



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Presents 101 Year-Old Thelma Koelmel of Watertown with Senate Commendation Award

PATTY RITCHIE August 12, 2021



State Senator Patty Ritchie Thursday honored 101 year-old Thelma Koelmel of Watertown with the New York State Senate Commendation Award in recognition of her civic engagement and for inspiring people to exercise the right to vote.

Last year, Koelmel—who will soon turn 102—was featured in the news for heading to the polls in person to vote in the 2020 presidential election. Koelmel was born one year before the 19th Amendment was ratified, giving women the right to vote. The first presidential

election she voted in was 1940 when Franklin D. Roosevelt faced Wendell Willkie.

“Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy and a right that many fought hard to attain,” said Senator Patty Ritchie.

“While many people don’t take advantage of the opportunity to vote, it is truly amazing that at 101 years-old Thelma Koelmel has continued to do so. It is my honor to present her with the Senate’s Commendation Award and I would like to thank her for inspiring so many others to be civically engaged.”

The New York State Senate Commendation Award recognizes exceptional people who have made a lasting contribution to their community. Award recipients devote their personal time, energy, creativity and expertise to others. They also are leaders in their community who enrich the social, health and educational well-being of their fellow citizens and inspire others to become involved and make a difference.

(Attn. photo editors: Senator Ritchie is pictured in the above photo with Thelma Koelmel and her family)