



**February is Black History Month.** It is a time to celebrate the important roles African-Americans have played in the development of the United States. In celebration of Black History Month, the Village of

Suffern will be highlighting and recognizing the achievements of African-Americans from the great state of New York.

In 2019, for the first time in history, the New York state Legislature was led by two African-Americans – Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie and state Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins. That fact qualifies 2019 as a landmark year, but black lawmakers have been trailblazing both city and state politics.

In 1917, **Edward A. Johnson** was the first African-American elected to the New York state Legislature. **Adam Clayton Powell Jr.** was the first African-American man elected to New York City Council in 1941. He later became the first black man to represent New York in Congress, joining the U.S. House of Representatives in 1945 and ultimately serving 12 terms. New York's first black state senator, **Julius Archibald**, was elected in 1952, and as a trailblazer, introduced and pushed for civil rights legislation. **Constance Baker Motley's** life was filled with firsts: the first black woman to be elected to the state Senate in 1964, the first woman to serve as Manhattan borough president, and finally, the first black woman to serve as a federal court judge in 1966. **Shirley Chisholm** became the first African-American woman to be elected to Congress, serving New York's 12th Congressional District in Brooklyn for seven consecutive terms and was the first black woman to seek the presidential nomination from a major political party in 1972. **Mary Pinkett** became the first black woman elected to New York City Council in 1974 – serving the people of Brooklyn in that role until 2001. **David Dinkins** made history as New York City's first black mayor back in 1990, and **David Paterson**, became New York's first black governor, when he succeeded Eliot Spitzer and served out nearly three years of Spitzer's term from March 2008 to the end of 2010.

The Village of Suffern proudly recognizes our black political pioneers – all of whom have shown that progress has been made and that there is work that's left to be done.