She has three comedy specials, her latest on the Dry Bar Comedy Channel called “Dreams Don’t Come True”. She is the host of a weekly podcast “Sweet and Salty with Ellen Karis” in its 11th season and is an actress having appeared on Amazon Prime’s “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” and the Tina Fey’s movie “Sisters”. She is also an Author and has published a children’s book “Special

People: Godparents in the Orthodox Christian Faith”. She is currently working on a one woman show about her Cypriot Great-Grandmother. A former CPA and Wall Street Analyst with an MBA in Finance, Ellen turned walked away from yearly bonus’ and 401K’s for the dream of entertaining people. A longtime Upper East Side resident, Ellen is so grateful to be living in what she describes as “its own little town” the gem of New York City and to receive the Woman of Distinction Award from the neighborhood that she cherishes is a such a high honor and humbling.



Susan Kaufman



Susan Kaufman, a resident on the Upper East Side for over 40 years, has been involved with volunteer efforts at Temple Emanu-El for 25 years. Tikkun Olam means to create a more compassionate and just world. The Chair of Temple Emanu-El's Tikkun Olam Committee for the past 11 years, Susan recruits volunteers, procures supplies, and communicates with partner organizations for Project Prom, Annual Thanksgiving Dinner, Mitzvah Day and other community service projects at the Temple and on-site. Temple Emanu-El and Susan's vision has been to reach out to our New York City community and other states as well to help those who are less fortunate than ourselves.



Patricia Mays

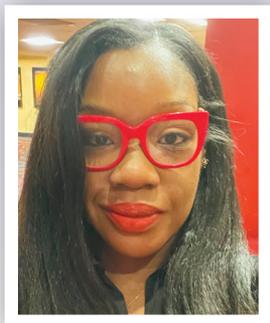


Patricia Mays is a highly motivated nonprofit development professional inspired to create opportunities that positively impact the lives of others in the community. She has an expertise in garnering resources for nonprofit mission delivery while strengthening relations with donors, volunteers, community partners, and the public. She is highly skilled at developing internal and external communication strategies and managing all communication channels.

Patricia transitioned from the corporate sector 15 years ago after successful careers in both hotel management and fashion advertising. As part of her personal and professional development, she went back to college later in life and earned a master's degree in Health Education from Columbia University while simultaneously transitioning into a nonprofit career at the American Red Cross. Patricia has been Chief Development and Communications Officer at the Carter Burden Network, a leading aging services org in NYC, for the past 10 years and is passionately dedicated to improving the lives of vulnerable older adults in our shared community. She is inspired daily by the social worker and older adult center colleagues she works with and feels privileged to support their work. Patricia is a native New Yorker.



Rosanna McCoy



Rosanna McCoy is a dedicated and compassionate Patient Care Technician at Memorial Sloan Kettering, where she has worked since July 2010. Born in Trinidad, she immigrated to the United States with her mother and sister in search of better opportunities. They settled in Brooklyn, where Rosanna completed her elementary, middle, and high school education before pursuing higher education. She trained to become a Certified Nurse Assistant and a Patient Care Technician, discovering her passion for caring for others.

Throughout her career, Rosanna has provided care for both disabled adults and children in home care settings, as well as for patients with various health issues in hospitals. She has gained experience in several departments, including Outpatient, Ophthalmology, and the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU). Currently, she works on the M19 unit, consistently going above and beyond to ensure the comfort, dignity, and safety of every individual in her care.

Her diverse experience and compassionate nature have inspired her to pursue a career in nursing, with the goal of becoming a nurse practitioner and eventually opening her own practice.

In her free time, Rosanna enjoys traveling, watching movies, participating in adventurous activities, and spending quality time with her friends and family.

In recognition of her outstanding performance in patient care, Rosanna McCoy was honored with the 2025 Women of Distinction Award. This accolade motivates her to continue her exceptional work and inspire others.



Adriana Mero



Adriana Mero is a dedicated professional and mother of three who has built a meaningful career at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. She joined MSK on December 14, 2015, as part of the Environmental Services department. Initially responsible for discharge cleaning, she later transitioned to the overnight shift, where she specialized in Operating Room terminal cleaning. In this role, Adriana played a vital part in ensuring a sterile and safe environment for surgical

patients, a responsibility she embraced with pride due to its direct impact on patient care.

In December 2021, Adriana advanced her career by joining the Nursing department as an overnight Unit Assistant on the 19th floor. Welcomed warmly by her team, she quickly became an integral part of a supportive and collaborative group that feels like an extended family. Together, they celebrate milestones and navigate the challenges of working in a cancer hospital. Adriana is deeply committed to her role, striving daily to support both patients and colleagues while ensuring the unit operates smoothly to meet any arising needs.

