



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo presents New York State Senate Commendation Awards

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO November 2, 2023

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At a special ceremony today at Munson in Utica, New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-C-Rome, presented New York State Senate Commendation Awards to several residents of the 53rd Senate District.

Commendations are one of the highest honors that the Senate can use to recognize individuals who have served and made lasting contributions to their community and the state throughout their careers or lives.

Those honored included:

- Darlene Mack-Brown, community engagement direct at Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency and community advocate
- Steven DiMeo, president of Mohawk Valley EDGE
- Rocco “Rocky” DiVeronica, former Town of Lenox supervisor and Chairman of the Madison County Board of Supervisors
- Frank Elias, founder and president of Utica Coffee Roasting
- Monalisa Fermin-Fennell, a community advocate
- Dr. Brian Gaffney, a leading cardiologist in the region
- Susan Hanson, advocate for breast cancer survivors and their families
- Rodney Kent, former president and CEO of International Wire
- David Mathis, director of the Oneida County Office for Workforce Development
- Jacqueline Nelson, president of the Rome Branch of the NAACP
- Victor Pearlman, executive director of the Jewish Community Foundation of the Mohawk Valley and the Jewish Community Center of Utica
- Raymond Philo, retired chief of the New Hartford Police Department
- Earle Reed, former president of ECR International and founder of the Boilermaker Road Race in Utica
- Richard Smith, an accomplished local attorney
- John Zogby, respected pollster

Heather Elias, Nick Matt, Rev. Dr. Mary Webster, Mary Carol (MC) Chruscicki and Patricia Baskinger were unable to attend the ceremony but were also recognized.

Honorees received a personalized plaque and commendation coin as part of the ceremony.

“There are many individuals within our communities who are certainly worthy of recognition for their efforts to enrich the social, religious and educational well-being of their neighbors and fellow citizens,” **Sen. Griffo said.** “The hard working, caring and dedicated individuals receiving New York State Senate Commendations today have helped to make our neighborhoods, communities, region and the state a better place for all.”

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