

OFFICE OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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PRESS RELEASE

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Celebrating the Culture of Color

Gregory's Rousing Address at NYS NAACP Convention Gets Standing Ovation

Gregory Honored by the National Council of Negro Women for His Commitment to Public Service

AMITYVILLE, NY— While most Islanders use their October weekends to get a jump on raking leaves, on Saturday October 6, Suffolk County Legislative Majority Leader DuWayne Gregory (*D-Amityville*) was busy sowing the seeds of cultural awareness by playing key roles in not one, but two major events this weekend celebrating people of color.

As the first Majority Leader of color in the history of the Suffolk County Legislature, Saturday morning found DuWayne invited to give the keynote address to begin the first full day of the *NAACP New York State Conference's 76 Annual Convention* at the Huntington Hilton. The theme for this year's conference was "*Your Power, Your Decision— VOTE.*"

After being introduced by Dr. Hazel N. Dukes, president of the NAACP New York State Conference, DuWayne woke up the early morning crowd with a rousing and enlightening speech about the history of racism on Long Island. Dating back to the 1920s historians estimate 20,000 Islanders were also card carrying members of the Klu Klux Klan.

Gregory brought the crowd to their feet, receiving a standing ovation, when he reminded delegates that regardless of the outcome of the November presidential election, the work for racial equality is never over.

— MORE, MORE, MORE —

“As we get ready to hopefully re-elect this nation’s first president of color, when we wake up Wednesday morning November 7th, it won’t really matter what headlines may say. What matters is what we tell ourselves. And that should be this – racism is indeed not race at all.

There is no finish line. There is no victory lap. And we cannot allow there to be winners and losers... We must not permit the complacency of our past gains to allow future generations to lose the pathway to hope and prosperity....

Remember, even though we no longer need an underground railroad to deliver our people out of servitude, that does not mean we ever reach the last stop on our journey to serve mankind.”

Later that day, DuWayne was honored by the *Suffolk Section of the National Council of Negro Women at their annual Founders Day Luncheon* in Bayshore. The theme of this year’s luncheon was *“Paying Homage to our Elders as we move Forward into the Future.”*

At the event Suffolk Section president Angel Brinson presented DuWayne with the *Mary McLeod Bethune Public Service Award*, named after the NCNW’s founder. At a time when most minorities could only expect to work in the White House in menial housekeeping jobs, from 1936-1945 Bethune served as the informal "race leader at large" for President Franklin D. Roosevelt. DuWayne thanked the ladies for the honor and said his own career could not have been possible without the pioneering work of Bethune.

“As the first African American Majority Leader in the history of Suffolk, I know the obstacles that all people of color have had to overcome in order to succeed on Long Island...

I want to thank the National Council of Negro Women for their advocacy and commitment to all people of African descent. Mary McLeod Bethune's legacy of education, civil rights, and leadership lives on in each of us. And we are mindful that her contributions have laid the groundwork for our successes.”

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See attached photos/jpegs next page



Suffolk County Legislative Majority Leader DuWayne Gregory (*right*) seated with Dr. Hazel N. Dukes, president of the NAACP New York State Conference at their 76th annual conference held at the Huntington Hilton Saturday October 6, 2012.



Suffolk County Legislative Majority Leader DuWayne Gregory addressing delegates at the NAACP New York State Conference held at the Huntington Hilton Saturday October 6, 2012.



Suffolk County Legislative Majority Leader DuWayne Gregory (*third from left*) and president Angel Brinson (*far right*) with fellow honorees at the Suffolk Section of the National Council of Negro Women at their annual Founders Day Luncheon in Bayshore, Saturday October 6, 2012.