



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Murphy hosts 2016 Women of Distinction ceremony

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MT. KISCO, NY - At a ceremony held at Mt. Kisco Elementary School, fifteen women from communities throughout the Hudson Valley were honored by Senator Terrence Murphy as the 2016 recipients of the 40th Senate District's Women of Distinction Award.

A capacity crowd heard powerful personal stories about women who have turned their dreams into successful business ventures, volunteered to give back to their communities, or taken a leadership role in keeping drugs from infesting our youth.

"Our honorees are women who set high standards for themselves, then went out and accomplished what was seemingly impossible," said Senator Murphy. "They selflessly serve their communities as volunteers, asking nothing in return. Their reward is helping to make the Hudson Valley a better place to live. They are role models for the next generation of young women and have been instrumental in helping their communities grow and prosper."

The 2016 Women of Distinction Award recipients are:

Regina Aurisicchio (Carmel). The owner of Florrie Kaye's Tea Room, Regina is a cancer survivor, having fought and overcome both breast and colon cancer. Regina volunteers with St. James the Apostle Church, the Mahopac School District, Kennedy Catholic, Mahopac Sports Association and her Rosary Group. She is also a Community Cares Board Member, and a member of the Putnam County Women's Alliance, Mahopac Carmel Chamber of Commerce and Hamlet of Carmel Civic Association.

Carol Christiansen (Somers). In June 2012, Carol and her husband Lou lost their son to heroin addiction. In light of their tragedy, they co-founded Drug Crisis in Our Backyard, a community-based non-profit offering education and treatment for families and individuals struggling with addiction. Carol has been recognized for her efforts by the Putnam County Sheriff's Honor Corps, a Congressional Proclamation, the Sid Gibson Image Award and a Certificate of Recognition from Mental Health Services of Putnam County. In addition, Carol is a real estate broker and owner of Café Realty and has received numerous awards of excellence.

Laurie Dean (Croton-on-Hudson). Laurie is the Coordinator for the Croton Community Coalition, working proactively to keep teens drug-free. She was recognized with a national award from the Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America for developing a program designed to teach parents about marijuana. Prior to joining the Coalition, Laurie worked in corporate human resources for 25 years. A two-time PTSA President for Croton Harmon High School, Laurie also volunteered delivering meals for the Croton Caring Committee and served on the Circe School Board of Directors.

Joan Donohue (Mount Kisco). After retiring as Staff Coordinator for the Sarah Neuman Nursing Home, Joan began her illustrious volunteer career as a member of the Mt. Kisco Elementary School PTA, eventually becoming co-President. She is Chairperson of the Leonard Park Committee, and a member of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians and St. Francis of Assisi Church. She has also served two terms as a village trustee and has served as Chairperson of the Mt. Kisco Democratic Committee.

Jane K. Dove (Lewisboro). A forty-year resident of South Salem, Jane is an independent journalist and publicist who learned her craft as Associate Director or Public Affairs for New York Medical College in Valhalla. She is currently a lead reporter for the Lewisboro Ledger and a contributor to WAG Magazine. She has worked with numerous non-profit organizations including The County Children's Center, New Jersey Cystic Fibrosis, the Bridge Fund of New York and Westchester

and the Visiting Nurse Association of the Hudson Valley.

Josephine Galgano (Sleepy Hollow). Josephine has resided in Sleepy Hollow for all of her 79 years and has been a strong voice for seniors. She serves on the Police Advisory Committee, is a member of the Red Hatters and has been President of the Sleepy Hollow Seniors. As President, she held countless luncheons honoring community events. In 2014, Josephine was selected as an aide for the Sleepy Hollow St. Patrick's Day Parade. She is also an active volunteer with local elections and is an active parishioner at Immaculate Conception Church.

Frances Gibbs (Peekskill). Fran was the first female Mayor of Peekskill, serving three terms. She served as a Councilwoman for eight years and later as Deputy Mayor. She worked as a teacher, and operated Camp Mill Run, a day camp in Shrub Oak. Fran was instrumental in building up Peekskill's Artist District, and as a longtime member of the Paramount Center for the Arts, raised over 1 million in funds for the organization.

