



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senator Young Honors "Woman of Distinction" Helen Worth

CATHARINE YOUNG May 27, 2010



ALBANY - State Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – Olean) honored Portville resident Helen Worth yesterday at the annual prestigious “Women of Distinction” ceremony at the State Capitol in Albany. Mrs. Helen Worth was recognized for her extensive contributions to improving the quality of life in her community and beyond through her outstanding record as a teacher, volunteer and a leading community activist for those living with the HIV/AIDS virus.

"I am proud to honor Helen Worth as a Woman of Distinction, and prouder still of the recognition she has earned from her neighbors, colleagues and friends for all that she has done toward the betterment of her community," said Senator Young. "She has touched the lives of many children, and has been a wonderful inspiration to thousands of people living with HIV/AIDS throughout the world. Her courage is unmatched and this recognition is very well deserved."

In 1971, Mrs. Worth began her teaching career at the Portville Central School (PSC) in Portville, New York where she taught full-time until 1989. Helen would later return to PSC in 1996 and continued working as a substitute until her retirement in 2007.

After leaving PSC in 1989, she became an Adjunct Instructor in English at Jamestown Community College in Olean, New York. From 1990-1995, Mrs. Worth split her time teaching English at both The University of Pittsburgh in Bradford, Pennsylvania and St. Bonaventure University in Olean, New York, where she was also named Supervisor of Student Teachers.

In 1988, while still a teacher of secondary English, Helen would receive news that would change her life forever. After donating blood to the American Red Cross, she was informed soon after by mail that she was infected with the AIDS virus. It was seven years earlier when Helen actually contracted the virus while receiving a blood transfusion during surgery at a hospital in upstate New York.

Soon after receiving treatment at the University of Rochester Medical Center, Mrs. Worth took it upon herself to volunteer for several Adult AIDS Clinical Trial Groups, and spoke in schools, churches and community groups with other people living with the AIDS virus, a role she continues passionately even today throughout the Southern Tier.

Among many of Mrs. Worth other past accomplishments and accreditations in the campaign for the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS and for the extension of HIV/AIDS prevention and care include: Co-Chairperson for the display of Names Project Memorial Quilt, St. Bonaventure Univ., 1997; Member of the Interagency Taskforce on AIDS, United Methodist Church, 1989 –1996; Secretary for the Rochester Community Advisory Board, University of Rochester, AIDS Clinical Unit, 1991- 1995; Workshop Presenter for the World Council of Churches, Madras, India, 1995; Speaker for The Names Project, Clarke College, Dubuque, Iowa, 1995; and Speaker/Presenter for the United Methodist Church Latin American Caribbean AIDS Convention.

Today, Mrs. Worth continues to mentor persons living with HIV/AIDS in New York State through her involvement with the Cicatelli Associates Incorporates, an organization at the forefront in recognizing and addressing critical health care issues as they emerge and impact the delivery of HIV prevention, diagnosis, and treatment services.

For her willingness to help others through her teaching career and dedication to numerous volunteer services, Mrs. Worth has received several awards and recognitions including the Distinguished Teacher Recognition Award from the Rochester Institute of Technology in 1997, Good New Award for Community Service from the Olean Chamber of Commerce in 1998, and she was inducted into the Portville Central School Hall of Fame in 2002.

In 2007, Mrs. Worth also received a diploma from the Person With AIDS Leadership Training Institution.

Mrs. Worth remains an active participant as a member of the Portville United Methodist Church, the Portville Historical Society, the Portville Village Board, the Friends of the Library, the Pfeiffer Nature Center, and the Cattaraugus County Art Association.

She is married to James Worth and has three children, Mary Kay, Karen, and Bradley. She currently resides in Portville, New York.

The Women of Distinction program was created in 1998 as part of the state's celebration of Women's History Month to honor exemplary women from across New York State whose singular professional or personal achievements, commitment to excellence and accomplishments merit special recognition. Honorees are selected from nominations submitted from across the state.

Previous winners in the annual event have included leading women from the worlds of business, academics and civic life, as well as those who have performed heroic or selfless acts, made significant discoveries or provided examples of personal excellence against difficult odds.

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