

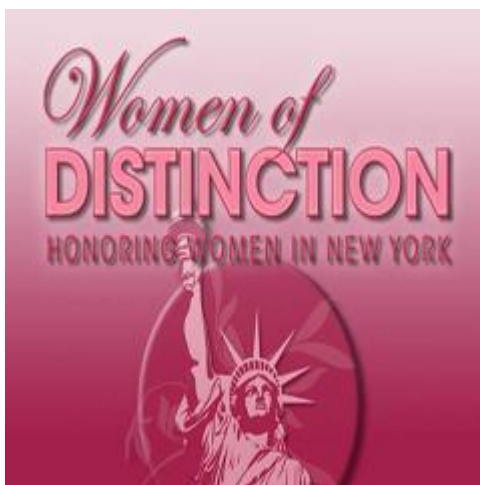
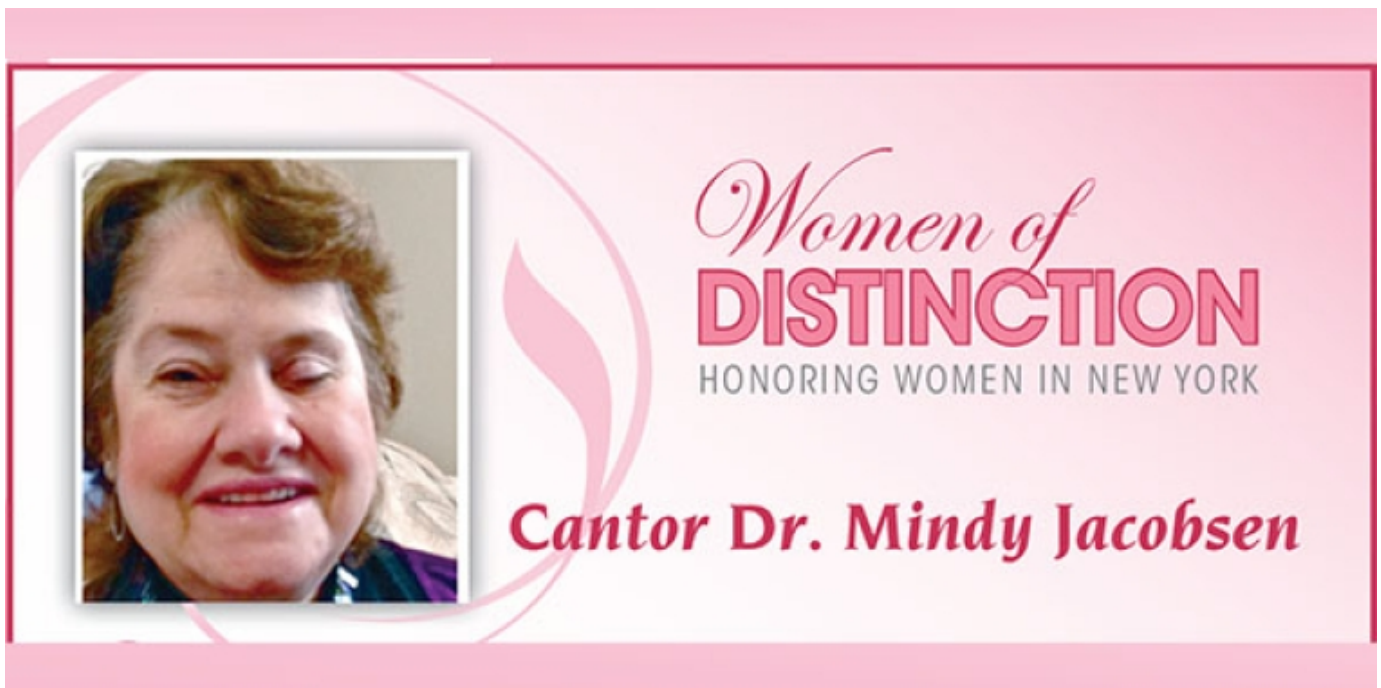


NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jesse Hamilton

Cantor Dr. Mindy Jacobsen

JESSE HAMILTON May 13, 2015



Cantor Dr. Mindy Jacobsen

**Award:** HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

**Year:** 2015

Cantor Dr. Mindy Jacobsen was born in Miami, Florida, where she was one of the first blind children allowed to be mainstreamed in the public school system. She currently lives in Brooklyn with her husband, Carl.

At age 21, Ms. Jacobsen fulfilled her dream of living independently, when she moved to New York City. While there, she received her Music Education degree, was ordained as the first blind woman cantor in Judaism's long history, and in 2004, accepted an honorary Doctorate of Music from her alma mater, The Hebrew Union College, Institute of Religion, School of Sacred Music.

As one of the first women in the cantor, Ms. Jacobsen officiated and sang in concerts throughout the country, hoping to educate the public about the capabilities of women cantors and to get congregations used to the sound of women's voices executing the vocal art, which – up until that point – had been performed only by men.

Ms. Jacobsen served for 13 years in the senior administration of the Jewish Braille Institute of America, now JBI International. During that time, she directed the library and the recording studio, where the Talking Books for the Blind were recorded.

Ms. Jacobsen was a pioneer in the early days of speech access technology for the blind. As one of the first technology specialists with the New York State Commission for the Blind, she recommended the equipment to help open up new positions for blind and visually impaired workers, making it possible for blind employees to do their jobs more efficiently.

As Director of the Brooklyn Chorus of Sweet Adelines International, Ms. Jacobsen led the group to three first place regional championships in their division. She has since stepped

down as the Director, but still sings with the chorus and happily serves as its Assistant Director.

Ms. Jacobsen currently works to help seniors who experience vision loss by facilitating support groups and teaching seniors to use computers which are adapted especially for blind and visually impaired individuals. Ms. Jacobsen asserts that, "with proper training and the right attitudes about ourselves, we can live the lives we want."