

Michele Coleman Mayes

Vice President,
General Counsel and Secretary

The New York Public Library



Michele Coleman Mayes is vice president, general counsel and secretary for The New York Public Library (“NYPL”) and a member of the senior management group. Mayes is responsible for guiding NYPL’s legal strategy to enable NYPL to achieve its mission. She joined NYPL in August 2012.

Mayes brings extensive legal, corporate and government experience to NYPL. From 1976 through 1982, she served in the United States Department of Justice as Assistant United States Attorney in Detroit and Brooklyn, eventually assuming the role of Chief of the Civil Division in Detroit.

In 1982, Mayes entered the corporate sector as managing attorney of Burroughs Corporation. As Burroughs and Sperry Corporation merged, creating Unisys Corporation, she was appointed staff vice president and associate general counsel for Worldwide Litigation. In 1992, she joined Colgate-Palmolive Company as vice president and associate general counsel U.S. In 1993, she was promoted to vice president of Human Resources and Legal for North America and ultimately became vice president, legal and assistant secretary, and elected a corporate officer. In 2003, she joined Pitney Bowes as senior vice president and general counsel. In 2007 she assumed the role of executive vice president and general counsel for Allstate Insurance Company, a position she held until joining NYPL.

Mayes is the recipient of numerous awards, including the American Bar Association, Commission on Women in the Profession - The Margaret Brent Award, and the Minority Corporate Counsel Association Trailblazer Award. In 2009, Mayes was recognized as one of the most Influential General Counsels in America by *The National Law Journal* and by Ethisphere Institute in 2011 Attorneys Who Matter. In 2012, she received a Lifetime Achievement Award from *The American Lawyer*.

In 2011, Michele and Kara Baysinger co-authored a book entitled **Courageous Counsel**, which chronicles the rise of women general counsel in the Fortune 500.

She served on the Presidential Commission on Election Administration in 2013-2014.

She became Chair of the Commission on Women in the Profession of the American Bar Association in August 2014.