

Mary Hughes—Kings County District Attorney's Office

Ms. Hughes joined the Kings County District Attorney's Office in 1989 and her first project upon joining the Office was the creation and implementation of the Legal Lives program, which brings the criminal justice system to Brooklyn's elementary school classrooms and focuses on the development of the students' critical and analytical thinking skills. Ms. Hughes also supervised the formation of the Truancy Reduction Alliance to Contact Kids (TRACK) program, which is a collaborative effort between law enforcement, social workers, and parents to improve school attendance. Additionally, Ms. Hughes supervises the School Advocacy Bureau, which prosecutes crimes committed in or near schools, and has developed a cooperative and productive relationship between the Kings County District Attorney's Office and the Borough's schools.

Realizing that many citizens of Brooklyn are unable to travel to the downtown area for assistance, Ms. Hughes and her staff created the Neighborhood Offices. There are currently 26 centers around the County that have a trained staff member who screens complaints and refers them to the appropriate bureau in the office or an outside agency. The staff educates the public about the many services available, such as through the Family Justice Center, the Domestic Violence Bureau and the Elder Abuse Unit. Ms. Hughes supervises the Community Relations Bureau and the Senior Affairs Unit. Community Relations Specialists are assigned to a number of police precincts throughout the County and they interact with tenant associations, community based organizations, local leaders and the police to insure that community complaints are heard and addressed by the appropriate bureaus in the office. The Senior Affairs Unit brings members of the office to senior centers around Brooklyn to answer their questions, address their concerns and speak to them about ways to maintain their safety. Ms. Hughes also spearheaded the creation of the office's pro-bono, Partners in Prosecution, and Legal Fellow programs. These programs recruit and train volunteer attorneys to assist in all facets of prosecution.

Mary Hughes brings a creative and original approach to prosecution with a focus on crime prevention through education, safety and delivery of services to the people of Brooklyn, and it is my honor to present her with the Dewey Medal.