



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Leroy Comrie

Valerie Brathwaite Nelson

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Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

*The Honorable
Valerie Brathwaite Nelson*

The Honorable Valerie Brathwaite Nelson was appointed by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, Second Department in February 2016, making history as the first African-American female from the County of Queens to be elevated to Associate Justice of the Appellate Division.

Prior to her election as Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York in 2005, Justice Nelson served two years as an elected Judge of the Civil Court of New York. She grew up in Queens and graduated from P.S. 134 in Hollis, the Renaissance Middle School in St. Albans and the Campus Magnet High School in Cambria Heights. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Syracuse University, graduating with honors in only three years.

Justice Nelson went on to receive her Juris Doctor degree at George Washington University, was admitted to the bar in New York and later admitted to practice law before the United States Supreme Court as well as various other courts. Justice Nelson has received a host of honors and recognitions, including the Women of Achievement Pacesetter Award, United States Congressional Award, a New York State Senate Award, New York State Assembly Award, the Queens Borough President's Award and the New York City Council Outstanding Service Award. She has been featured in various articles, and her distinguished record of service has been profiled in the media.

Justice Nelson has been an active participant and leader in various professional and community organizations, including past member of the NYS Continuing Legal Education Board, past first vicepresident of the York College Community Advisory Council, past member of Community Board 12 in Queens, a former Girl Scout Troop Leader, former Vice Chancellor, Trustee and member of various boards and committees for the Diocese of Long Island and former warden and member of the vestry of St. Gabriel's Church, Hollis. She is a Silver Star member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and a member of The Links, Inc.

Justice Nelson is grateful for the opportunities that have been provided to her by others, and she is eager to continue to make positive contributions to society. She is married to Nicholas J. Nelson, Ph.D., and they are the proud parents of three children.