

## Sefatia Romeo Theken, *Mayor of Gloucester*



**Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken** has dedicated her career to public service and community stewardship, serving as the Mayor of Gloucester, Massachusetts since 2015. Prior to this position, Sefatia was elected to the Gloucester City Council as an At-Large member in 2001, where she served the majority of her tenure as Council Vice-President until her mayoral appointment in January 2015. She was elected to a full term by the citizens of Gloucester in 2015 and won reelection in 2017.

Throughout Mayor Romeo Theken's professional career, she has been a leader in the struggle for health care access for individuals, most notably as an advocate for senior citizens. Prior to her career in public service, she served as the Community Health & Human Services Liaison at Addison Gilbert Hospital.

In June 2015, under Mayor Romeo Theken's administration and in response to the opioid crisis, the Gloucester Police Department launched the *Angel Program*, which created a simple, stigma-free entry point to treatment on demand and reframed addiction as a disease, not a crime. The Angel Program was the first of its kind in the country and was recognized at the White House by President Barack Obama in 2016, and Mayor Romeo Theken received a PAARI government leadership award in 2018 and 2019.

A lifelong resident of Gloucester, Mayor Romeo Theken is a dynamic and tireless leader within the community. She is a staunch advocate for small businesses – having owned a fishing vessel and operated her own catering business and health care consulting business.

When an economic downturn hit the fishing industry in the early 1990's, Romeo Theken moved quickly to push for a program to address the health care needs of fishermen and their families. In collaboration with the Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association, she helped create and implement the *Massachusetts Fishermen's Partnership*, which provides health insurance coverage within the fishing industry throughout Massachusetts.

Mayor Romeo Theken is an outspoken advocate for all fishermen and shore-side businesses, leading efforts to honor Gloucester maritime heritage through art initiatives such as the Art Haven. On a national level,

Mayor Romeo Theken promotes Gloucester's seafood opportunities at trade shows like the New England Food Show and North America Seafood Expo and the USDA's "*Local Foods, Local Places*" initiative. In June 2017, the Mayor launched "*Gloucester Fresh*" as an innovative program designed to promote local, sustainable seafood and the restaurants that serve it. Most recently, Mayor Romeo Theken has announced the creation of *BioGloucester* – a new initiative to support and promote the community's life science economy.

Mayor Romeo Theken is a certified Executive Office of Elder Affairs SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs to Everyone) Counselor and a Certified Medicaid Counselor/CAC. She has been awarded the North Shore Health Project *Community Health Activist Award* (2014); the *Senior Care Rosemary F. Kerry Service Award* (2016); the Red Cross *Community Hero Award* (2011); the *Outstanding Outreach Educator Award* from the Community Health Education Center and the MA Department of Public Health; the *People Against the Tide Community Leadership Award* from Health Care for All Massachusetts; an award from Figli di Trappeto; an award from the Italian Consulate; and the *Women Honoring Women* award from Wellspring.

Mayor Romeo Theken has also been honored with the President Lyndon B. Johnson War on Poverty award for *Fighting Against War on Poverty* (2007) and the North of Boston *2017 Ann Turcotte Leadership Award*.

Mayor Romeo Theken has taken Business Administration courses at North Shore Community College and Salem State University and holds a degree from San Diego Pacific University. She has received certifications from the MA Department of Public Health, Boston Public Health, the office of Medicare/Medicaid and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Mayor Romeo Theken is married to Matthew F. Theken. She is the mother of three grown daughters and the grandmother of four.