

HONOREES

ROSCOE R. NIX DISTINGUISHED COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD



Catherine Leggett

Catherine Leggett has always aspired to serve the community. At a young age, her mother and grandmother instilled in her the values of education, hard work and a strong moral compass. Catherine began her professional career as a Social Worker after earning a Bachelor of Arts in sociology and psychology from Howard University in Washington, D.C. Her goal was to effectuate change. Feeling like she was only putting a band-aid on the problems facing her community, she enrolled in Law School at Howard University. After graduating from Law School, Catherine initially became a criminal attorney. Once again feeling like she was only addressing the symptoms of her community's issues she transitioned into employment law with the goal of making a real difference for workers.

As an employment lawyer, Catherine's work with companies like American Airlines and her 13-year tenure as the head of personnel at Hechinger, an American chain of home improvement centers, was marked by her commitment to promoting equal rights, diversity and inclusion. She actualized her vision to help workers at Hechinger, bringing about significant changes such as the first African American woman manager at a hardware store, the first woman to drive a forklift and by being one of the first companies to employ prisoners from Lorton, VA in their stores. These achievements stand as a testament to her dedication and the impact she continues to make today.

While at Howard University's School of Law, Catherine met her husband and former County Executive Ike Leggett. As the former first lady of Montgomery County, Catherine's contributions to the community extended beyond her legal career. She worked with many not-for-profit organizations and brought a spotlight to the arts in Montgomery County. Her efforts to raise awareness of arts through initiatives such as the annual Executive Ball and her service as a board member for Imagination Stage, Strathmore Music Center, and Olney Theater have been instrumental in fostering a vibrant arts scene in the county. Her dedication to sharing the beauty of the arts with the community and children is evidence of her belief in their potential.

Catherine takes great pride in her family and the achievements of her children and grandchildren. Throughout her life, she is especially proud of the times when she has contributed to helping organizations achieve their mission of supporting the most vulnerable members of our community. Her involvement with Montgomery County's Family Justice Center was instrumental in establishing a safe space for women and individuals impacted by domestic violence to access resources such as legal assistance, protection, counseling and employment opportunities.

Catherine is the senior vice president for Human Resources at International City/County Management Association-Retirement Corporation, a nonprofit, independent financial services corporation focused on providing retirement security for the public sector. A proud wife, mother, and grandmother, Catherine says being of service makes her the happiest. In tough times, her belief in the truth and the rightness of things motivates her to continue reaching out and lifting up the most vulnerable people of Montgomery County.