



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Maude Bruce

Maude Bruce was born in 1945 and grew up in Cuthbert, Georgia, in the segregated south. At the age of 16, while visiting with her grandmother in Albany, Georgia, Ms. Bruce and 19 other teenagers joined in a protest march led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It was there in Albany that she first became involved with the NAACP - the oldest civil rights organization in the country - and the civil rights movement. As a teenager, Ms. Bruce was arrested during a peaceful march - an incident that she later recounted for the award-winning documentary *Eyes on the Prize*.

In 1962, Ms. Bruce married Jimmy Lee Bruce, and five years later, moved with him to Ellenville, where they raised their children and became active in the community. Ms. Bruce spent 36 years working as a timekeeper and doing payroll at Imperial Schrade. In 1986, she and her family suffered a terrible tragedy when her 20-year-old son, Jimmy Lee Jr., was killed by a chokehold, applied during what should have been a minor incident over alleged rowdy behavior, by two Middletown police officers who were moonlighting as security guards at a movie theater. The two officers involved were never indicted.

Ms. Bruce turned her worst personal tragedy into service to the community and advocacy for police reforms and accountability. She has served as President of the Ellenville Chapter of the NAACP since 1985. Under Ms. Bruce's leadership, the Ellenville Chapter of the NAACP has been an important anchor in the community, providing backpacks, school supplies and clothing for schoolchildren at their annual Back to School/Stay in School rally.

She hosts forums with local, state and federal candidates, honoring community members, organizations and businesses of distinction, and standing up for social, racial and economic justice. Ms. Bruce has been at the center of it all, making the fight for justice and service to community her priority for nearly 58 years.

***Maude Bruce was selected as a
2019 Woman of Distinction honoree by Senator Jen Metzger.***

