



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Virginia Houseknecht

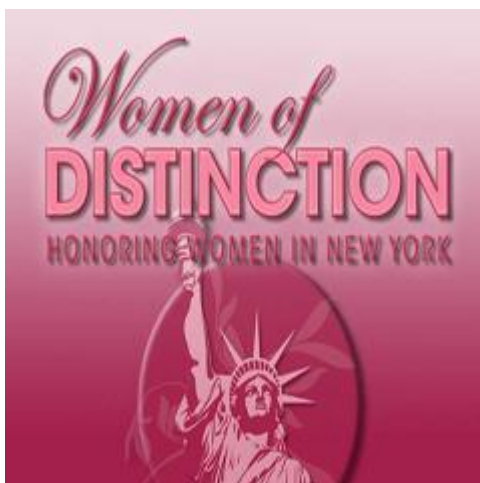
THOMAS F. O'MARA May 14, 2012



*Women of*  
**DISTINCTION**  
HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

***Virginia Houseknecht***

*Virginia Houseknecht was selected as a 2012 Woman of Distinction by Senator Thomas F. O'Mara*



Virginia Houseknecht

**Award:** HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

**Year:** 2012

Virginia Houseknecht, affectionately known as “Ginny,” has been a devoted community educator throughout her career and her retirement.

For 35 years, Ms. Houseknecht served as the Family and Consumer Sciences Program Leader for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schuyler County. She is known across the Southern Tier for her leadership and research-based education in food sciences, nutrition and health, parenting, and financial management.

Shortly after her retirement in 2005, Ms. Houseknecht was diagnosed with Parkinson’s Disease (PD). Devastated, yet wanting to do something positive to help others, she contacted Schuyler County Office for Aging and RSVP. With their endorsement and tremendous support, Ms. Houseknecht established the Southern Tier Parkinson’s Disease Support Group in 2006. Her motivation to help others alongside her ability to easily connect and build a rapport led to the success of a service that now provides accurate information, with guest speakers and a resource library, binding relationships, and a strong support network for those in need. Since its creation, more than 100 persons with PD and their caregivers have benefitted from Ms. Houseknecht’s work as founder and facilitator of the group.

Among her other honors, Ms. Houseknecht is a recipient of the Jefferson Award for Public Service, the Schuyler Senior Volunteer of the Year, and Friend of Extension awards. She is a member of the League of Women Voters, and the Southern Tier Library System Foundation’s campaign committee.

She has a Bachelor’s degree from the College of Human Development, Penn State University and a Master’s degree from the College of Human Ecology, Cornell University. Ms.

Houseknecht lives in Watkins Glen. She and her late husband, Lee, are proud parents of their daughter, Ashley.