Ann Godesky (Town of Pawling). A retired teacher and advocate for youth, Ann has been a consultant for the U.S. Department of Education Northeast Regional Center for Drug Free Schools and Communities and Athletic Director for Pawling High School. Ann has volunteered for the Dutchess County Youth Board, Dutchess County Children's Services Council. Task Force of Drugs and Alcohol, Lakeside & Holiday Hills Transition Advisory Board, Pawling Task Force, Pawling Rotary Club and Pawling Resource Center.

Ginger Gross (Southeast). Ginger worked for the Brewster School District as a librarian for 15 years, was a 16-year member of the Brewster Education Foundation. She currently serves as President of Putnam County Retired Teachers Union, volunteers with Ann's Place, a support group for cancer patients and the Lake Library Association in Franklin, New Hampshire.

Melissa Kamin (Brewster). Melissa is the founding Director of Community Relations and the Corporate Compliance Officer for the Hudson Valley Cerebral Palsy Association. She is also a founding member of the development team at the Association, providing job opportunities and training environments for individuals with disabilities. Melissa is a founding member of the Board of Directors of the Opportunity League, which provides recreation and sports programs to individuals of all ages and abilities.

Aimee Nichols (Mt. Pleasant). At just 35-years of age, Aimee owns Berger Hardware, is head of the Thornwood Chamber of Commerce and volunteers for numerous organizations. She is a volunteer EMT and serves on the Board of Directors for the Valhalla Ambulance Corps, is a soccer coach for the Mt. Pleasant AYSO, and is a

volunteer firefighter for the White Plains Fire Department. She has received numerous business and community awards including the 2016 North American Retail Hardware Association Young Retailer of the Year, the 2007 Henry Gerke Firefighter of the Year Award and the 2012 True Value Best Hardware Store in Town Award.

Mary Ann O'Connor (Patterson). After retiring from teaching at the St. Patrick's School in 2000, Mary jumped into volunteering at the Patterson Library. She serves as Treasurer for the Putnam Lake Seniors, is a member of the Putnam Lake Fire Department Women's auxiliary, trains altar servers for the Sacred Heart Church, chauffeurs seniors to medical appointments and dresses up as Mrs. Claus during the Christmas season for many organizations.

Dorothea LaScala (Yorktown). Affectionately known as "Dottie," Dorothea owned LaScala's Bridal Shop for 25 years. She served as a Girl Scout Leader, taught C.C.D. at St. Patrick's Church in Yorktown and was a District Leader for the Yorktown Republican Party. Dottie is also a current Board Member of the Circolo Da Vinci of Yorktown. Dottie's many past awards include the 1984 Westchester County Executive Certificate of Appreciation, 1985 Westchester County Executive Certificate of Merit, 2012 Westchester County Executive Certificate of Distinguished Service and the 2012 Certificate of Special Recognition for District Leader of the Year.

Commander Rosemarie Lord (Beekman). A retired Navy Commander and Registered Nurse, Rosemarie served in Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan. Rosemarie has volunteered with U.S. Naval Academy, interviewing and advising eligible candidates. She has also been a religious education teacher, Brownie and Girl Scout Cookie Mother and Treasurer and Officer of the Kevin Barry Irish Club. She has been recognized for her outstanding service with the Navy Achievement Medal, Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, National Defense Services Medal - two stars (Vietnam, Persian Gulf and Iraq Wars), Global War on Terror Services Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal and the Naval Militia Medal.

Patricia Singer (Town of Cortlandt). Patricia joined the Cortlandt Community Volunteer Ambulance Corp in 1997, serving as Recording Secretary since 1998. She has been an Emergency Medical Technician since 1999, responding to over 2,046 calls. She serves as a Youth Corps Advisor, and is on the equipment and membership committees. She is also an American Heart Association CPR Instructor. During the day she is a Special Education Teacher's Aide at Hendrick Hudson High School and is also the Director of the Putnam Valley Day Camp.

Janet Wells (New Castle). After 10 years on the Town Board, Janet served as New Castle Town Supervisor for two terms. She served on the Chappaqua Board of

Education for 12 years, where she was Vice President and then President for an unprecedented four terms. Following her work with the Chappaqua Board, Janet served a five-year term with the Northern Westchester/Putnam Board of Cooperative Services (BOCES), serving two terms as President. In 1993, Janet co-founded the Chappaqua School Foundation (CSF), a not-for-profit dedicated to raising funds for the Chappaqua School District. CSF has donated over \$3.5 million and funded 275 grants.