

PRESS RELEASE

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ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS HONOR JOYCE ROBINSON SHEARS ON HER RETIREMENT FROM THE ESSEX COUNTY VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOLS



Joyce Shears (front, center), former Executive Assistant/Office Manager of the Administrative Offices of the Essex County Vocational Technical Schools, was honored during the Freeholder Board's October 23rd meeting at the Hall of Records. She is pictured above with: Front Row (left to right), Freeholder President Blonnie Watson, Freeholder Vice President Patricia Sebold, Freeholder Carol Clark and Freeholder Brendan Gill. Back Row (left to right), Freeholder Leonard Luciano, Freeholder Gerald Owens and Freeholder Rufus Johnson. PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON

(Newark, NJ) – The Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders honored Joyce Robinson Shears on her recent retirement as Executive Assistant/Office Manager in the Superintendent's Office of the Essex County Vocational Technical Schools during its Wednesday, October 23rd meeting, held at the Hall of Records, when Freeholder Vice President Patricia Sebold of Livingston presented her with the Board's Commendation for 26 years of outstanding service.

In her presentation to Joyce Shears, Freeholder Vice President Patricia Sebold who taught in the West Orange Public School system for over 30 years stated, "I am honored to be here today to present a Commendation to another deserving individual who has made a difference in our educational system here in Essex County. As an educator myself, I understand the importance of those who are behind the scenes and in administrative roles that support and make the school system work." In regard to Ms. Shear's soft-spoken nature, Freeholder Sebold referred to her as "a true professional at all times and a quiet storm who gets things done!"

Ms. Shears grew-up in Montclair and was educated in the Montclair Public School System. She graduated from Katherine Gibbs College in Montclair in 1970 and continued her education at Bloomfield College. Currently, she is pursuing a degree in Organizational Leadership at Thomas Edison State College in Trenton.

Ms. Shears began her career in service organizations in 1968, as an office assistant in the Government Secretary's Office in St. Thomas Virgin Islands. From there, she went on to serve in the Human Resources Department and the International Division at Schering Pharmaceuticals in Bloomfield, New Jersey for two years, where the corporation awarded her a full scholarship.

Ms. Shears began her career in county government working for the Essex County Youth & Economic Rehabilitation Commission from 1970-1974. Always in an environment of political leadership, she worked for a ground-breaking minority computer forms corporation, Urban Data Systems, Inc., in Newark where the principal officers were William Payne and the late Donald Payne, Sr. She also worked as an aide in the office of the late Senator Wynona M. Lipman.

In addition, Ms. Shears worked as an Administrative Assistant in the Office of the Director of the Urban League of Essex County, headquartered in Newark from 1975-1983. This position allowed her to work collaboratively with Urban League offices around the country and she had the opportunity to meet several prominent African Americans; Vernon Jordan, Julian Bond, and Ron Brown were among the notables who influenced her views on minority education and equal rights.

She worked for Bluestone and Bluestone, writing insurance documents for life and medical policies from 1984 – 1986. In August of 1986, she became employed by the Essex County Vocational Technical Schools in the Administrative Offices, where she served for 26 years until her recent retirement from the Superintendent's Office as Executive Assistant/Office Manager.

Ms. Shears is a member of Union Baptist Church in Montclair where she has faithfully volunteered for many years. She enjoys singing background vocals and has lent her musical talents to the Freeholder Board during various events. She is married to Lloyd M. Shears, Jr., and they are the proud parents of their daughter Lauren Tiffany Shears an employee of Essex County in the Office of the County Executive.

In her acceptance comments, Ms. Shears thanked Freeholder Vice President Sebold and the entire Board for the honor and stated, "I am just overwhelmed." She went on to say that over the years she has worked with a number of inspirational individuals in service and support positions. She stated, "What I found most gratifying is that all those individuals were trying to improve the lives of others; whether staff, students or members of the community." She went on to say, "I believe those Essex County leaders have empowered and inspired me even in my retirement; I feel that there is more for me to do." While reminiscing about the many people she has met, Ms. Shears light-heartedly recalled a visit to her office by Freeholder Carol Clark who commented to the many photographs of notable dignitaries on her office wall, "Wow, there is a whole bunch of history in here!" In closing, she summed up her experience in Essex County as being filled with wonderful people who have influenced her life and work ethic. She stated, "I am grateful to be a part of the success that was achieved; God bless you all."

The presentation was also attended by Shear's family, Vocational Technical School Staff; Interim Superintendent Joseph Zara and Business Administrator/Board Secretary Anthony Abbaleo, County Administrator Ralph Ciallella and Deputy County Administrator Alan Abramowitz, and

Freeholder President Blonnie Watson, Freeholder Rufus Johnson, Freeholder Carol Clark, Freeholder Leonard Luciano, Freeholder Brendan Gill and Freeholder Gerald Owens.

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