



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lea Webb

## Senator Webb Honors Local Students & Faculty at the Second Annual Abraham Lincoln DeMond Day at SUNY Cortland

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(CORTLAND, NY) On the first day of Black History Month, State Senator Lea Webb (SD52) proudly joined students, faculty, and community members at SUNY Cortland to celebrate the Second Annual Abraham Lincoln DeMond Day. During the celebration, Senator Webb honored three outstanding individuals from the university with New York State Senate

proclamations, acknowledging their significant contributions to fostering a rich and diverse community spirit.

The esteemed recipients of this year's proclamations were Clay Barnett, recognized for his role in organizing the event; Tatum Pittman, hailed as the founder and organizer of the inaugural celebration; and Katrina Hodge, Assistant Director of Multicultural Life and Diversity at SUNY Cortland, for her ongoing dedication to diversity and inclusion.

**Senator Webb remarked,** “As we commemorate the 2nd Annual Abraham Lincoln DeMond Day, let us remember that this day is more than a ceremony; it's a renewal of our commitment to the ideals of equality, understanding, and collective growth. It's a day to reflect on our past, celebrate our present, and aspire for a future where the principles that DeMond stood for are not just remembered but are lived and breathed in every corridor of this institution and beyond. I am proud to recognize Clay Barnett, Tatum Pittman, and Katrina Hodge, whose efforts ensure that the legacy of Abraham Lincoln DeMond and the principles he stood for continue to resonate on campus and beyond.”

[Senator Webb recently highlighted Abraham Lincoln DeMond Day on the floor of the New York State Senate](#), commemorating Black History Month and the contributions of Black individuals from the Southern Tier. This recognition serves not only as an honor to DeMond's memory but also as a reminder of the ongoing struggle for civil rights and the importance of community leaders in shaping a more inclusive and equitable society.

**Background:**

Abraham Lincoln DeMond, SUNY Cortland's first African American alum, emerges as a beacon of inspiration through his life and works. His journey from a student at Cortland Normal School to a politically active pastor who delivered the influential “The Negro Element in American Life” speech, preserved in the Library of Congress, showcases a legacy

of unwavering commitment to equality and justice.

The Second Annual Abraham Lincoln DeMond Day at SUNY Cortland stands as a testament to the university's dedication to celebrating diversity and fostering an environment where every individual has the opportunity to thrive. It is a day of reflection, celebration, and aspiration, honoring the past while looking forward to a future shaped by the ideals of equality and justice for all.