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# NEWSLETTER

*Cornerstone Dads eJournal*  
by  
*Fathers & Families*  
*Coalition of America*



Featured Interviews  
**Affiliates of the Year**  
Fathers of the Year  
**Couples of Excellence**  
Family of the Year



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*James C. Rodríguez*  
*President & Chief Executive Officer*



For those who were involved at our 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Families and Fathers National Conference that Father & Families Coalition of America hosted with outstanding team of

volunteers, members of the board of directors and consultants, I am very honored to for the support. This conference hosted over 700 guests that attended, presented and or volunteered at our conference or national gala awards. I feel compelled to shift the focus on those we honored at our annual Drs. Ramon and Yolanda Nieves Family Affair Red Tie/Red Dress Gala and Awards Ceremony. Over the past 15 years, we have taken time to reflect on those who quietly serve in leadership positions making decisions daily to improve the outcomes for children and families. Many lives have been saved from the efforts of these servant leaders.

There are heartwarming stories of commitment, dedication and modeling as fathers and couples that I want to take a moment to introduce our *2017 National Hon. Stanley Seiderman Fathers of the Year- Righteous and Upright Men*. In 2000, I was very fortunate to receive mentoring from a leader advancing responsible fatherhood in early childhood education from Marin County, California. This quite leader, Hon. Stanley Seiderman gave guidance for our early years as a state coalition and later asked for national leadership out of Fathers & Families Coalition. FFCA has been awarding the Seiderman award since 2006 to recognize fathers who are righteous and upright men in their communities and who have offered their time and talents to enhance children, youth and families. The award is named for Stanley Seiderman, the founder and Executive Director of the Bay Area Male Involvement Network (BAMIN), which collaborated with child service agencies to increase the involvement of fathers and positive male role models in children's lives with the tagline from his widow, Ethel Seiderman who was

champion of one of the nation's largest foundations on early childhood. We have honored Couples of Excellence that regardless the adversity the championship of dedication and commitment to



oneness is paramount. In 2017, we honored six couples with the longest of 58 years of marriage. Fathers and Families

Coalition of America could not exist without the strong examples of leadership that chooses to serve and follow to make remarkable differences in the lives of others globally. My dear friend, President of the National Hispanic Legislators and State Representative for the State of Connecticut, the



Honorable John S. Martinez was a leader to ensure state and hopeful of federal legislation that created requirements

of child and family funded programs to address the plight of father absence and address disparities of many communities to empower community development and leadership. Representative Martinez served as one of Fathers & Families Coalition of America's founding Members of the Board of Directors when a tragic accident took this dynamic and influential leader. Annually, we have given one awardee selected by myself for her and or his tireless efforts for social justice in America. In 2017, we honored the Honorable Jeffery M. Leving, Ltd. of Chicago, Illinois. Fathers & Families Coalition of





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America recognizes it's the relationships with local, state, national and international affiliate agencies that increase the capacity to support our overall purpose. In 2017, we honored three agencies that are using their unique purpose to transform the lives of children and families from San Diego with Children's Paradise to St. Louis' Fathers Support Center and UIH Family Partners, Inc. serving Trenton, New Jersey. It is important to know that these agencies were selected by Dr. Sherry P. Ulmer who was seeking to recognize agencies going beyond purpose with intentional passion. Dr. Ulmer took note of all the outstanding affiliate agencies from Australia, Jamaica, Puerto Rico and throughout the United States with evaluation of several agencies that led to the three agencies with selection of UIH Family Partners as our 2017 Fathers & Families Coalition of America Affiliate of the Year! Developing national partnerships is part of the core of FFCA and this includes leadership of many institutions of higher education, various levels of government agencies, as well as both interfaith and

community based organizations. In 2017, working with Alabama A&M University and Black Family Preservation Group we were humbled to host the 2017 Family of the Year awarded to Bishop George D. McKinney, wife Judge Barbara BJ Warren McKinney and their entire family as a model for family-life. March 2, 2017, we honored generations of diversity and overcoming adversity with Bishop Edward Smith as our Master of Ceremony and leadership with Members of the Board of Directors and numerous volunteers who set aside time and use of their talents to be part of a very special annual awards program. I would like to extend special gratitude to LabCorp DNA, Inc., Plinio Garcia of Major Family Services, Inc. and former National Basketball Association player Ricky Davis with Ms. Naomi Natale, MSW as sponsors for our annual gala/conference as well as 4The Body, Kaplan and Nurturing Fathers. Again, I extend sincere gratitude to all the speakers, volunteers and one amazing designer, David Gutierrez of Artest Design Group...



**Helping Children Get a Head Start  
Trailblazing Leadership and Honoring Others  
Dr. Sherry P. Ulmer, Founding Chairperson of Fathers & Families Coalition**



Head Start originally began in 1965 under President Lyndon B. Johnson's initiative to meet the needs of disadvantaged pre-school children. Since then Head Start has helped millions of families and young children across America, with early

learning standards, emotional skills, problem solving, stress management, child health, and vision and hearing screenings. Head Start employees have also worked with school districts, in identifying children who may be at risk for developmental delays.

Dr. Sherry P. Ulmer began working at the first Head Start location in Pinal County, Arizona, in 1969. "There were 60 to 90 children at the time, infants to four year olds," Ulmer says. During the 38 years, she was CEO, Head Start expanded to 14 locations throughout Pinal and Gila Counties, helping over 1,000 toddlers and preschoolers, in Arizona. "Head Start is the best program the government started. You can't do enough for children. We owe it to them," says Ulmer.

Ulmer is an advocate for education. She worked to, "Set policies in place so that Head Start staff could receive educational benefits. They were allowed time off to go to college, or further their education. I had college teachers come to our location and teach staff and have it count towards their education credits and certifications. This allowed staff the opportunity to earn a degree, while working."

Ulmer shared how important it is that high schools and colleges offer vocational programs, so that

students can be introduced to real job environments, and requirements while they are learning. This increases their chance of aligning their talents and interests with a successful job.

Dr. Ulmer also had a great vision for Head Start staff to be leaders in their community. She started early intervention programs and put staff in these roles. One of the programs that Ulmer helped develop was the transportation program. She states, "Many low-income families who live in rural areas do not have a car to get to work or school. The transportation program allowed staff to pick these people up and drive them to work or school. This touched a lot of people."

Dr. Ulmer played a significant role in having the state of Arizona fund programs for fathers. In 1996, Fathers and Families Coalition of America was one of the programs that was birthed from Dr. Ulmer's dedication to helping families in her community.

