



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Cordell Cleare

Statement from Senator Cordell Cleare on the Passing of Dr. Hazel N. Dukes

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Today, we mourn the passing of a giant. Dr. Hazel N. Dukes was more than a leader—she was a force of nature, a guiding light, and a warrior for justice. Her legacy is woven into the very fabric of our communities, especially here in Harlem, where her presence was felt in every fight for dignity, equality, and progress.

I had the profound honor of working alongside Dr. Dukes in the struggle for civil rights, equity, and opportunity for our people. Whether it was in the fight for voting rights, access to quality education, or standing up against systemic injustices, she was always on the front lines—fearless, determined, and unwavering. Her mentorship, wisdom, and friendship were gifts that I, and so many others, will forever cherish.

Dr. Dukes dedicated her life to uplifting Black people, ensuring that our voices were heard in the halls of power and that our communities had the resources and opportunities we deserved. She was a fearless advocate, never shying away from speaking truth to power, yet always carrying herself with grace and an unshakable commitment to justice.

For generations, she stood at the forefront of the fight for civil rights, mentoring young leaders, championing education, and demanding fairness in housing, healthcare, and economic opportunity. Harlem—and indeed, all of New York—has lost a pillar, but the impact of her work will be felt for years to come.

We are forever grateful for Dr. Dukes' service, for the battles she fought, and for the paths she paved. We will honor her not just in memory but in action—by continuing her work and ensuring that her legacy lives on.

Thank you, Dr. Dukes, for everything. Rest in power.