



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Roy J. McDonald

Karen Gordon

ROY J. MCDONALD May 11, 2011



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**Award:** HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

**Year:** 2011

For nearly 40 years, Karen E. Gordon has worked tirelessly at the Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO) for the Greater Capital Region, Inc. to improve the lives of struggling Rensselaer County residents. Quickly rising up the career ladder from bookkeeper in 1972 to Executive Director in 1982, Ms. Gordon passionately leads the agency every day in its mission to break the cycle of poverty by offering people the tools they need to become self-sufficient.

CEO, part of a larger system of non-profit Community Action Agencies across New York State and the country, has grown exponentially under Ms. Gordon's tenure. From a fledgling agency in cramped rented space with 20 workers, CEO has grown to 250 employees and 150 volunteers who operate programs out of nine buildings it owns. With an annual budget of \$21 million, CEO is an "umbrella" agency that provides over 25 programs and services designed to empower individuals and families to move out of poverty and into lives filled with success.

A life-long resident of Troy with a B.S. in Management from the College of Saint Rose, Ms. Gordon has received numerous accolades for her leadership, including The Uncle Sam Citizen of the Year Award, The Troy Business and Professional Woman of the Year Award, and the New York State Community Action Partnership Leadership Award. Most recently, she was honored by the Capital District Business Review with the "Women Who Mean Business Award" and by Key Bank with the "Key4Women Achieve Award."

As she starts her fifth decade with CEO, Ms. Gordon's commitment is unwavering, as she continues to witness firsthand the agency's core creed: Given the necessary resources, education, and opportunity, people can change.