

PRESS RELEASE FROM  
PRESIDING OFFICER DUWAYNE GREGORY



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Friday, Jan. 15, 2016



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## **Gregory Appoints Two to Women's Advisory Commission** *Maresa Dealy and Melissa Firmes Appointed to Three-Year Terms*



**Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory, left, swears in Maresa Dealy of Amityville, center, and Melissa Firmes of Copiague to the Suffolk County Women's Advisory Commission on Jan. 12 in Hauppauge. The Commission advises the County Legislature, County Executive and County Office of Women's Services on policy issues pertaining to women living in Suffolk County.**

**HAUPPAUGE, N.Y.** – Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory swore in his two new appointees to the Suffolk County Women’s Advisory Commission (SCWAC) at the body’s first meeting of the year, held Jan. 12 at the H. Lee Dennison Building in Hauppauge.

Maresa Dealy of Amityville and Melissa Firmes of Copiague will each serve a three-year term on the SCWAC, which advises the County Legislature, County Executive and County Office of Women’s Services on policy issues pertaining to women living in Suffolk County.

“The Women’s Advisory Commission provides critical insight on issues of relevance to women living in Suffolk County,” said Presiding Officer Gregory. “Although women constitute more than half of the county’s population, they are underrepresented among elected officials, which makes the work of the Commission all the more important. Maresa and Melissa have both proven to be outstanding leaders within their respective communities, and I am confident both will provide meaningful contributions to the work of the Commission.”

Dealy, a single mother and secretary to the principal at Deauville Gardens East Elementary School in Copiague, is also the president of the Amityville Parent Teacher Council.

“I look forward to helping women and mothers who are out there just trying to survive because I was one of those women,” said Dealy. “It takes every ounce of your strength to swallow your pride and seek help through social services. We must offer these women more than minimal job training. We must give them meaningful opportunities to better themselves and the lives of their families.”

Firmes serves as the executive director of KiDS NEED MoRE, a nonprofit organization that enhances the lives of children, families and young adults coping with cancer and life-threatening illness. She is also a member of the Copiague Chamber of Commerce.

“I’m honored to be joining the Commission, and I look forward to focusing on finding ways to break the glass ceiling and to combat domestic violence,” said Firmes.

Presiding Officer Gregory also swore in the SCWAC’s 2016 board members at the meeting, including the Commission’s new Chairwoman, Marlene Johnston of West Bay Shore. She was appointed to the Commission in 2012 by 11th District Legislator Tom Barraga.

“I’m honored to have been elected to this position by my fellow Commission members and I anticipate a productive year,” said Chairwoman Johnston. “Specifically, I look forward to narrowing our focus to the issues of domestic violence and affordable child care, which are both serious challenges for many Suffolk County women. We also plan to help the Office of Women’s Services enhance its website, as well as its traditional and social media presence, in order to make more women aware of the resources available to them in Suffolk County.”

“For the past four years, Marlene has been a tremendous advocate for women’s issues as a member of the Women’s Advisory Commission,” said Legislator Barraga. “Her unwavering dedication and outstanding interpersonal skills make her the right choice as Chairwoman to lead the commission towards a successful future.”

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