



## SURROGATE NELIDA MALAVE-GONZALEZ

**In 2013, Nelida Malave-Gonzalez was elected a Bronx County Surrogate.** As Surrogate, she presides over court hearings on matters of probate and administration, guardianships, adoptions and other miscellaneous matters.

The youngest of eleven children, Surrogate Malave-Gonzalez is of Puerto Rican descent and grew up in Bronx County. Her parents provided a structured, loving environment, teaching Nelida the importance of hard work, persistence and patience. Raised in a housing project where neighbors looked after each other and elders were always referred to as “Mr. and Mrs.,” Surrogate Malave-Gonzalez describes the Bronx as the “best kept secret” because of the

kindness and resilience of its residents.

Surrogate Malave-Gonzalez did not let the naysayers impose on her what they saw as limitations of a disadvantaged Hispanic girl. “You have to go beyond your comfort zone and push yourself in order to grow,” she states. With education as the vehicle to reach her goals, she vowed to focus on her studies no matter what was going on in her life, earning a bachelor’s degree in business marketing from Fordham University in 1985.

While working at the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs, she understood the power of advocacy and the importance of balancing the interests of consumers and business owners. Viewing a legal career as a way for her to help empower those in her community, she earned a law degree from the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law in 1991.

Surrogate Malave-Gonzalez attributes her “yearn for learning” to her professional success, including her years as an Administrative Law Judge for the New York City Environmental Control Board and as an attorney at a general practice law firm. In 2005, she was elected to the New York City Civil Court bench, serving in Bronx County until her election to Surrogate’s Court.

Surrogate Malave-Gonzalez strongly values communication and teamwork. She also believes it is critical to acknowledge employees for their efforts. As Surrogate, she works to fairly and effectively respond to the needs of those served by the Court. She states that “This Court belongs to the people of the Bronx. Most people visit the courthouse during highly stressful periods in their lives. It is vital that everyone who walks through our courthouse doors seeking assistance is treated with the utmost concern and respect.”