"Jobs are key to strengthening families and communities," says Ulmer, this is one of the reasons she awarded UIH Family Partners, the 'Dr. Sherry P. Ulmer Innovator and Affiliate of the Year Award,' during the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Families and Fathers National Conference. She says, "It was a difficult decision, but UIH Family Partners, not only helps fathers get jobs, it provides them clothing for their interviews, job readiness skills, parenting classes, anger management, legal support, and child bonding opportunities. UIH Family Partners identified what fathers need for long-term success and provided it."

Ulmer is currently retired from Head Start but is involved in the community working part-time at the local Chamber of Commerce.

Written by: Elisabeth Davies, MC

Author of *Good Things Emotional Healing Journal: Addiction*



## PROTECTING FATHERS LEGAL RIGHTS TO BE PARENTS

Jeffery M. Leving, Ltd.

2017 Honorable John S. Martinez Leader of the Year



Jeffrey Leving, Attorney at Fathers Rights in Chicago Illinois, knows all too well the

negative impact left on children who are raised in a fatherless home. Leving says, “My parents were divorced and I didn’t have a full-time father present when I was growing up, and my brother ended up being raised in a catholic orphanage. If my father had been in the home, my brother might not have had to grow up in an orphanage.”

Leving grew up in the South-East side of Chicago, where there were lots of gangs, shootings and poverty. He says, “I started realizing that a lot of these problems had to do with fathers not being in the home. Everyone wants to belong somewhere and when they don’t have a father figure, they usually gravitate to a gang. The person who runs the gang becomes the father figure. I knew that if I ever had children, I did not want them to grow up in the environment I was raised in.”

Leving has one daughter and after his divorce, he saw the need for more laws to support fathers staying in their children’s lives. He co-authored a joint custody law. This law set forth that it is now a criminal offense to deny the other parent their right to parenting time or custody time. “This law came into effect in 1986,” Leving says, “Based on this law, not only was I was able to get joint custody of my daughter, but many fathers and children have reaped the benefits of this law. Fathers are parents and should not be limited to just visitation.”

Another law that Leving co-authored insures that fathers in Illinois be informed about their right to DNA testing before a determination of fatherhood is made in the courts, or by a judge. Leving says, “There is a lot of fraud in paternity testing, and there is a lot

of fraud when paternity testing doesn’t occur. Many men have been ordered through the courts to pay child support to children that are not theirs biologically. This law protects them.”

Leving also co-authored a law that allows fathers in the Illinois prison system to use electronic visitation technologies such as email, telephone, internet and video conferencing. There are fathers who are put into jail because they cannot afford to pay child support,” says Leving. “This law allows them to continue communication with their children.”





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“What is most rewarding about my work for Dads Rights is the positive impact that it makes for fathers and children and the social justice that ensues.”  
Leving received the ‘Honorable John S. Martinez Leader



Written by: Elisabeth Davies, MC  
Author of *Good Things Emotional Healing Journal: Addiction*

of the Year Award’ at the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Families and Fathers National Conference, for the work he has done in reengaging parents in the lives of their children, and strengthening families, and communities.





## TURNING FATHERS INTO RESPONSIBLE DADS

### A National Model Serving Fathers Fathers Support Center of St. Louis 2017 National Affiliate Honoree

Halbert Sullivan founded Fathers Support Center of St. Louis, Missouri in 1997. Sullivan says, "Fathers Support Center started with one employee, me. I did everything. Today we have 60 employees and through our Family Formation's Responsible Fatherhood Project we helped 450 fathers last year; 298 got jobs. We have good success."



Many of the men who come into the programs at Fathers Support Center come from a childhood of poverty, substance

dependence and a biological father who was absent. Halbert's background is like many of the men who come through his program, which deepens his connection and success with them.

Sullivan says, "Giving men structure is a necessary component in helping them make long-term change. Family Formation is the core program at Fathers Support Center, offering a structured six week, full-day program where participants learn necessary skills for effective parenting, personal, spiritual and emotional

*(Attorney Lisl Williams, JD. Receiving on behalf of Fathers Support Center National FFCA Affiliate Honoree Award)*



development, substance

abuse prevention and child abuse and neglect prevention. Sullivan continues, "It is imperative that the men learn effective skills, vs just giving them the educational information. Learning supports them in positive change and overcoming barriers so they can become responsible fathers."

Fathers Support Center also helps men with employment, mentoring and legal services for custody and visitations. Most recently they have added a program for women; helping them co-parent positively with fathers, in raising their children. Sullivan says, "Initially men come into our program to get a job, but by the time they leave they are focusing on children, family and community."

Sullivan says, "One of the biggest factors that motivates mothers and fathers to want to be good parents, is for them to see a person who came from their same low-income neighborhood become successful. This gives them hope. If he can do it, I can do it."

Sullivan's interest was sparked to work with uninvolved fathers when he was doing research in his Masters of Social Work program. "Children who grow up without a father in the home, are impacted negatively in every area; learning, emotional development, behavior and relationships. They are also at a higher risk for poverty and crime. This left a burning passion to help my community, by



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empowering men to become successful fathers to their children,” says Sullivan.

Sullivan continues to be very involved with the men and women who are helped through Fathers Support Center. “At least once a month I will run into a graduate of my program, when I am in the community. They will come up to me and start talking about their children. It is so rewarding to actually see

the improvement in the family dynamics of the clients I work with.”

Written by: Elisabeth Davies, MC  
Author of *Good Things Emotional Healing Journal: Addiction*

**CHILDREN’S PARADISE PRESCHOOLS GIVES EACH CHILD AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY  
A National Early Childhood Development Model  
Children’s Paradise, Inc. of San Diego County, California  
2017 National Affiliate Honoree**

Julie Lowen, President and CEO of Children’s



Paradise Preschool and Infant Center, founded Children’s Paradise in 1993, after the daycare she operated in her home became too full. Since then Children’s Paradise has five locations in San Diego County and supports 854 children in learning and growth development.

Lowen, says, “My passion for helping children was sparked by my own childhood experience, growing up in a biracial family that was thrown into poverty. I remember what it felt like to be a child in need who wanted a kind, encouraging teacher. This grew a deep desire to break the cycle of poverty and abuse, in which children can be exposed. Children’s Paradise is a labor of love and determination to make a difference in my community and in the lives of kids.”

Children’s Paradise Preschool and Infant Center has



programs for children from six weeks old to age twelve. Lowen believes a good education in a loving environment should be offered to every child, not just the children whose parents are financially thriving. Lowen states, “Last year we gave out \$545,

000 in scholarships and helped more than 72 families in our community, whose parents could not afford our tuition. By the age of three, children from low – income homes hear 20 million fewer words than children from high- income families. When these children attend school together, their verbal achievement gaps narrow. Studies find that children





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from all socioeconomic backgrounds perform better academically and socially in high quality, diverse environments.”