Adriana takes great pride in being part of a team that values collaboration and mutual support. Her dedication to making a difference in the lives of patients and colleagues underscores her passion for contributing to MSK's mission of providing exceptional care.



Sharon Pope-Marshall



Sharon Pope-Marshall is Executive Director of CIVITAS, a community-based nonprofit civic organization that covers the Upper East Side and El Barrio/East Harlem. Sharon has been with CIVITAS for over a decade, starting as a volunteer and co-chairing its Land Use & Zoning Committee before eventually becoming a board member and ultimately the organization's executive director in 2021. As executive director, she organized The East Side Residents Coalition, bringing together

leaders from East Harlem, the Upper East Side and East Midtown to discuss land use issues. She also organized Understanding Streets Academy, promoting pedestrian street safety initiatives, and has provided testimony and public comment before the New York City Districting Commission, the City Planning Commission, and various public forums. A passionate urbanist, Sharon advocates for sound, context-sensitive urban planning, zoning, and land use policies for the Upper East Side and El Barrio/East Harlem.

In addition to executive director, Sharon is a long-time member of Manhattan Community Board 8, which also covers the Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island. She co-chairs CB8's Communications Committee. In honor of her community planning and civic engagement work, in 2022, Sharon received an OTTY (Our Town Thanks You) award by Our Town, an Upper East Side newspaper that focuses on quality-of-life issues. She is a member of the NYC Greenways Coalition and the Cornell Tech/Roosevelt Island Task Force. She is on the board of Street Lab, a nonprofit that activates and transforms city streets, and she is also an alum of the Coro Neighborhood Leadership Program, a nonprofit that provides our city's top talent with the resources they need to understand how to influence meaningful change and address complex challenges within their neighborhoods.



Donna Sbriglia-DeChecchi



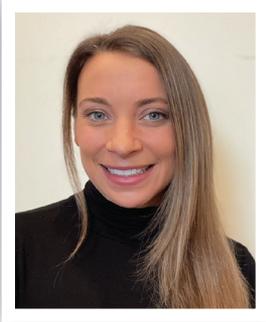
Donna Sbriglia-DeChecchi has always been part of the Upper East Side. Born at Lenox Hill Hospital and grew up across the street from MSK. During her senior year at St. Jeans Baptiste high school Donna began her career at Memorial Sloan Kettering in the coffee shop. That after school job led to a 50-year career at MSK. While attending college and raising her children who are the fourth generation to grow up in the neighborhood, she affectionally calls Yorkville. Donna held

numerous positions in many departments including Patient Transport, Nursing, Administration, Inpatient Operations, Supply Chain, and Planning, and is currently part of the Design & Construction team. Donna takes pride in being a part of MSK, collaborating with staff, and helping patient. She has been involved in planning and opening many MSK sites, sharing her knowledge, mentoring, and working beside dedicated staff.

In 1990 Donna returned to Sokol New York on East 71 Street where she volunteered as a teenager, teaching girls' gymnastics. Over the past 35 years Donna has taught and held volunteer positions on the Sokol Executive Board including, Physical Director for programs, President and currently First Vice President. Donna loves being a member of this fraternal organization whose motto is a Sound Mind in a Sound Body. Sokol is one of the few remanences from when the neighborhood was Czech and Slovak. Her greatest reward is when the children she taught bring their children back to attend classes because of their fond memories at Sokol.



Amy Setesak



Amy Setesak is a dedicated nurse and innovator focused on advancing patient care through forward-thinking solutions. Since earning her BSN from the University of Connecticut in 2008, she has built a diverse clinical background spanning home care, medical-surgical, oncology, neurocritical care, and plastic surgery post-operative care.

Her passion for innovation emerged through piloting new initiatives and workgroups, inspiring her to complete UCONN's

Healthcare Innovation Program. She is a founding member of the first Nursing Innovation Center and Accelerator at MSK, breaking down silos to foster collaboration between nursing and biomedical engineering while empowering nurses to navigate the complexities of innovation within healthcare organizations. As a co-inventor of a medical device, she champions end-user innovation to develop solutions centered on both patients and clinicians.

Beyond the bedside, Amy is developing a plant-based protein water designed for both patients and health-conscious consumers, bridging the gap between clinical care and everyday wellness. Her mission is to empower nurses as change-makers, shaping the future of healthcare.





