



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## O'Mara and Palmesano pay tribute to local GST BOCES student honored as NYACCE 'Student of the Year'

THOMAS F. O'MARA October 4, 2017

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**Elmira, N.Y., October 4**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) recently presented an official Legislative Proclamation congratulating **Greater Southern Tier BOCES (GST BOCES)** graduate Tezeru "Tizta" Birbirsu

of Corning upon her selection by the **New York Association for Continuing/Community Education (NYACCE)** as a 2017 “Student of the Year.”

Birbirsa will be among a group of adult education students from across New York State that NYACCE will honor at its 34th Annual Student of the Year Awards Event in Albany later this month.

In a joint statement, O’Mara and Palmesano said, “We are grateful for this opportunity to pay tribute to Tizta’s determination, optimism, and strength. She deeply values the powerful difference that education makes to a fuller, more successful, and more hopeful life, and she has pursued the opportunities offered by GST BOCES to their greatest benefit. Tizta’s a true inspiration to her family, her classmates, her community, the administration and staff of the GST BOCES, and our entire region.”

Birbirsa was nominated for this year’s award by GST BOCES Community Education Specialist Robin DeLong. DeLong said she submitted the nomination based upon Birbirsa’s dedicated participation in the ESL and Certified Nurse Aide/Home Health Aide programs, along with her exemplary work ethic and positive attitude.

DeLong said, “Tizta is a perfect example of persistence and motivation. These two attributes have contributed to her current success and will guide her as she continues along her career path. Her classmates are inspired by her positive attitude and example.”

O’Mara and Palmesano recently commemorated the tribute locally. At O’Mara’s district office in Elmira, they presented Birbirsa with an official Legislative Proclamation stating, in part, “It is the practice of this Legislative Body to commend individuals of outstanding character like Tezeru (Tizta) Birbirsa -- together with those institutions like GST BOCES committed to their success -- who have shown initiative and commitment toward constantly

pursuing higher goals for themselves, and acting as role models of leadership to be emulated by their peers.”

In 2013, Birbirsa immigrated to the United States from Ethiopia with her husband, a Corning, Inc. employee, and the couple’s young daughter. A high school graduate, Birbirsa realized upon arriving in Corning that she needed to improve her English proficiency. She enrolled in the GST BOCES English as a Second Language (ESL) program and soon became a volunteer at the Southeast Steuben County Library in Corning. She then entered the Certified Nurse Aide/Home Health Aide program at GST BOCES and completed a clinical training program at the Appleridge Senior Living Center in Horseheads, where she is currently employed.