One of the rewards for Lowen in working at Children’s Paradise, “Is when adults who attended as children, return to do an internship and share how much they loved coming to this preschool when they were a child.” Lowen is proud that her childcare staff hold a minimum of a bachelor’s degree and have CPR and First Aid certifications. This has awarded Children’s Paradise Preschool and Infant Centers a top rating from the San Diego County Office of Education. Lowen says, “One of our locations is a training sight,

where we train our own staff and offer the space to the community as a free resource for education development.”

On March 2<sup>nd</sup> Lowen’s dedication, hard work and success in her community paid off, when Children’s Paradise was recognized as Affiliate Honoree of the Year, for Excellence Serving Children, Families and Communities, at the 18th Annual Families Fathers National Conference.

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**STRUGGLING FATHERS BECOME EMPOWERED THROUGH UIH  
THE 2017 NATIONAL AFFILIATE OF THE YEAR  
Dr. Sherry P. Ulmer Innovator of the Year Awardee  
UIH Family Partners of Trenton, New Jersey**



*Karen Andrade Mims, Chief Executive Officer and staff of UIH Family Partners, Inc.*

The Union Industrial Home Association for Destitute Children (UIH) of Trenton, New Jersey was incorporated in 1860 and originally used as an orphanage.

Since then it has expanded into protecting children in families where one parent, often the father, does not live with their children.

Karen Andrade-Mims, Executive Director of UIH Family Partners, has worked for UIH since 2008. She

says, "What sparked my passion for working with fathers and families was a pilot program that began in 1993. We received some funding from the federal government to work with fathers who were largely unemployed and owed back child support. Many fathers have a desire to be a good dad, but do not feel they have anything to offer their families if they are not employed."

UIH offers free clothes for job interviews, as well as job readiness skills, certification programs; such as food handlers and OSHA, and fork lift operator training. These programs assist fathers who are reentering the workplace after incarceration, an opportunity to develop a career, not just get a job.





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to address those needs too,” UIH supports families’ long-term success by offering free weekly parenting classes, an anger management program, recreational activities that give dads and their children bonding opportunities, and legal support to straighten out child-support issues.

Andrade-Mims says, “One of the necessary components that has helped men who come to UIH thrive, is our male staff that reflects the clients we serve. They are fathers themselves and we have a generational approach that makes us able to work with an age range of young to old men.”

“What is most rewarding about my job,” says Andrade-Mims, “are the success stories.” UIH recently received the Dr. Sherry P. Ulmer Innovator and Affiliate of the Year Award which, “Affirms for me that all of the hard work and effort I have put into UIH for the past seven years was worth it! Says Andrade-Mims.



*Written by; Elisabeth Davies, MC  
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“It is one thing to build self-sufficiency and help someone become employed, continues Andrade-Mims. Fathers have other needs as well and we want





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**THE 2017 NATIONAL FAMILY OF THE YEAR HONOREE**  
**Bishop George Dallas and Judge Barbara J. Warren McKinney**



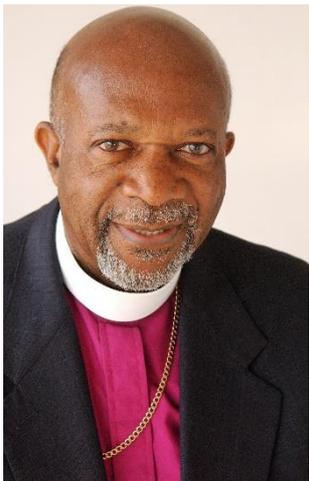
*Sharon Brooks Hodge, CEO of Black Family Preservation Group with Dr. Teresa Merriweather Orok, Vice President of Institutional Research, Planning and Sponsored Programs Alabama A&M University Present National Family of the Year*





**BISHOP GEORGE DALLAS MCKINNEY'S INSPIRING STORY  
FAITH, FATHERHOOD, AND FAMILY**

*By Dr. Carletta N. Perry with Contributions from Dr. Luisa Maria Connal Rodríguez*



Anyone who lives in 21st Century United States can see there are many social ills. Research claims most of these stems from changes in family life. Indeed, the increase of fatherless families shows us the need for extraordinary people to rebuild people's lives. The emphasis for this work needs to be on families and fathers. The question arises what kind of a person does it take

to work on this all important national and local issue? One great example comes from the life and work of Bishop George Dallas McKinney, whose inspiring story of the relationships between family, faith, and

education become a model for many to follow. We can look closely at Bishop McKinney's life.

*George Dallas McKinney* was born August 9, 1932 in Jonesboro, Arkansas. He is the ninth of 14 children born to his parents; unfortunately, only 12 of the 14 survived to become adults including 8 brothers and 6 sisters. Bishop McKinney's mother, Rosie Anna Thompson McKinney, was a homemaker, and his father, George Dallas McKinney, supported his family through the difficult work of sharecropping in the cotton fields, corn fields, and molasses fields, which were popular at that time. "My father was also a Minister of a Pentecostal and Holiness Church, so we grew up in a very strict environment where emphasis was placed on moral character and discipline but our home was filled with love, compassion and hope despite the poverty," recalls McKinney.





“We were told from childhood that we could get out of the hopelessness and poverty by embracing faith in Jesus Christ and getting the very best education we could get; therefore, my parents stressed good religious practices and good education,” states McKinney. Attending school in a community built by



black people after the Civil War was also important to young George *(oldest son, Pastor George Anthony McKinney receiving national award)* McKinney’s

father. His father moved the family to Jonesboro, Arkansas because there was a K-12 school and where they lived before did not have a school for blacks so it was his father’s pattern to move where his children could attend school. After 12th grade, the family moved again to be close to the only state-supported black college, now known as the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. McKinney attended the University of Arkansas after being accepted and receiving a full scholarship for tuition, room and board, along with 5 of his siblings.

Bishop McKinney attributes the success of his family to the discipline his parents exemplified and instilled in their children. McKinney claims it was the emphasis on religion and education since childhood that allowed all his siblings to graduate from four-year colleges these included 3 Pastors, 3 Educators, 2 College Administrators, 2 Lawyers, and 2 College Professors. McKinney told a story concerning how his parents emphasized religion and education. His family went to a small Pentecostal church which emphasized the Rapture. One day, one of Bishop McKinney’s brothers came home to tell his father that the minister told him that he need not focus on education so much as Jesus was coming at any time and the need for education wouldn’t exist. Bishop McKinney chuckled remembering his father’s response: “It may be that Jesus will return, but we don’t know when. So, when

he does return, he’d better find you in school sitting at your desk.” Now I see how Bishop McKinney learned from his parents to entwine religion with education. “I believe these are interesting results with an emphasis on education and being exposed to a religion that was disciplined and stressed love for God, family, country, and values that make life worth living,” McKinney states.

