



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeremy Cooney

## NYS Senator Jeremy Cooney Honors Midge Thomas as 2023 New York State Senate Woman of Distinction

JEREMY COONEY August 16, 2023

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Senator Cooney poses with 2023 Woman of Distinction Honoree Midge Thomas

**(ROCHESTER, NY)** - Today, **Senator Jeremy Cooney (D-Rochester)** honored Midge Thomas as his 2023 NYS Senate Woman of Distinction.

Each year state senators select *one constituent* to decorate with this prestigious honor. The Women of Distinction program highlights exemplary women from across New York whose

professional or personal achievements, commitment to excellence and accomplishments merit special recognition.

Mrs. Thomas was selected for her decades-long service to the Rochester community. She established the Freddie Thomas Foundation to honor the legacy of her late husband, civil rights activist Dr. Freddie Thomas. The Foundation provides a free space for community organizations and has funded countless projects in Rochester, including the Jane Pittman Drinking Fountain which provides free drinking water in the center of the city.

Today, Mrs. Thomas continues her work, inspiring the next generation of community leaders in Rochester.

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*It is my honor to recognize Midge Thomas as my 2023 Woman of Distinction” said **Senator Jeremy Cooney**. “Midge truly embodies this award. For decades she has been a leader in our community, fighting for humanity, liberty, and equity for all. Both Rochester and New York State have benefited from her decades-long work, and are proud to present her with this prestigious award. We are deeply grateful for Midge’s relentless effort to improve our community.”*

“Research what you want to be. Make short and long term plans. Focus on your goals. Go for it,” said **Midge Thomas**, 2023 NYS Women of Distinction Honoree.

“Midge Thomas has etched her own legacy into the story of Rochester’s never-ending quest for equity, inclusion, and social justice,” said **Mayor Malik D. Evans**. “And now, thanks to this recognition from Senator Cooney and the New York State Senate, her legacy—and the lessons we all can learn from that legacy – extends beyond Rochester to the entire state.”

"My life had been impacted by Midge Thomas before I really knew who she was," said **Rochester City Council Member LaShay D. Harris**. "I remember participating in the activities at the Triangle Building such as dodge ball and swimming. Activities offered free to youth in the community. Midge Thomas has blazed a trail in her role a stark advocate for the Rochester Community. As the founder of the Freddie Thomas Foundation formally known as the Triangle Building now located at the Harro East Building, she became one Rochester's First African-American to own a major commercial building. She continued the work of supporting community youth which was started by the late Dr. Freddie L. Thomas, her husband. That is just one of the many accomplishments of Mrs. Thomas."

"Working with Midge over the past two-years has been a rewarding experience. Not only was I able to publish my first book, but I got to know a phenomenal woman who initiated positive change in the city of Rochester," said **Laura DiCaprio**, *author of Letters to Freddie: The Biography of Midge Thomas*. "Her dedication to helping others has inspired me to do the same, therefore all proceeds from the book will be donated to Downtown ROCs, a non-profit organization that creates economic opportunities for youth in the city, while simultaneously adding beauty and energy to Downtown Rochester."

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