

The
WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS
celebrates

BLACK HISTORY AND HERITAGE MONTH

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2022 AT 7:00 P.M.

Live streamed from the Board Chamber
<https://westchestercountyny.legistar.com>

PROGRAM

Welcoming Remarks & Acknowledgements
Chairwoman Catherine Borgia

Presentation of Tributes



KECIA PALMER-COUSINS

Community Leader and Co-Owner of
Aero-Ba-Soul, Inc., in Peekskill, NY

Presented by Legislator Legislator Colin D. Smith



MARIA SMITH DAUTRICHE

Director of the Westchester Center for
Racial Equity of the YWCA of White Plains
and Central Westchester

Presented by Legislator Jewel Williams Johnson



REGINALD A. LAFAYETTE

Democratic Commissioner of the Westchester
County Board of Elections – *In Memoriam*

Presented by the Board of Legislators

Catherine Borgia
Board Chair
Legislator, 9th District

Colin D. Smith
Legislator, 1st District

Erika L. Pierce
Legislator, 2nd District

Margaret A. Cunzio
Minority Leader
Legislator, 3rd District

Vedat Gashi
Legislator, 4th District

Benjamin Boykin II
Legislator, 5th District

Nancy E. Barr
Vice Chair
Legislator, 6th District

Catherine F. Parker
Legislator, 7th District

Jewel Williams Johnson
Legislator, 8th District

Damon R. Maher
Legislator, 10th District

Terry Clements
Legislator, 11th District

MaryJane Shimsky
Legislator, 12th District

Tyrae Woodson-Samuels
Legislator, 13th District

David J. Tubiolo
Legislator, 14th District

James Nolan
Minority Whip
Legislator, 15th District

Christopher A. Johnson
Majority Leader
Legislator, 16th District

José I. Alvarado
Majority Whip
Legislator, 17th District





KECIA PALMER-COUSINS is a wellness entrepreneur, manufacturing engineer and business management consultant specializing in project management. She co-owns Aero-Ba-Soul, Inc., a Minority Women Business Enterprises (MWBE) certified business management and workforce development training company with her husband, Kevin, as well as co-owns G&K Sweet Foods, LLC, a MWBE Certified baked goods company. She provides technical assistance and business coaching to MWBE's, motivating them as they navigate their way through the government and corporate procurement process to grow their businesses. She

also leads employee assistance program training workshops for non-profits and educational institutions.

Kecia was raised in Mount Vernon and is still a member of Unity Baptist Tabernacle Church there. She is a graduate of Mount Vernon High School and went on to earn a B.S. in Manufacturing Engineering from Boston University, an M.A. in Project Management from George Washington University, and an M.B.A. in Marketing from Long Island University. A Verizon Global Senior IT Project Manager retiree, Kecia's 24-year career ranged from being one of the first female analysts and field foreman to leading virtual teams implementing telecommunications infrastructure projects for Fortune 100 companies.

She has been a resident of Peekskill since 2002 with her husband and two sons and she is actively involved in the community. She is a City of Peekskill Youth Bureau Board Member (VP), Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce Board Member and past Chapter Editor/Foundation Chair and current Historian of the Jack and Jill of America, Inc. Mid-Hudson Valley Chapter (MHVC). Kecia also serves as the 2nd VP and Civic Engagement Chair for the Peekskill NAACP. Kecia was appointed by the Peekskill Mayor and the City Council to serve on the Local Planning Committee for the Peekskill Downtown Revitalization Initiative (\$10M), and also serves on the Feeding Westchester Board.



MARIA SMITH DAUTRUCHE is the Director of the Westchester Center for Racial Equity of the YWCA of White Plains and Central Westchester. A Mount Vernon native, she brings to the Center a wealth of experience, most recently as senior advisor to the president and CEO of the National Urban League. She previously served as Vice President in the League's partnerships and advancement office for five years, raising more than \$60 million and playing a critical role in shaping the organization's current racial equity partnerships. In January 2021, Dautruche led the organization of Westchester County's first observance of the National

Day of Racial Healing, an annual event sponsored by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation focused on racial healing and transformation efforts across the U.S. Dautruche most recently completed Northwestern University's Leading Racial Equity and Inclusion in Organizations course modules and Rx for Racial Healing Circle facilitator training.

A 2005 graduate of the University of Pittsburgh with a B.A. in Africana Studies and Communications, she earned a Master's in Arts & Cultural Management from Pratt Institute in 2009. She is an alum of the National Urban League Washington Bureau Certificate in Advocacy Program and the ULI/Project REAP Academy. Dautruche was an Independent Sector NGen Fellow in 2018, a 92Y Women in Power and completed Yale School of Management's Interpersonal and Group Dynamics facilitator training, both in 2017. She's also a co-founder of New Voices for Reproductive Justice – a powerful organizing force for the health and well-being of Black women and girls, women of color and LGBTQ+ people of color at the local, state (PA and OH) and national levels. Dautruche has been engaged locally as a member of the Westchester Black Women's Political Caucus and Community Voices Heard and served on the Westchester County African American Advisory Board (2018-2020).



REGINALD A. LAFAYETTE (b. 8/18/52 – d. 1/15/22) was born and educated in Charleston, South Carolina before relocating in 1972 to Westchester County. He began his professional career with the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in Manhattan, where he served in various positions over the course of nine years. In 1981 he resigned from Met Life and started his public service career as Commissioner of Human Rights in the City of Mount Vernon. He served as the Deputy Comptroller for three years. Later he became City Clerk for the City of Mount Vernon, a position he held for fifteen years. He became the Democratic

Commissioner of the Westchester County Board of Elections in 1999, a position he held for over twenty years, and was a member of the New York State Election Commissioners Association.

Commissioner LaFayette served eight terms as the Chairman of the Westchester County Democratic Committee from 2004-2020, and was the current Democratic Chairman of the City of Mount Vernon. He held the positions of Executive Chair of the New York State Democratic Committee and was a member of the Democratic National Committee. He has served a Delegate for the National Democratic Convention for former Secretary Hillary Clinton in 2008 and President Barack Obama in 2012. He had been a Democratic District Leader in Mount Vernon since 1972, and was a member of the Black Democrats of Westchester. He has been a Prince Hall Mason since 1983 and a member of Progressive Lodge No. 64 for thirty-five years.

In addition, he has held a number of civic offices including:

- Former Member of the United States Selective Service Board No. 104
- Former New York State Committeeman, 84th AD
- Former Democratic Vice-Chairman of the City of Mount Vernon
- Former member of the Mount Vernon Postal Service Board
- Former Executive Vice-President of the Mount Vernon Chapter of the NAACP
- Former Treasurer of the Independent Citizen's League

Throughout his years of public service, Commissioner LaFayette has been honored by various organizations. In 2019, he was honored by the Westchester Young Democrats. He received the Paul Robeson Award in 2016 from Mount Hope African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Westchester Community Opportunity Program honored him with the Community Service Award in 2010. The Mount Vernon City Democratic Committee honored him for his service and dedication to the City of Mount Vernon in 2009 and he was honored by the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority that same year. In 2008, he received an award from the Westchester Black Democrats. The Westchester Black Women's Political Caucus honored him in 2006. In 2005, he was honored by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The United Black Clergy of Westchester honored him with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Service Award in 2000.

Commissioner LaFayette was a proud and longtime resident of Mount Vernon, where he raised his two children. He was the devoted father of daughter, Deidra, and, son, Jahi. The Board of Legislators recognizes his many varied and invaluable contributions to Westchester County.