In the early 1950’s, civil rights movement gained momentum, and many members of McKinney’s family were able to make outstanding contributions to African-American history. One sibling becoming the first Black Editor of the Law Journal of the University of Indiana who went on to become a successful lawyer and lobbyist in Washington. McKinney, himself, was the first Black person to receive a Doctorate from the University of Washington and the first Black Chaplain employed at Toledo Hospital. Due to our parents’ example of discipline, we can pass on these values to our children and grandchildren. We are truly thankful to our parents for showing us how to be responsible human beings who are committed to family, to God, and to the community,” McKinney states proudly. Bishop George Dallas McKinney was married to Jean McKinney in 1957 for 47 years. Together, they raised 5 sons, 15 grandchildren and 1 great granddaughter.

They were partners in life and ministry. George and Jean McKinney established the St. Stephen’s ministry which grew to more than 3000 members, a child care facility, a K-12 Christian school, a Licensed Marriage and Family Center, a Retirement Center for the elderly, and a Housing Ministry which included co-op housing, rehabilitation housing, and 47 low-income housing units for families in distress. “We had a great life together,” he says, until she passed away in June 2004 of cancer.

As he reminisced, Bishop George McKinney was most proud of being a father and raising 5 African American men. “In the 1950’s and 1960’s, it was very difficult raising sons because of police brutality, racism, and such but by God’s grace we survived and they are





productive citizens,” reports McKinney. “Of the 5 sons with me and Jean, all 5 of them have entered ministry, several attended seminaries, and some graduated colleges such as Shaw, Azusa, and Morehouse College.”

All five of his sons are married and in their first marriage. “Their marriage, like no marriage, is faultless and perfect, but you work through it and know that love covers a multitude of things and they have tried to rear their children well,” says McKinney. With his 15 grandchildren and 1 great granddaughter, he continues to teach important virtues such as love and hope so it is passed on from one generation to the next generation. McKinney reports he had the privilege of marrying all his sons to their wives and modeled what it meant to be a man and a father. He said, “I never tried to deceive them to think I was perfect but to teach them to believe in forgiveness, restoration, and love.”

“Fatherlessness is a real curse in our day,” claims McKinney who takes pride in being a father and father figure to so many young men.

McKinney firmly declares, “There is a calling on us to mentor and nurture young black males.” In 1964, McKinney, along with his late wife, Jean, established a group home for delinquent boys. Over a period of 10 years, they were assigned hundreds of young men by the court system to care for. As foster parents, they housed the young men, counseled them, assisted them with their educational path, and mentored them to be responsible young men. McKinney recalls, “This was a tremendous experience! So, in addition to being a probation officer that counseled more than 5,000 young men, we had more than 200 boys in our home in those 10 years. It was the most enlightening and rewarding experience spending time with boys from troubled homes, who had no male role model and no clue of what life had to offer. It is a blessing to see them now, 40 or 50 years later, still saying thank you for listening to me and imparting in my life.”

(August, 2008) Bishop McKinney married Attorney Barbara (BJ) Warren. Sister Barbara McKinney has been warmly received by the congregation of St. Stephens and is now actively involved in the life of the local Church and the Jurisdiction of the Church of God in Christ with her husband. What exactly did George McKinney impart on the lives of these men that made such a huge difference in the boy that became a man? McKinney reports that most were from broken homes, one had been in 15 foster homes, had no knowledge of his father, his mother was in a mental hospital, and he had not seen her in many years. With great compassion, McKinney told me that “those young men were missing a stable home, responsible fathers, and there was an absence of moral and spiritual direction and teaching. These were young people who were adrift without a moral compass, many had no religious background, no understanding of biblical teaching of honesty, truth telling, responsibility, and discipline. These were young people who were brought into this world who had no chance because there was no stable environment when they came into the world. We tried to help them overcome these serious problems. Unfortunately, these same problems exist today except it is worse! Something is very much out of order.”

When we view the research and simply look around at our community, we know that this is true. There is a breakdown in our families, too many fathers are absent and our children are suffering. McKinney believes this is due to several reasons:

(1) The elevation of the pursuit of material things and the under importance of being a family, a father, or a mother. Being a parent is not a priority and it ought to be! Parenting is the most important activity that those that choose to get married and have a family can do. They are minimizing that emphasis.

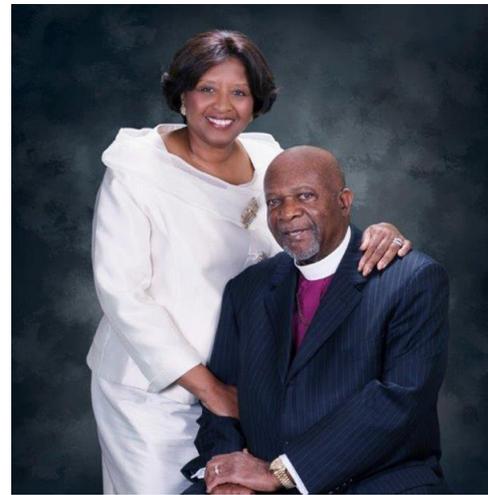
(2) There was a time when faith and community were extremely important. They were important to everyone including the school system, the faith community and families. For example, it was



unthinkable to bring shame on your family and your community. In fact, now the faith community is abandoned by young people before they get to college so they are persons with college degrees who are biblically illiterate. The story of David and Goliath has no meaning because they have not been exposed to values and principles that are taught in the community. We have the parents to blame for that. The schools have also taken an interesting turn, for example, it is difficult to engage in a conversation about being a Christian. In short, there is an absence of the reinforcement of the values that one time existed.

(3) There has been a shift in the meaning and the understanding of marriage. The disintegration of the family and the new standards whereby young people do not think marriage and commitment is important, and therefore, see no reason to work at marriage. Many believe that if there is a problem in your relationship, just find a new relationship. These new age ideas are all around us, but who suffers but the children. A child once asked me, "Mister, will you be my daddy?" This was heartbreaking. The problems of young men being seduced into drug abuse and young women into prostitution reflects the vacuum of discipline and moral discipline they missed and the whole community is responsible. Without direction and spiritual values, without moral discipline, we become dangerous, destructive, and hopeless.

Bishop George McKinney enjoys very rewarding work with the marriage and family movements across the nation. He is very active with the Promise Keepers, which is 50,000 to 60,000 men coming together to empower men. McKinney says he empowers the men to claim their



*(Bishop George Dallas McKinney and First Lady Judge Barbara McKinney and family).*

responsibility to father children, to be involved and spend time with their children, and fill the vacuum

they have experienced."

In addition to his work with Promise Keepers, Bishop McKinney has visited and worked with all presidents from President Gerald Ford through the current President Barak Obama.

