



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

## Senator Mayer Announces Her Nomination of Joan Grangenois-Thomas As a 2024 Senate Woman of Distinction

SENATOR SHELLEY B. MAYER May 15, 2024

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*(Albany, New York)* - Senator Shelley Mayer is pleased to announce Joan Grangenois-Thomas as her nominee for the 2024 Woman of Distinction award. Ms. Grangenois-Thomas is recognized for her dedication and service to the Senate District 37 community.

Grangenois-Thomas has made powerful contributions to Westchester County and her home of Port Chester personally and professionally through her years of activism and advocacy. She has lived in the Village of Port Chester for 31 years and raised her family there. She serves Village Trustee and previously served as Village Deputy Mayor. In all of her work, Grangenois-Thomas strives to uplift those around her and empower them to be seen, heard, and valued, with a special emphasis on women and younger individuals.

The Senate Women of Distinction program was created in 1998 to honor women across New York State for their achievements and accomplishments. The honorees are women who have made enriching contributions to both their local communities and the state.

**Senator Shelley B. Mayer said,** "I am honored to name Joan as a NYS Senate Woman of Distinction. For over three decades, she has made tremendous contributions to the Village of Port Chester and to Westchester County. Her advocacy on behalf of women and children

and her commitment to equality and equity are unmatched. I am proud that our district is home to people like Joan, who aspire to help and uplift others in every way possible.”

**Joan Grangenois-Thomas said,** "I am very grateful to Senator Mayer for this honor. I greatly admire the Senator for her strong advocacy on behalf of all the constituents of Senate District 37 and for Port Chester residents specifically. Those of us who are advocates and activists don't do what we do for the glory, we do it to improve the lives of our neighbors and our community, and if my contribution and this recognition provides any incentive for others to participate where they live, then it will have all been worth the effort."

Having lived in Port Chester for over three decades and raising her family there, Grangenois-Thomas was elected the first Black woman to serve as a Village Trustee in 2019.

Grangenois-Thomas is a lifelong community activist. She is a member of the Executive Committee of the Port Chester-Rye Branch of the N.A.A.C.P. and past president. In 2014, she received a proclamation from the County's Human Rights Commission for her swift response to racially charged flyers distributed in town meant to divide the Black and Hispanic communities. From 2016 to 2020, Grangenois-Thomas was the Volunteer Executive Director of Sustainable Port Chester Alliance, dedicated to safeguarding human and civil rights, affordable housing, good jobs, workers' rights, and more. Grangenois-Thomas also leads Read, Talk, Act (RTA), an interfaith, social justice book club that began following the horrific mass shooting at Mother Emanuel A.M.E Church in Charleston, South Carolina in 2015. The RTA reads books dedicated to helping people understand the ways racism and discrimination have taken root and how we can make change. Additionally, Grangenois-Thomas has been a member of many Port Chester School District committees, being an advocate for not only her children but all children of Port Chester.

Following the murder of George Floyd in 2020, Grangeniois-Thomas organized peaceful rallies and protests that drew crowds of over 2,000 people. She is also the principal of her public relations firm, JGT Public Relations, since 2014 to help nonprofits and social enterprise organizations amplify their message. From 2021 to 2023, Grangeniois-Thomas served as District Director for Congressman Mondaire Jones.

Throughout all her work, Grangeniois-Thomas has committed to helping others recognize and reduce the inequities in their community. She has been a leader in the fight for equality throughout Westchester and in her home of Port Chester, NY.



Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Joan Grangenio-Thomas, and Senator Shelley Mayer // photo courtesy of New York State Senate Photography