



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Valerie Bell

Valerie Bell has been deeply ingrained in her community for over 50 years. Ms. Bell was born and raised in the Wyckoff Gardens development, situated in the Boerum Hill section of Brooklyn.

From her early years, she exhibited a fervent dedication to assisting residents, fostering a profound understanding of the neighborhood's dynamics, and advocating for unity. It has always been her passion to ensure that every resident's voice is heard and valued.

Throughout her journey, Ms. Bell encountered numerous challenges, yet one of the most significant was navigating the infill of the next generation. However, undaunted amidst these challenges, her proudest moment came with the accomplishment of co-naming Nevins Street in honor of her parents, who were esteemed pillars of the community. Her daily commitment revolves around operating the Association's office to cater to the needs of the residents.

Having spent her entire life in Wyckoff Houses, Ms. Bell has been an integral part of its fabric. Serving as TA President for eight years, she spearheaded initiatives such as the re-establishment of the GED program within Wyckoff, and played pivotal roles in various community endeavors. Her journey began at the age of 18, when she joined the NYCHA summer youth program and the youth council, subsequently becoming involved in the community center and tenant patrol.

Ms. Bell's roots in Wyckoff trace back to 1965, when her parents, Virgil and Claudia Bell, became founding tenants. Her father supervised the tenant patrol, while her mother served as Sergeant of Arms in the early 2000s. Recently, they were honored with the co-naming of Nevins Street for their outstanding contributions as community leaders.

Ms. Bell's impact extends beyond local recognition. She played a crucial role in advocating for Wyckoff Gardens during the Gowanus Rezoning, securing millions for its renovation. Her relentless efforts in engaging residents and collaborating with NYCHA have shaped the Comprehensive Modernization of Wyckoff Houses, ensuring that residents' needs and voices guide the development's renovation with minimal disruption to their lives. This work will tremendously better the lives of thousands of tenants for generations to come.

***Valerie Bell was selected as a
2024 Women of Distinction honoree by Senator Andrew S. Gounardes***