In a side note, Bishop McKinney has met and assisted Mother Theresa of Calcutta. It was through a friend of Mother Theresa that Bishop McKinney began work at one point to help raise funds for scholarship for the children that the Missionary Sisters of Charity taught. Later in life, Bishop McKinney met Mother Theresa. She thought he was a Catholic Bishop and she kissed his ring. I asked him, if he said anything. He responded, "I was awestruck and said nothing." This kind and humble man contributes much to the work for families, fathers, and society.

Bishop George Dallas McKinney is highly respected for his insight on faith, fatherhood and family. In fact, he is a renowned Licensed Marriage and Family and Child Counselor, and author of Christian Marriage. He is also the author of nine other books and made contributions to many others, including serving as the senior editor of the African American Devotional Bible published by Zondervan in April 1997. In his three decades of ministry, Bishop McKinney has worked with many influential leaders, has received numerous honors in the field of religion and community service. He is a National Bishop for the Church of God in





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Christ (COGIC) and remains the Senior Pastor of St. Stephens's Church of God in Christ, in San Diego, California, with his wife for the past six years, Attorney for the Supreme Court, Barbara McKinney.



*Pastor McKinney and family with Dr. Teresa Merriweather Orok, Alabama A&M University (far right) receiving The National Family of the Year by Black Family Preservation Group, Inc. with FFCA....*



*The McKinney Elders Izora Prentice (97) a retired school teacher; Esther Smith (96) a retired administrative secretary; Naoma Rucker (88) a retired executive administrative secretary; Rufus (86) an attorney Bishop George Dallas McKinney (85); Jesse (82) a pastor and social worker; Dr. Arthur Lorenzo (81); Charles (80) College Administrator and Ernest (74) Attorney*





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## 2017 NATIONAL FATHERS OF THE YEAR



*Bishop Henry Hearn*

*Mr. Luis Rivera*



*Mr. Charles Smith*



*Mr. Edward Smith*



*Mr. Terrence Stewart*



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*Mr. Kevin Suber*



*Mr. Lovell McMichael on behalf of Mr. Nestor Hombar*



These magnificent eight men who come from diverse backgrounds all centered on devotion to their children that their stories were a dedication they shared to their children, assuredly exceeded the desire of the Seiderman Family for Righteous and Upright Men. Fathers & Families Coalition of America's Master of Ceremony, Bishop Edward Smith oversight of the gala with involvement of former National Basketball Association player Ricky Davis and his daughter's mother, Ms. Naomi Natale, MSW sponsored the presentations...



*Bishop Smith, Ricky Davis, Charles Smith, Naomi Natale*



*Bishop Ed Smith, Ricky Davis and Edward Baker*



*James Rodríguez, President and Chief Executive Officer with Members of the Fathers & Families Coalition of America Board of Directors Professors Edwin Gonzalez Santin, Dr. Obie Clayton, Dr. Alpha Omega Curry, Mark Perlman and Pastor Stephen E. Browning*





## ONENESS

### BEING A COUPLE OF EXCELLENCE TO MODEL FOR GENERATIONS



#### *NATIONAL HONOREES* *James and Pearl Mosby*

Over the past several years, Fathers & Families Coalition of America has made a commitment at our national conference to address how we can improve outcomes for children with a deeper dialogue of the “why” our children globally are in midst of challenges unlike any time in history with more children born in single parent homes. However, this is a great opportunity to examine the “what” to strengthen families. Therefore, we have been committed to honor marriage. Not all of those we have recognized have lived happily ever after...many had to overcome adversity and it was a key word...not love but commitment that brought about lasting role models as points of references for others to understand “stick and stay” as we have had couples married 73-years in the Martinez’ (2015 honorees) and renewal of vows for couples married less than 15-years and over 60-years. In 2017 it was the humor of James and Pearl Mosby married 58-years, just as all the couples have recognized one word that sustains marriage, commitment! Over the past five years, we have increased awareness that one factor for the improvement of child well-being is the modeling of two healthy parents. Not always does marriage or the

length of a marriage equal healthy relationships. However, the level of commitment overcoming adversity is a model has brought many attendees to tears...overflowing of inspiration and for many youth hope for healthy relationships.



#### 58 Years of Marriage!

Fathers & Families Coalition of America looks at the why more than the what has happened to family-life globally. With changes in the state of the American family over the past several decades, one of the most pressing issues in America is the rise of single-parent households (Clayton, Mincy, & Blakenhorn; 2003), which has a significant impact on African-American children. The trend of father absence is not irrevocable. A report released by the National Center for Health Statistics (2013) indicated that African-American fathers with children ages 0-5 years have the highest daily parental involvement of all races/ethnic groups, while Hispanic fathers have the lowest daily parental involvement of any group. However, after the child turns 5 years or older, Black fathers have the least father involvement compared to Latino and White fathers.

An unintentional outcome of our honoring others that demonstrates a powerful influence of service to others, that without any filtering of the “who” is nominated just a criterion of their character, FFCA has overwhelming received nominations to recognize the strengths of Blacks and Hispanic family-life. FFCA has never sought out to hone in on one issue and or group affected/effectuated by the outcomes of realities for millions of children in the United States of father





absence, unmarried rates... But it is worthy to note the diversity of fathers from the South Dakota to San Diego, Buffalo to San Francisco, Corpus Christi to Chicago and or Miami to Oregon of men who model righteousness and responsibility. I have been so honored to have men who took over the responsibility of raising another man's child nominated by his community, wounded warriors, a father who never had money to leave Miami let alone travel to other portions of Florida or the United States but it is this one special word of "commitment" combined with dedication, responsibility, affection and a striving to be better men, dads and for many husbands daily that is touching to hand-off an award that unfortunately millions of dads are not doing and not because they cannot...

A third children now live without their father in the primary home residence. In 1960, only 5% of children born in the United States were to unmarried mothers. By 2014, 44% of children born in the U.S. were to unmarried mothers and 50% of all of children born in the U.S. were to unmarried mothers under age 30. Nationally, in 2014, 72% of African-American mothers and 50% of Hispanic mothers were unmarried to the father of their child. The United States has the highest unmarried rate with children under 18 than any "western industrial" nation (America's Families and Living Arrangements; 2014). The need to focus on younger parents increases with the growing number of children born to unmarried mothers (51%) *"In this past year, for the first time in the history of our nation, a slight majority of all births to women under 30 took place out of wedlock—a dubious milestone,"* (Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin & Palma, 2011). Addressing the resilience factors of fathers to overcome barriers from relationship, race, poverty, education and employment will be critical. I believe the modeling of the Coupes of Excellence who have demonstrated *"leadership in oneness"* give the sense that regardless of all the data, we can make a difference through perseverance. Each couple from so many interfaith backgrounds have centered on their faith regardless if it has been Judaism, Muslim,

Christianity or Buddhist that faith combined with commitment to each other has blossomed decades of the power of oneness in their lives and family.

