



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham Recognizes Peekskill Attorney Tanya Dwyer as a Woman of Distinction Honoree

PETE HARCKHAM September 20, 2022

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*Peekskill, NY* - NY State Senator Pete Harckham recognized Tanya Dwyer, a Peekskill attorney with Legal Services of Hudson Valley and a community housing advocate, as a 2022 State Senate Woman of Distinction honoree at a special ceremony this week.

“Tanya Dwyer has focused her entire career on helping others, especially less fortunate community members and workers with families in need of housing assistance,” said Harckham. “Through her efforts, countless residents have a roof over their heads, and thanks to her innovative, hands-on efforts she has made a positive impact in Peekskill and beyond. She is truly a ‘woman of distinction,’ and I congratulate

her on being honored as such.”

The ceremony, held in the offices of Legal Services of Hudson Valley, included Dwyer’s colleagues and friends, plus family members watching over the internet, as Harckham presented Dwyer with the Senate Women of Distinction Award and a Senate Proclamation. To see a video of the ceremony, click [here](#).

Dwyer began working at Legal Services of Hudson Valley in 2018 as a foreclosure and bankruptcy attorney defending homeowners. The following year she founded Parish House, Inc., a nonprofit with a mission to build houses that are eco-friendly and affordable on a minimum wage salary. Prior to her work at Legal Services, Dwyer founded and operated her own law firm for 10 years, primarily defending the rights of homeowners. During this time, she was selected as a 2016 TED Resident and presented her TED Talk, “Brooklyn is Magic”, about the vast economic potential of the Crown Heights neighborhood in Brooklyn.

Today, Dwyer is chair of the Peekskill NAACP Economic Sustainability Committee, where she has an initiative to update Peekskill's City plan to center housing and environmental justice. In addition, Dwyer is a volunteer for Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, and serves as a DEI Committee Member and a board member of the Black Diamonds Academic Success, Inc.

Dwyer was born in Jamaica, but immigrated to the United States as a child. Her first exposure to real estate development and housing came from her father, an electrical contractor and neighborhood organizer; all along, her dream was to become an attorney. Tanya earned her law degree from George Washington University, and later interned at the United Nations (focusing on the right to adequate housing), the Ugandan Women’s Lawyers Association and the Washington, D.C. Office of Human Rights.

In 2019, Dwyer founded Parish House, Inc. Its mission is to build houses that are eco-friendly and affordable on a minimum wage salary. Dwyer promotes the mission behind Parish House as a presenter, panelist and grass roots advocate; her comprehensive design to make the City of Peekskill climate resilient and affordable has served as the benchmark for Peekskill’s first attempt to develop a comprehensive plan for the city since the 1970s.

“We are so fortunate to have Tanya Dwyer at Legal Services of the Hudson Valley and in our communities,” said Rachel Chazin Halperin, CEO of Legal Services of Hudson Valley. “She is a tireless advocate for equal access to justice and most-deserving of this award.”