



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
David J. Valesky

Senator Valesky Names Sharon Owens New York State Senate Woman of Distinction

DAVID J. VALESKY May 6, 2015

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Syracuse–State Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) announced today that Sharon Owens, chief executive officer of Syracuse Model Neighborhood Facility, Inc., has been selected as the 53rd Senate District’s 2015 Woman of Distinction. Owens was recognized for her work in human services and community development in the city of Syracuse.

“Sharon Owens’ remarkable contributions to our community demonstrate her dedication and commitment to the Syracuse residents most in need of a strong advocate,” Sen. Valesky said. “Her leadership is strengthening the programs and services that Southwest Community Center offers, and I am pleased to honor her as this year’s Woman of Distinction.”

A graduate of Syracuse University, Owens has worked in the field of housing, community development and human services for almost 30 years. In May 2013, Owens became the third CEO of Syracuse Model Neighborhood Facility, Inc., which operates the Southwest Community Center.

While an employee of the city of Syracuse, Owens served as Deputy Commissioner of Neighborhood and Business Development administering the city's Community Development Block Grant funding to foster the revitalization of neighborhoods and the creation of job opportunities through housing, community development and economic development efforts. In addition, Owens oversaw Section 3 and Minority/Women-Owned Business participation in funded projects.

Prior to joining city government, Owens served as Deputy Director of Housing for not-for-profit agencies Home HeadQuarters, Inc. and Jubilee Homes of Syracuse. In both positions she was responsible for program development, grant writing and supervision of staff. She developed relationships with many families throughout Syracuse and was able to assist them in strengthening their community through the affordable housing programs. Before that, Owens worked at People's Equal Action and Community Effort, Inc. (PEACE), a Community Action Agency of Onondaga County, where she was the Early Head Start Family and Community Coordinator and the Youth Services Component Director.

The New York State Senate's "Woman of Distinction" program was created in 1998 to honor New York women who exemplify personal excellence, or whose professional achievements or acts of courage, selflessness, integrity or perseverance serve as an example to all New Yorkers. Since the inception of the program, more than 400 women have been honored as Women of Distinction.