Therefore, we must eventually come to a place to say, "enough is enough" we should have already drawn that line with more and more children in child welfare, juvenile justice systems and lacking the modeling of both mom and dad... and it should be noted more fathers are raising children alone with mothers absent at the highest rate in well over half a century. We have an opportunity to be in a place of transformation from the current conditions to what the promise of a positive destiny and for those of us walking in a good place in our journey, we should be mentoring others to advance and end the struggle permanently.

Therefore, I asked Ms. Elisabeth Davies, MC to interview experts on Marriage and Healthy Relationships to give insights to how to can teach others to sustain such as the Martinez', Mosby's and others.... *James Rodriguez, President and CEO*

*Special Interviews with Dr. Jacqueline Del Rosario, Dr. Allen McCray, Dr. Dezette Johnson and Bishop Henry Hearn*

There was a purpose to have few of our colleagues' chat with one of the talented writers for FFCA. We asked Dr. Allen McCray, President of Life Impact LLC, Humacao, Puerto Rico, Bishop Henry Hearn, Sr., Lancaster, California, Dr. Jacqueline Del Rosario, President and CEO of Recapturing the Vision, Miami, Florida with Dr. Dezette C. Johnson, Charlotte, Florida. Interviewed by Ms. Elisabeth Davies to gain insights on development of healthier relationships. They were each asked the same five questions.

The first question - *What do you see as critical issues facing today's families?*

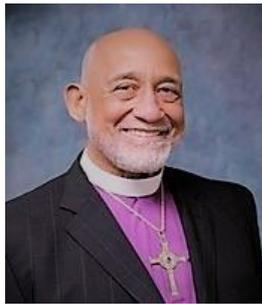




“The critical issue facing today’s family is the lack of security of a nuclear family. The united family is what gives us a sense of belonging, being loved, and a sense of competency.” McCray is a Certified Professional Behavioral Analyst. He holds graduate degrees in counseling, as well as marriage, family and child therapy. He is the father of two daughters and has been married for 51 years.



Bishop Henry Hearn Sr. says, “One of the critical issues facing today’s family is we have left taking care of our wives and children and become too busy making money and living beyond our means. This increases stress and divorce. We make material things more important than relationships.” Hearn is the Senior Pastor of Living Stone Cathedral of Worship. He holds a Bachelor’s of Science degree in Environmental Engineering and is the father of six children.



Dr. Jacqueline Del Rosario, President and CEO of Recapturing the Vision of Miami, Florida



believes the critical issue facing families today is, “An underdeveloped sense of love and relationship. There are too many children growing up without fathers in the home. Children are being left alone, unattended, with a lack of financial stability.” Del Rosario is the author of *Youth-Centered* curricula and workbooks. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, a

Master’s in Education, and a Doctorate of Education in Organizational Leadership. She has been married over 20 years and is the mother of two sons.

Dr. Dezette Johnson, Associate Professor of Social



Work at Johnson C. Smith University, believes “A critical issue facing the

African American family today, is raising children without both biological parents in the home. This effects financial stability, as well as mentoring and role modeling from the parent who is not there. Youth being raised in single parent homes do not experience a mother and father in a partner relationship, which is critical to learning how to relate to a partner in a healthy way.” Johnson developed the ‘I Matter Program’ which reduces teen dating violence on college campuses. Her Bachelor’s degree, Master’s degree and Doctorate degree are all in Social Work. She is a single mother to one son.

The second question - *What are the key elements necessary to keeping family relationships strong?*

McCray claims, “The seven elements that constitute a strong family include members needing to have a plan for problem solving. Family members needing to show appreciation to one another. Good communication between family members. Each family member accepting responsibility for their behavior. Family members defining a common goal that they are all working toward. Commitment to the family unit, and having a common faith.” McCray adds, “One of the criteria to being a strong family, is a traditional marriage.”

Hearn says, “The key elements that keep a relationship strong are communication and love between the two. A husband should not stop loving his wife because she isn’t cooking meals or doing laundry. Couples need to spend time together in prayer and





make time to go out with each other. A strong marriage is the foundation to a healthy family.” Hearn recalls, “Mom and dad worked all day in the fields. At night, they would be on the porch with family.”

Del Rosario claims “The three key elements necessary for keeping relationships strong, are principles, which includes the morals, values and conduct agreed upon by the couple or family members. The second component is balance. The couple, or family members need to agree on what the priorities are and keep those areas in order. The final key is planning. It is important to know why you are together and what you are working toward. Where do you want to be in one year, or five years with your plans?” Del Rosario adds, “In our family, we have meetings about everything, so that everybody is on the same page.”

Johnson states, “First and foremost having a healthy love for one another is necessary to keeping family relationships strong. Communication and faith are also important. It takes a village to raise a child.” Johnson shares, “As a single parent I learned that I needed a support system for me as well as my son. I belong to a single parent group in my neighborhood, which has been a nice support.”

The third question - *What advice can you give to people who work with families?*

McCray and Del Rosario’s advice is, “To treat the root cause, versus the symptoms.” Del Rosario advises, “We need to build a solution not an instant fix, such as medication.” McCray agrees, “People need tools to work with to fix the root of the problem. They need to realize who they are. Self-awareness is the key to transforming ourselves.”

Hearn’s advice is, “If your service or work is going to take you away from your wife and family, don’t do it. It is more important to take care of loving your wife and letting her know you are her partner. My advice to wives is do not compete with your husbands. Work with him. Talk, exchange conversation. I push

relationships. Schedule a time with your spouse every week.”

Johnson’s advice to those who work with families “Is to listen to what the family needs and wants, rather than what we think they need to incorporate into their lives.”

The fourth question - *How, if at all is faith a component of your work?*

McCray says he grew up in a faith based home. “My dad was a pastor. I got the calling to be a pastor and back then if you got the calling you did it. I was resistant for a long time. I was also angry and depressed. Taking the DiSC profile and attending a Personality Plus training seminar, changed my life. I started to embrace my true self and become who I had always been but never allowed myself to be. McCray was a pastor for 40 years. He uses the DiSC personality profile with the individuals and families he counsels. The DiSC is a personal assessment tool used to improve communication and help people discuss their behavioral differences. He adds, “The D.I.S.C material is rooted in Ezekiel chapter one which describes the four faces of God; the lion, the eagle, the ox and the man. McCray’s book, *Who’s Behind the Mask?* Goes into depth about the D.I.S.C personality profile.

