



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Cordell Cleare

Regarding the Untimely Passing of Ms. Excenia Mette

CORDELL CLEARE April 24, 2025



A longtime Harlem resident and beloved community member was taken from us much too soon. I express my sincerest condolences to the family of Ms. Excenia Mette, who was such an important part of the Harlem community. Ms. Mette or 'Zeenie' as she is known in Harlem, was known for her warmth, bringing together people through her cooking, and for preserving generations of Harlem's Black culture.

In 2018, Ms. Mette opened "Mama Zees" on 123rd and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd, the only Black woman owned bodega in all of New York City. The first to exist in the city since 1987.

She served traditional soul food dishes including fried catfish and Chicken & Waffles, building off of the recipes she was taught by her grandma also named Excenia. On Sundays, Ms. Mette would host worship services outside of her deli to share her relationship with God with the community and continue to bring people together. Her impact and visions for Harlem will forever be remembered.

Ms. Mette was also a longtime member of the National Action Network, helping advocate for the advancement of Black Americans in Harlem and nationwide.

Ms. Mette was an inspiration to the community and an example of Black women leaders in this community. She will be missed by her family and by us all.

