



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Darrel J. Aubertine

Pamelia Woman Named NYS Senior Citizen of the Year

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May 5, 2010

ISSUE:

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Dorothy Austin recognized by Senate for her tireless work, advocacy on behalf of fellow seniors

ALBANY (May 5, 2010)—State Sen. Darrel J. Aubertine said today that Dorothy J. Austin of the Military Road in the town of Pamelaia has been named the 2010 New York State Senior Citizen of the Year by the New York State Senate.

“For me to be presented this award by Sen. Aubertine, I’m very grateful, but when I see seniors from all different counties here today, I know each one of them is just as worthy. I’m proud to be representing all seniors in winning this award,” Mrs. Austin said. “I believe in one thing and that is love. Love is cheap. Nobody has to be rich to love. To go into a nursing home and give a smile, to recognize somebody, somebody you haven’t seen in a while, that’s all it takes—a little love to make the world go around. My faith, my family and my friends are the three most important things in my life. Everything else is a luxury. If I can help somebody, put a smile on their face and a little love in their heart, it’s worth it to me.”

The award is given annually to a senior citizen who has tirelessly advocated on behalf of seniors within his or her community and assisted in providing support services and activities that have enhanced the lives of fellow senior citizens. The Jefferson County Office for the Aging nominated Mrs. Austin and her husband, Robert H. Austin, for awards with the Senate and Assembly. The Senate Committee on Aging selected Mrs. Austin among nominees from across the state.

“Dorothy is a shining example of what it means to give back to your community,” said Sen. Aubertine, who introduced the resolution to honor her on the floor of the Senate. “She has lived a full life and continues to add to it by being involved in the lives of others. A cancer survivor and a person of deep faith, she is well known to never shy away from an opportunity to help a neighbor in need.”

Mrs. Austin, who celebrated her 74th birthday on Sunday, has been an active volunteer with the Office for the Aging, helping with the office’s annual events including a summer picnic and the Senior Health Fair, sponsored by the Office for the Aging and Sen. Aubertine last fall. Married 27 years to Mr. Austin, an active senior and Pamelaia Town Justice, Mrs. Austin is the mother of two, step mother to two more and the proud grandmother of three.

“Dorothy’s about as positive a person as I’ve ever met in my life. She’s always happy and takes life as it comes along,” said Steven E. Binion, director of the Jefferson County Office for the Aging. “She’s a good hearted person who’s always looking out for her friends and even strangers, anyone who’s looking for a helping hand. She’s been an ongoing friend of the Office for the Aging, helped us at many, many, events, and for her entire senior life, she’s been a volunteer and member of many civic organizations. She and her husband both are outstanding citizens, not just senior citizens.”

Serving also in her fifth year as president of the Busy BG’s—the Brownville-Glen Park Senior Citizens group—Mrs. Austin has also served as vice president and treasurer of the senior organization. She has also been actively involved in senior activities in LeRay, Theresa and Dexter.

“Dorothy’s a great person. She’s very personable and helpful to others. Plus she’s taller than me,” said Robert J. Thomas, a Jefferson County Legislator from Glen Park representing the towns of Dexter and Brownville, and member of the Brownville, Glen Park Senior Citizens. “She organizes the senior citizen events here and does a great job with that leading everyone to have a good time. She has a great sense of humor, is a great dancer, and is always willing to go the extra mile for her community. I’m very happy to see that she is being honored by the Senate.”

Mrs. Austin has been a regular participant in the county’s Meals on Wheels program and an active member of AARP, the American Red Cross, the Four River Valleys Historical Society, and the Jefferson

County Agricultural Society. A lifetime member of the North Side Improvement League in Watertown and the league's 2002 Member of the Year for the Ladies Auxiliary, the Brownville Immaculate Conception church parishioner makes weekly visits to Samaritan Keep Home to visit residents, bringing with her love and a smile to brighten the day of her fellow seniors.

"Dorothy is a wonderful friend to just about anyone she meets," said Doris L. Bennett, a close friend and fellow member of the Busy BG's. "I don't think she'd ever have a stranger in her life, because everyone she meets becomes a friend. She's never too busy to stop and talk somebody. Any time that we're at meetings or in a social time, if anyone wants to visit with her, she'll stop to visit. Whoever she has in front of her she puts first and that's nice. I've known her for 10 years now and she's always been a great friend."

In addition to honoring Mrs. Austin, the Senate also declared May to be Senior Citizen Month and celebrated Senior Citizen's Day with an information expo and ceremony at the Empire State Convention Center.

Last year, another North Country resident, Floyd "Duff" Powell of DeKalb Junction was recognized with the 2009 Outstanding Contribution by a Senior Citizen Award for his work as a counselor and leader within his community and his church, lending a helping hand with everything from performing marriages to helping maintain the DeKalb Junction Food Pantry, which he helped found. Mr. Powell passed away on February 20th at age 82.