



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins Honors Velmanette Montgomery With Legislative Legacy Award

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(Albany, NY) - Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins [recognized](#) former Senator Velmanette Montgomery as the first-ever recipient of the Senate Majority Leader's Legislative Legacy Award on Tuesday, February 23, 2021. Former Senator Montgomery served as the Chair of the New York State Senate Standing Committee on Children and Families and was the longest-serving Democratic Senator in New York State history. She was the second African-American woman elected to the New York State Senate, and the first woman to give birth while serving in the New York State Senate.

"I couldn't think of a more deserving recipient of the first Senate Majority Leader's Legislative Legacy Award than former Senator Velmanette Montgomery. This is an incredible honor for me and an opportunity to celebrate someone iconic in creating Black excellence," said **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins**. "Velmanette is an accomplished community advocate and a personal mentor who was a force in government during her distinguished 36-year career in the State Senate. She is an inspirational leader and has been a champion for children and families in New York State and people who are currently and have been incarcerated -- always knowing the importance of creating a pathway for people to better their lives. She spent more years than any Democrat has spent in this chamber, and she got the chance finally to see so many of the things she fought for long ago become part of what we're proud of today. I commend her for her continued work and dedication to serving the people of New York and always being a champion for those

who need it most. I also thank her for opening doors for women from all walks of life to come after her. It is an honor and a privilege to recognize her today.”

Former Senator Velmanette Montgomery was first elected to the New York State Senate in 1984 and re-elected 17 consecutive times as a representative for Fort Greene, Boerum Hill, Red Hook, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Sunset Park, Gowanus, and Park Slope, among other neighborhoods located within the borough of Brooklyn. In 2019, she was elected Majority Conference Secretary. Senator Montgomery has a longstanding history of passion for community involvement and improvements to public services. She was a staunch advocate for New York families and remained committed to making New York a better place to live and raise a family.

During her political tenure, former Senator Montgomery played a key role in major legislative accomplishments such as [raising the age](#) of criminal responsibility in New York State, the [Kinship law](#) to allow kinship foster parents to exit foster care, become guardians, and continue to receive benefits similar to foster care, the [Anti-Shackling law](#) to prohibit incarcerated pregnant women from being handcuffed and shackled while in labor, the “[Deed Theft Bill](#)” to strengthen laws regulating distressed property “consultants” who provide services to prevent property loss, and [Bereavement Leave for Same-Sex Couples](#) that prohibits employers from discriminating in the granting of funeral or bereavement leave to its employees who are in a same-sex relationship. Senator Montgomery held the “Examining the State of Our Youth” roundtables throughout New York State, which resulted in the [Human Services Report and Directory](#) that serves as a resource guide for human services organizations, and resulted in important legislation introduced. Former Senator Montgomery continues to stand as a strong proponent of women’s rights, family services, restorative justice and children’s welfare.