Hearn says, “My faith goes back to mom. She was a cook for a white family in Mississippi. Dad was a sharecropper on their plantation. I was about eight years old and I stole a toy truck from the child my parents worked for. My mom said, ‘Son God has better plans for you than stealing.’ She made me go with her and return the toy truck. On the way, back she said, ‘We will have our own farm someday and you will have lots of toys.’ In 1948 mom and dad bought their own farm in North West Mississippi. I received lots of toys. This taught me anything I set my hand to do I can accomplish.”

Del Rosario describes her faith as being, “The foundation of everything I do at home, in my life and at work.” Johnson confers by saying, “My faith is the



basis of my work. It allows me to do my calling and fulfill my purpose as a researcher, professor, and motivator to others- to live and be their best self.”

The final question - *What motivates you to do the work you do?*

McCray says, “Being a trainer for leaders and counseling families is my passion. It is what gives me energy and makes me feel fulfilled. I see people’s lives transformed.”

Hearns responds, “I promised the Lord if he brought me back safe from the Korean War, I would do whatever he wanted me to do. I came home safe in May of 1955. I had passed the GED exam and took a college entrance exam at Tennessee A & I College. The Vice President of the college saw my exam scores and called me to his house and asked me why I wanted to study agriculture. He showed me my test scores, which were high in math, science, physics and engineering. He invited me to be in his algebra class. I didn’t know what algebra was, but I aced his class and went on to do trigonometry, calculus and civil engineering. I graduated with a bachelor’s degree in 1959. There were no jobs for black civil engineers in Tennessee, so I moved to California in 1960. I began working as a design engineer at Edwards Air Force Base. I joined a Baptist church in Anaheim. The pastor shook my hand and said, ‘God has a greater calling for you to be a preacher.’ I never wanted to be a preacher, but in that moment, I remembered my promise to God and knew that this message was from him. I have been preaching for almost 50 years now.”

Del Rosario reflects, “I was born poor. My parents were migrant workers. My dad was the first black man

inducted into the construction union. This allowed him to make more money and we became an affluent family. In 1994, Del Rosario founded ReCapturing the Vision, an international organization committed to ensuring that every child has an opportunity to succeed. “I see all children as my children. I was inspired by Janet Reno on how to revitalize a community,” says Del Rosario. “To see change, parents need to emphasize the importance of education with their children. Education is key to further possibilities and reestablishing a hope for tomorrow.”

Johnson recalls, “I was a school social worker for many years. I would see parents dealing with domestic violence and the impact it had on their children. My work in healthy families and healthy relationships developed from these experiences. As a researcher, I conducted research on African American teens and college students in dating relationships. Three years ago, I was awarded a grant through the Department of Justice to reduce domestic violence against women on campus. Through this grant, “I Matter” JCSU Safety and Prevention Coalition was developed. This program offers training, education and prevention to students and faculty, to reduce the cycle of domestic violence on Johnson C. Smith University campus. The *I Matter* program now successfully functions without grant funds.”

We want to thank each of the four experts for sharing their wisdom, time and vision that strengthens families and builds healthy relationships for the people of our Nation. Written by Elisabeth Davies, MC, Author of *Good Things Emotional Healing Journal: Addiction*





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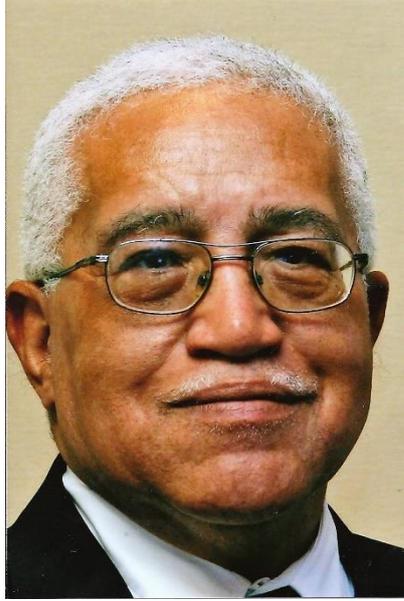




## A JUDGE THAT HELPS MINORITY FATHERS AND FAMILIES

Written by Elisabeth Davies, MC with editorial contributions by Dr. Luisa Maria Connal Rodríguez

Many people have contributed to our coalition.



One exceptional contributor is Judge Arthur L. Burnett, Sr., Retired. As Executive Director of the National African American Drug Policy Coalition, he brought into our coalition twenty-six (26) National Member Organizations dealing with the following: Health Care –with special emphasis on substance abuse and

mental health, Medicine and Psychiatry, Law and Criminal Justice, Juvenile Delinquency, Education, Housing, Law Enforcement, Social Work and Psychology. These additions to our coalition over the past ten years help us to reduce and prevent illegal drug use, crime and juvenile delinquency in African American communities throughout the United States. Judge Burnett’s skills and biography demonstrate his interests in helping humanity, especially members of the African American Communities in the US. For Judge Burnett, has been part of African American history from his part in attaining an education with Thurgood Marshall’s aid, through his work on several United States Court Benches as a member of the judiciary. His contributions to our coalition are a direct result of his many successes in other areas outside non-profits. Thus, we listen to the history of a man who gained knowledge and ability to continue helping others after retirement from the bench. “I was born in poverty in 1935,” Burnett discloses. “At age 19, I lived under threats to be killed by the Klu Klux Klan. “When I applied to the University of Virginia School of Law in connection with the Prince Edward-Farmville civil rights cases which were part of

Brown v. Board of Education in October 1954 which was supposed to compel the Commonwealth of Virginia to abandon massive resistance to desegregation and comply with the Brown decision, they ignored my application. Because of developments in Arkansas with Governor Orval Faubus threatening to close all schools in the State for Colored children, the NAACP and Thurgood Marshall, who was my chief lawyer, decided not to proceed with my case in Virginia and arranged for the Commonwealth of Virginia to pay all my expenses to go to law school in New York to which I had been admitted. Thurgood Marshall was my chief counsel in that case and became my guiding light almost like my uncle. After my case was resolved in a conversation with him he told me that he wanted me as a “little country boy from rural Spotsylvania, Virginia to go to New York that I could be as brilliant as any Jewish kid



they could find.” I promised him that I would not let him down. I entered law New York University School of

(Judge Burnett with Jeffery M. Leving, LTD) Law in the Fall of 1955 and graduated in the top 10% of my class in June 1958.” At the beginning of my third year in law school, Thurgood interviewed me to join him in his work with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, but I had already accepted an appointment to the Attorney General’s Honors Program in the Criminal Division of the United States Department of Justice. In then what was one of my most difficult decisions, I declined his offer with the explanation that I wanted to go into the Justice Department to make sure that the “Lady of Justice” was truly blind and that we achieve true



equality of justice for all persons in the United States regardless of race.

