



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Eric Adams

## October Constituent of the Month: Sarah Keys Evans

ERIC ADAMS October 1, 2013



**Award:** Constituent of the Month

Sarah Keys Evans was born in rural Washington, NC, in 1929, the second oldest of seven children. After graduating from Mercy Catholic High School, she enrolled in the Perth Amboy, NJ Hospital School of Nursing in 1948, and moved to New York that December. She found a kind home at the Franciscan Handmaids of Mary Convent in Harlem for Career Girls, and remained in New York for two years before enlisting in the Women Army Corps in 1951. Following her honorable discharge as a private first class in 1953, she worked full-time and attended beauty school at night. What followed was a successful 30-year career as a hair stylist, including her ownership of Glamour Nook, Ltd. However, years earlier, Sarah's stand for dignity would lay the foundation for Rosa Parks and the Montgomery, Alabama, bus. In August 1952, while traveling home on furlough from the Army in uniform, Sarah Keys Evans was asked to give up her seat on the bus for a White sailor. She refused, and was arrested and fined \$25.00 for her actions. Her proud stance led to a 3-year legal battle that culminated in the historic ruling that outlawed segregation in interstate bus travel. In November of 1955, the Interstate Commerce Commission reversed the "separate but equal" policy that ruled that Black passengers who paid the same amount for rail and bus far as White passengers must receive the same service, without being shunted into seats reserved only for Blacks. Ms. Evans' brave actions resulted in many well-deserved honors. Her contributions to America's civil rights movement earned an award from the New York State Beauty Culture Association and the Martin Luther King, Jr. "Living the Dream Award." The former Sarah L. Keys married George C. Evans, Jr., a native of Beaumont, TX, in 1958, and she has lived in Brooklyn since 1954.