



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **LDF Mourns the Loss of Dr. John Flateau, Esteemed Public Servant and Professor**

The [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) is deeply saddened by the passing of Dr. John Flateau, a dedicated public servant, political strategist, and professor whose lifelong commitment to public service in New York City, including in partnership with LDF attorneys, made a profound impact on communities across the region. He died at 73 years old on December 30, 2023.

“Dr. Flateau was a brilliant and unrelenting advocate for equitable political power for Black communities in New York state,” said LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai Nelson. “He was also a mentor, selfless professor, and extraordinary strategist. Dr. Flateau has left an indelible mark on the people and power structure of this state. May he rest in well-deserved peace and power in gratitude for his service.”

Dr. Flateau dedicated his life to advancing civil rights through community activism and public service, including as an advocate for voting rights and education. Dr. Flateau worked with LDF for several years as a member of the New York Voting Rights Consortium, a coalition of local and national voting rights organizations and partners in New York City dedicated to ensuring equity and protection of voters of color in the region. The fundamental work within the coalition included devising “unity maps” for redistricting for the New York State legislature and New York City Council to preserve the strength of Black, Latino, and Asian groups. LDF also filed an amicus brief in *Flateau v. Anderson* (1982), in which Dr. Flateau was a plaintiff in the case to advocate for fair redistricting lines in congressional representation.

Dr. Flateau’s work in public service was wide-ranging and far-reaching during his professional tenure, including as Deputy Secretary for Intergovernmental Relations for the New York State Senate from 2009-2010, Senior Vice President and Chief Diversity Office for the NYS Empire State Development Corporation from 1983-1990, and Executive Director of the NYS Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus for the New York State Legislature from 1975-1982.

Dr. Flateau was also a cherished member of the faculty of Medgar Evers College, where he served as a professor and chair of the Department of Public Administration, and the director of the institution’s Dubois Bunche Center for Public Policy.

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*Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) is the nation’s first civil rights law organization. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape*

*the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.*