



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John C. Liu

## Senator Liu recognizes 2024 Women of Distinction honoree, Robbie Garrison

JOHN C. LIU May 21, 2024

| ISSUE: **WOMEN OF DISTINCTION, SENATOR LIU, ROBBIE GARRISON**



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**Bayside, NY** – On Friday, State Senator John Liu recognized Flushing community activist Robbie Garrison as his 2024 New York State Senate Women of Distinction Honoree. Garrison is a longtime community and civil rights activist who was integral in the reclamation of the

Olde Towne of Flushing Burial Ground in Queens.

Early in her career, Ms. Garrison encountered workplace discrimination at Merrill Lynch, leading her to become a co-founder of a book remainder business specializing in works by and about Black people. She became involved with many community organizations, such as the Queens Community Civic Corporation in 1977, which still mediates landlord-tenant disputes and assists seniors and disabled individuals today.

Her passion for history led her to co-found the Olde Towne of Flushing Burial Ground Conservancy, alongside late activist Mandingo Tshaka. Alongside other activists, the conservancy demanded that the old Martin's Field playground and park in Flushing be officially recognized as an African and Native American burial ground. After years of relentless activism by the conservancy, the city officially recognized the site and constructed memorials to memorialize it as a burial ground in the ensuing years.

In addition to her involvement with the conservancy, Garrison has received numerous awards for her service, including an Essence of Justice and Equality Award and recognitions from the Queens Civic Congress. Her dedication to preserving the memory of 19th-century African American businessman, Wilson Rantus, led to the establishment of the "Rantus Rock Garden" on the Queens College campus in 2023.

**State Senator John Liu** stated, "Robbie Garrison has been a passionate advocate for justice and equality for her entire life, and I've learned so much in 22 years of working alongside this outstanding individual. Her dogged determination to reclaim the Olde Towne of Flushing Burial Ground was met with much adversity, but it only served to reinforce her conviction that acknowledging and preserving history is the right thing to do. Her work embodies the spirit of activism and community service, making her truly deserving of being named a New York State Woman of Distinction."

**Robbie Garrison** stated, "Saying I am honored to be chosen for this award, among so many of my phenomenal female peers, is not saying enough. I am humbled, grateful and blessed to be sharing this with my family and friends. My journey is always about doing the right thing, and always about setting the records straight. Black History is American History."