



Eva D. Williams
2009 Racial Justice Award
Community Wide Dialogue to End Racism
InterFaith Works

A large poster on the wall behind her desk proclaims: “I will be the first in my family to get a college degree, to have a career I love, to earn enough money to enjoy life.” Throughout her own career, Eva Williams has helped hundreds of young people realize this dream.

Born in the US of Liberian parents, Eva says she was “raised Liberian” meaning with a strict parental eye on her actions, whereabouts and values. Eva’s maternal grandfather was the Liberian ambassador to the UN, and her father’s family came to the US fleeing political unrest that killed her great grandfather and great uncle. Though her parents came from opposite sides of the Liberian political spectrum, they formed a family together here in their new country. She credits this careful upbringing with her own life philosophy: “I always wanted to see fairness and right. It comes from my heritage. I grew up in the arms of people who made sacrifices for justice, and I learned that justice doesn’t come without a price.”

Eva is currently a school counselor at Corcoran High School in Syracuse. Prior to that, she was a school counselor at Jamesville-DeWitt High School, at Henninger High School, and served as Senior Admissions Advisor for SUNY-ESF. At Corcoran, she provides academic and developmental counseling for three hundred students, and helps prepare students for their post-secondary careers. Widely respected by the students, parents, and peers, Eva has initiated the Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) Summer Enrichment Academy, has coordinated the Corcoran-Cazenovia High School Exchange with Community Wide Dialogue to End Racism, initiated and participated in the staff dialogue entitled Helping Every Student Succeed which is helping to inform school policy and practice related to racially relevant teaching, and both initiated and serves as the advisor for the youth chapter of Rotary International - Interact, and the newly created W.E.B. Dubois National Honor Society.

Often, we hear colleges and employers telling us that they cannot find qualified candidates of color. This is a statement that Eva never accepts. She designed and implemented SUNY-ESF’s Summer Environmental Awareness Program for seventh through twelfth graders, as well as a Pre-College Orientation Program. Eva is a true believer of garnering belief into action. She opened the doors of the college for students of color.

Eva is married to Lawrence Williams, and together they have three children, Lauren, Adjuah, and Ayanna. She and her husband have been one of the driving forces behind the success of the Kirk Park Colts.

“I have spent my career working for educational equality for students of color. God led me to positions that have enabled me to do this. Because of my family foundation, hearing the stories of my elders, watching them, I learned and understood the potential of our community. It is that potential that drives my passion and work. I don’t feel I have done more than anyone else; I am doing what I believe is my responsibility to those who have come before me and those yet to come.”

Community Wide Dialogue to End Racism thinks Eva’s life and work exemplify a life of racial justice, and we are proud to honor Eva D. Williams with the 2009 Racial Justice Award.