



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## Senator Klein Hosts First Annual Bronx Jewish American Heritage Month Celebration

JEFFREY D. KLEIN May 31, 2015

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*Klein honors community leaders for outstanding contributions to The Bronx and beyond*

**BRONX, NY** - In celebration of more than 350 years of Jewish contributions to American history, society and culture, **State Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester)**, joined by Bronx civic leaders and hundreds of community members, hosted Jewish American Heritage Month celebrations across The Bronx this Sunday. At the celebrations, held the at the Riverdale YM-YWHA and Bronx House in Pelham Parkway, Senator Klein honored

important leaders in the community who are making a difference.

“As a culture and faith, the Jewish people have always endeavored to enrich our communities and make the world a better place. By celebrating our unique heritage and working together to lift up our communities, we are not only better Jews, but better Americans,” **said Senator Jeff Klein.** “I’m proud to host our first ever Jewish American Heritage Month Celebration and I applaud all our distinguished honorees for their outstanding contributions to the community. I look forward to working together to strengthen our neighborhoods and enhance Jewish life in The Bronx for many years to come.”

Honorees at the Riverdale celebration included Charles Moerdler, Farrah Rubin and Mark Friedlander. At Bronx House, Klein honored Edith Blitzer, Andrea Seigel and Barbara Davis Gelnick.

- Charles Moerdler, a partner at Stroock & Stroock & Lavan, has been an active public servant for years. For more than a decade, he has held an array of high-level positions serving the state of New York including as a member of the New York City Housing Development Corp., the New York City Board of Collective Bargaining, and most recently, as Vice Chairman of the Committee on Character and Fitness of Applicants to the Bar of the State of New York. Mr. Moerdler is also a trustee of St. Barnabas Hospital, member of the advisory board to the School of International Affairs at Columbia University and Chair of Bronx Community Board #8’s Land Use Committee.
- Farrah Rubin grew up in Riverdale and attended Riverdale Country Day School. Ms. Rubin currently serves as Development Director for the Kingsbridge-Riverdale-Van Cortlandt Development Corporation and as parents’ association co-president at P.S. 24. In 2012, Ms. Rubin lead the effort to provide teaching assistants in every kindergarten classroom and has also implemented the school’s first sustainable recycling program.

- Mark Friedlander, who retired last week, served as a justice for The Bronx County Supreme Court for more than a decade. Previously, Mr. Friedlander was commissioner and president of the New York City Tax Appeals Tribunal and as a Captain Judge for the United States Air Force. Mark's civic activities have included his service as President of the Riverdale Jewish Community Council, Chairman of Bronx Community Board #8, Vice President of Young Israel of Riverdale and more.
- Edith Blitzer was born in the South Bronx and grew up on East Tremont Avenue. Ms. Blitzer has served as President of P.S. 100's PTA, President of the Beth Jacob/Beth Miriam Yeshiva and as Chair of the Pelham Parkway Neighborhood Association. Most recently, Ms. Blitzer was appointed to serve on Community Board #11 by Councilman James Vacca.
- Andrea Seigel is a founding member of the Pelham Parkway Neighborhood Association and currently serves as Vice President. Additionally, Ms. Seigel is a member of Community Board #11, the Liberty Democratic Association, the Age-Friendly Neighborhood Initiative Advisory Committee and Bronx Women United. Ms. Seigel resides in the Pelham Parkway section of The Bronx where she also serves as an 80th Assembly District Leader.
- Barbara Davis Gelnick is the Board Chair of the Jewish Community Council of Pelham Parkway and sits on the board of the Bronx Jewish Council Home Attendant Services. In 2008, Ms. Davis Gelnick won the Tom Twyman Citizen of the Year Award for her work on the Jewish Community Council at the 49th precinct community breakfast.

"I am proud to be honored by Senator Klein and grateful for this tremendous award," **said Charles Moerdler.** "Senator Klein is a man who does not just speak, but takes action; he is a shining example of a true public servant. I look forward to working together for many years to come."

"Thank you to Senator Klein for this honor," **said Farrah Rubin.** "It means a great deal to me to be recognized for my work in our schools and throughout the local community. Senator

Klein has been a tremendous champion of our public schools and for that I am extremely grateful. Thank you to my beautiful family for their continued love and support, it is because of them that I am able to give so much back."

"Senator Klein is a true inspiration and hero," **said Mark Friedlander.** "I am honored to receive this award and am thankful for Senator Klein's partnership with the local community. Improving the quality of life for all Riverdale residents is incredibly important and I look forward to working together now and into the future."

"Words cannot express how grateful I am for this award," **said Edith Blitzer.** "Senator Klein has been a true friend and partner to the Pelham Parkway community. Whether it's standing up to violence or protecting our community from dangerous predators, I know I can count on Senator Klein. It's a true honor to receive this award and I am very thankful for all the support my family and friends have shown me over the years."

"I am honored to receive this award for my contributions to the Pelham Parkway community," **said Andrea Seigel.** "Building up our communities and improving the quality of life for residents is so important. Senator Klein has been a staunch supporter of Pelham Parkway and is always there to offer a helping hand. I commend Senator Klein for his steadfast dedication and know that our continued partnership will help lift up communities across The Bronx for generations to come."

"It was my pleasure to be included among the honorees at the Jewish American Heritage Celebration and I want to thank Senator Klein and his staff for all their efforts," **said Barbara Davis Gelnick.** "Both Senator Klein and we women who were honored value our Jewish heritage and our roots in Pelham Parkway, and we demonstrate this by our activities in the community."