



N.J. city council president known as trailblazer for Black women in politics dies at age 86

Updated: Dec. 02, 2024, 10:36 a.m. | Published: Dec. 01, 2024, 2:11 p.m.



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Former City Council President Mildred Crump, shown in a 2017 photo, has died at the age of 86. (Robert Sciarrino | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com) NJ Advance Media for NJ.com

By [Eric Conklin](#) | [NJ Advance Media for NJ.com](#)

Mildred Crump, a longtime Newark councilwoman and pioneer for Black women in city politics, has died at age 86.

Crump became the first Black woman elected to Newark City Council in 1994 and the first Black woman named council president in 2006.

“Throughout her life, Mildred broke barriers and was well-accustomed to being the first — both professionally as the first Black braille teacher in New Jersey and in her political career as the first Black woman elected to the Newark City Council and the first woman to serve as its president,” Gov. [Phil Murphy](#) said in a statement Sunday.

"A model public servant, Mildred deftly advocated for the most vulnerable in her community, working to uplift New Jersey's women, children, senior citizens, families, and residents with disabilities. Her impact was felt around the world, which is why she was called Mother Africa. She will be remembered for her unwavering dedication to improving the lives of her constituents and will be deeply missed," the governor said.

Lt. Gov. [Tahesha Way](#) added: "Throughout her distinguished career in public service, Mildred broke down barriers and blazed a trail for countless people, including myself. I am praying for Mildred's family and loved ones during this difficult time. She will be dearly missed."

Former state Assemblyman Jamel Holley, D-Union, recalled Crump as a "true champion for Newark."

"Mildred dedicated her life to public service, always advocating for the betterment of Newark and the greater Essex County area," Holley [wrote on X](#), formerly known as Twitter. "Her passion for uplifting the voices of those often unheard will leave an indelible mark on both the city and the state."

Essex County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo recalled Crump as "a strong leader, she was like the matriarch of the city and was a strong advocate and proponent for its residents."

Crump was [voted out of her post as council president](#) in 2010, but her colleagues unanimously returned her to the seat in 2013. At 82, she resigned from her council position in 2021. At the time, she dealt with medical issues stemming from a fall the prior year.

Her seat was filled by her son C. Lawrence Crump, who remains on the council.

Crump became the first Black braille teacher in Detroit, her hometown, before relocating to the Garden State. She was also a founding member of the New Jersey Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., the National Political Congress for Black Women of Newark, and the Global Women's Leadership Collaborative of New Jersey, dedicated to women's issues in Africa.