



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Recognizes Oswego County's Carol Blackburn as 2020 "Woman of Distinction"

PATTY RITCHIE August 26, 2020



Nominated by Senator Ritchie for the impact she has had on her students and her community, Phoenix Central School District educator [Carol Blackburn](#) has been selected as one of the New York State Senate's 2020 "Women of Distinction."

The New York State Senate launched its "Women of Distinction" program in 1998 to recognize the many contributions of women in New York State who have devoted themselves to their communities, excelled in their careers and inspired those around them to

make a difference.

Through the program, Senators from across New York State honor women in their districts at a ceremony typically held in Albany. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a virtual tribute, [available here](#), was launched.

“It’s often said that ‘to teach is to touch a life forever,’” said Senator Patty Ritchie. “That statement couldn’t be truer of Carol Blackburn, an educator who has impacted the lives of not only her students, but so many others through her advocacy and passion for making a difference.”

“It is my honor to recognize Carol for all she has done to help her students reach new heights and I congratulate her on being named a ‘Woman of Distinction.’”

Throughout the years, Carol has regularly made it a point to provide her students with the opportunity to visit the State Capitol and their representatives, including Senator Ritchie. During visits, Carol and her students have advocated for improved mental health services and enhancing suicide prevention in schools.

Carol and her students were responsible for encouraging Senator Ritchie to sponsor a law that provides New York State Universities, community colleges and city universities with educational materials on depression and suicide prevention. These materials are distributed to educators and in turn to students who are potentially battling depression or thoughts of suicide.

Because suicide has such a tremendous impact on peers, faculty and staff at colleges and universities, this new law also addresses the need for a “postvention” plan in partnership with a behavioral health provider in the community to support family members, friends, professionals and peers in the wake of a loved one’s suicide. Through this law and the

advocacy of Carol and her students, young people who are struggling are connected with the critical assistance they need.

To learn more about Carol and this year's other "Women of Distinction" honorees, [click here](#) and [here](#).