



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Neil D. Breslin

## Nell Stokes

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HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

***Nell Stokes***

Nell Stokes came to the Capital District from Alabama in 1963. She soon became active in the community, running for a seat on the Albany School Board. Her commitment to her community grew from there, as she became involved serving on numerous boards of directors, including with the Downtown Day Care Center, Neighborhood Resource Center, Parsons Child and Family Services and the South End Improvement Corporation. Ms. Stokes also served as an Albany County Election Inspector for 18 years, and on the Capital Area Council of Churches' Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial/Scholarship Committee for

23 years, 19 of those as its Chair.

In 1980, while employed by the Albany YWCA, Ms. Stokes created, designed and implemented the Black American Essay Contest, which encouraged students ages 8 to 18 to develop their skills in research and writing. The contest continued for more than 15 years, with excerpts from each winning essay seen on local television stations each day during the month of February.

Ms. Stokes has served on panels at Hudson Valley Community College, the State University at Albany, Russell Sage College, Schenectady County Community College and Siena College. She has been a recognized public speaker, columnist and poet, and has written, directed and produced several plays with themes on education, faith, hope and love. She is a co-founder of the Black Women's Association of Albany and a member of the League of Women Voters, NAACP and the Underground Railroad History Project of the Capital Region, Inc.

Currently, Ms. Stokes is a volunteer with a one-on-one after-school tutoring program for children in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades.

Retired from the Albany County Department of Social Services, Ms. Stokes says her faith sustains her and God uses her gifts for His glory.