



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

## Senator Michelle Hinchey Honors Ulster County's Evelyn J. Clarke with State Senate's 2021 Woman of Distinction Award

MICHELLE HINCHEY September 20, 2021

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**HUDSON VALLEY, NY** – Senator Michelle Hinchey (SD-46) on Sunday recognized longtime community organizer, Evelyn J. Clarke with one of the New York State Senate's highest honors, the *Woman of Distinction Award*, for her outstanding work and years of dedicated service on behalf of residents in Ulster County and across the Hudson Valley. This annual Senate recognition celebrates individuals who serve as leaders in their communities and demonstrate remarkable character. Hinchey presented Clarke with the award before community members and parishioners at New Progressive Baptist Church in Kingston, where Clarke serves as an Associate Minister and Director of Christian education.

“Every community needs an Evelyn Clarke,” said **Senator Michelle Hinchey**. “Evelyn began her journey in

community organizing during the Civil Rights Era at the young age of 16, and throughout her life has shown a fierce dedication to effecting positive change in the lives of those around her. This is a woman deeply committed to standing up for what is right and just in the world; a woman whose powerhouse presence brings people and entire communities together; and a woman known and respected for the ‘tough love’ she gives — because that’s who Evelyn is, a woman of strong faith who is there to help people rise to be the very best of themselves no matter the hand they were dealt in life. This is the first time I have ever bestowed this Senate recognition on a resident of my district, and I could not be more proud to honor Evelyn, a beloved community leader, mentor, and friend with the 2021 New York State Senate Woman of Distinction Award.”

Clarke is an integral part of the Kingston and Esopus communities and has served the public in countless roles over the years, including as a Volunteer Counselor at Esther House, a safe and sober residence for women recovering from substance use disorder. Clarke is also the past President of the Ulster County Multi-Services Center, which provides after-school programming for youth, and served as an Overnight Admissions Counselor at the Grace Smith House for Battered Women.

In 2012, Clarke was appointed to the Ulster County Human Rights Commission and as Director of the Ulster County Youth Bureau, posts she held for nearly a decade before her retirement in 2018. During her tenure, Clarke focused on areas, including restorative justice and keeping Ulster County’s schoolchildren safe and in the classroom. Clarke worked closely with the Kingston City School District Board of Education to facilitate the redrafting of the district’s disciplinary codes and continues her work in this space as a member of the Restorative Justice Community Empowerment Task Force and the Family of Woodstock Board of Directors.

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