



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Carmen Rojas

Carmen Rojas has lived the life and struggle of an immigrant from the Dominican Republic, and has been a resident of Washington Heights in the borough of Manhattan for more than 30 years. Graduated from the University of O&M in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, she was founder of the Women's Federation of Cibao, organizer for Laborers of the Franca de Santiago zone, producer of the radio spot called "The Morning's Magazine" in the city of Santiago, producer of a documentary denouncing worker rights violations, and has been a keynote speaker in seminars and workshops in many countries in the Caribbean and Central and South America.

Ms. Rojas became a voice for her community when her children began school; she became president of the parent association. After her children left, she mentored scores of incoming parent association presidents across the district, especially recently arrived immigrants. She has successfully fought off the closing of at least two schools.

As a volunteer, Ms. Rojas has taught GED courses at the school and Hostos Community College to Spanish speaking immigrants. She is president and founder of Parents Advocating for Children, an organization created in response to the need to unify parents, and is active on issues relating to the improvement of the education system. Her organization was responsible for organizing against a proposed halfway house for convicted felons on 182nd St., short blocks away from six public schools. She collected over 1,000 signatures in opposition to the siting of the correction facility.

Ms. Rojas was on the front lines in Washington Heights advocating for fairer treatment and protesting overcharges by Consolidated Edison. She led the fight in demanding the Department of Education clean up the asbestos contamination of a public school. Today she continues to advocate for the resolution of lead-contaminated water in schools.

Ms. Rojas has written hundreds of poems and had them published. Every summer she holds a community forum on poetry for all ages. Her home is lined with numerous awards and recognitions received for her three decades of service. In 2018, she was nominated by the General Consul to receive the International Oscar de La Renta Award for her community leadership. She received a Certificate of Merit for her outstanding contribution to the "All the Way" program by Manhattan Borough President Virginia Fields and received a certificate for her participation from the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

In May 2000, Ms. Rojas was awarded a City Council Citation by Council Member Guillermo Linares, the first Dominican to hold elected office in the United States.

In 2018, the Community Education Council awarded its first-ever Legacy Award to Carmen Rojas for her years and commitment to bettering public education for every child.

***Carmen Rojas was selected as a
2019 Woman of Distinction honoree by Senator Robert Jackson.***

