



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

Carmen G. Rivera

GUSTAVO RIVERA May 13, 2015



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

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**Award:** HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

**Year:** 2015

Carmen G. Rivera has been an active community organizer and activist for more than 40 years. She currently serves as the Assistant Vice President of Community & External Affairs for VIP Community Services. Previously on the VIP Community Services' Board of Directors for 30 years, she also served as its chair.

Ms. Rivera was born in Bayamon, Puerto Rico. Her bilingual and bicultural background provided her with a unique sensitivity to the plights of immigrants and those with language barriers – thus beginning a career full of volunteerism. Most notably, a local priest at St. Anthony's – Reverend Father Robert Banome – helped nurture her thirst for spiritual ministry and activism.

Ms. Rivera's community leadership and accomplishments have spanned decades. For 17 years, she has served on Community Board 9, and also held a post on the executive committee for nine years. In addition, Ms. Rivera has actively and selflessly served her community as housing chairperson, parish trustee, President of Parish Council for Church of St. Anthony, a mentor and leader to young girls ages 7-18 years, and as a member of the Executive Committee of Discovery for Justice Coalition, a non-profit organization that advocates for criminal justice reform.

Professionally, Ms. Rivera was employed as the National Sales Manager at Bookazine, a book wholesaler. She later became the National Trade Sales Manager at Lectorum/Scholastic Publishing, where she marketed Spanish books nationwide. Ms. Rivera was a member of the American Library Association, American Booksellers' Association, and a member of Reforma, where she supported the needs of Spanish speakers through library services. In 2009, she was honored with the first Lifetime Achievement Distinction for providing services to the Latino community.

Ms. Rivera's most important role is serving as the matriarch of her family – mother to Yolanda and Jeanette, and grandmother to Jasmine, Destiny and Brandon. She is the great grandmother of Hailey and Dominick. Ms. Rivera has been a proud resident of the Bronx for the last 52 years, and has resided in the same home for 44 years. She is an avid reader who enjoys culinary arts and travel.