After graduation, Burnett entered the United States Department of Justice in its Criminal Division in the Honors Program and passed the District of Columbia Bar being sworn in on October 20, 1958. On November 17, 1958, he entered the U.S. Army for a two-year tour of duty. Upon his return to the Department of Justice following military service, in January 1961 he was assigned as an assistant to the Attorney General as liaison from the Criminal Division and to monitor Martin Luther King's Movement for the Attorney General, the Deputy Attorney General, and the President. Burnett says, "I operated as a confidential agent, restricted then to disclosing what I read only to the Attorney General and the Deputy Attorney General of the United States, which still applies to the substance. After Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy left the Department of Justice to run to be U.S. Senator from the State of New York, Burnett transferred to the United States Attorney's Office in the District of Columbia and served as an Assistant United States Attorney for four almost (4) years. Following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in April 1968, Burnett's work involved overseeing the operations of the Metropolitan Police Department. After the riots in the District of Columbia, he was appointed the first Legal Advisor, now called General Counsel, in the Police department to make sure they followed the constitutional requirements established by the United States Supreme Court and did not engage in police brutality or violation of the civil rights of any individuals; thus, restoring order in the District of Columbia.

At age 34, Burnett was appointed the first African American United States Magistrate, a position now called Magistrate Judge. He served in that capacity until December 1975. He then was appointed the Legal Advisor for the entire U.S. Civil Service system, and after Jimmy Carter was elected President, he was assigned the extra duty of serving as the Principal Legal Advisor on Civil Service Reform and all

personnel matters to President Jimmy Carter working with counsel in the White House Counsel's Office. In January 1980, he returned to the United States District Court as United States Magistrate for a second appointment and served in that capacity until November 1987 when he was sworn in as an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia after an appointment by then President Ronald Reagan. In October 1998, he retired as an Associate Judge, and became a Senior Judge of the Superior Court, continued to hear cases, but also worked as a volunteer as Judge-in-Residence to the Children's Defense Fund. In 2004 he left that role to become one of the three (3) principal founders of the National African American Drug Policy Coalition, and its National Executive Director and upon its incorporation, Vice President of Administration, remaining a Senior Judge but on Sabbatical. Finally, on February 15, 2013 he completely retired from the Judicial System in view of the length of time he had been gone from the court and because of a far more active role in the current Administration on policy matters.



Burnett is the Father to five children. "They all have excelled," claims Burnett. "My older son, Arthur L. Burnett II, M.D. is a prostate cancer surgeon who invented Viagra. My second son is a deputy Administrator over Community Health Centers. My youngest daughter is a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. The oldest daughter is a Lawyer and CPA and the middle daughter is an Economist with two degrees." In 1975 he resigned a judgeship and went to the civil service system to have more time for his children and





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to give them guidance and encouragement to excel and did not return to the judicial system until they started entering college. In his job, as Legal Advisor of the Civil Service he had a staff of 17 persons working for him and he could delegate to them pressing issues, while he went home to participate in the children's school preparation and performance and extracurricular activities. He daily spent time with each of his children reviewing their school work and preparing them for exams and encouraging each to reach his or her potential. Upon returning to the Bench in 1980, as his children entered college, he spent considerable time visiting all the Catholic Schools in the Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. to discourage their students from becoming involved in usage of illegal drugs, underage drinking, and juvenile delinquent behavior and to encourage them to excel in their school work. In 1991 he received the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifical Medal from the Pope for his endeavors over a decade. This Medal is referred to as the Cross of Honor and is given for distinguished service to the Roman Catholic Church by lay people and clergy. It is the highest medal that can be awarded to the laity by the Pope.

Burnett has been instrumental in developing national programs that support fathers and families in becoming productive contributors to their community. The Fathering Court Program developed in Washington D.C. in 2008 is an example. This program offers recently incarcerated parents, who are delinquent in child support payments, a chance to make a fresh start. The program provides job training, counseling, employment services, and judicial access to help prepare non-custodial parents to become financially and emotionally responsible and to place their children's needs first.

"I want the father to have total involvement with their children, not just visitation, but to mold their personality and character and sense of values" asserts



Burnett.  
"If the father is in arrears with child support, he can have his child support

(Dr. Obie Clayton with Judge Arthur Burnett, Sr.)

temporarily reduced, by voluntarily going before the court and asking for a modification of his support obligation until he can get on his feet" and by working with 100 Fathers Inc. and other programs, including mentoring, and participating in job training leading to employment and opportunity for advancement in employment to catch up in the child support payments as time passes. This program allows fathers an opportunity to have enough to live on, while going through job training and obtaining employment and to become functional responsible fathers involved in their children's lives from a perspective of time commitment and being equally responsible as the mother for what the child may become. 100 Father Inc. is a program that uses leaders, mentors and role models in the community to assist fathers in getting involved in their children's lives.

Burnett listened to court disputes for almost 32 years before going on Sabbatical in 2004. "When I would hear, cases involving neglect and abuse, or termination of parental rights or waiving the parent's rights in an adoption proceeding, I would opt to get the child out of the foster care system. When a mother was accused of child abuse, I would request that the child's father be brought into court. I would ask the father to raise his child, to spend time with his child and be a responsible parent. I would work with Child Support Services to get the father involved. I would order parenting classes and mentoring programs to



stabilize the father. Most of the 18-25-year-old men that came through my court needed employment. Men working and raising their own children is the best solution to reducing recidivism and the crime problem,” asserts Burnett.

“I told Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and Presidents if you want to reduce crime significantly, create and provide jobs for our poor and unemployed, instead of relying on labor workers overseas. Have them make necessary items that American households use. The real unemployment rate in the United States is really between 20%-25%,” alleges Burnett when we consider those persons during part time work and “catch as catch can” and getting by on a barter system in our poor neighborhoods. “We need to incentivize men to feel they have worth and can contribute to others through meaningful employment opportunities, and encourage them to raise their children.” This also requires job training and raising their educational level and comprehension to meet the job demands in our current economy.

“The child welfare laws that were passed during the Clinton Administration caused deterioration of African American Families,” claims Burnett. “Women on welfare were not permitted to have a man live in the home. This law promoted absenteeism and sexism. Men would have sex with women and then leave because they were not allowed to reside in the home to raise their children. This discouraged self-responsibility and these women became takers. The more children they had, the more welfare assistance they would receive.”

“African American culture also plays a role on fathering today,” Burnett suggests. “The history of slavery, segregation, and African Americans treated as laborers and servants in a matriarchal society created a mind-set that raising the children was up to the mother. Men were laborers and not expected to be involved in child rearing. The black man has to overcome this cultural attitude and deal with the father issue.”

Burnett lived through being raised in rural America in poverty and segregation. He chose to rise above these obstacles by persevering and with a drive to excel in education and employment. His academic achievements, the position he earned as a United States Magistrate Judge in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, his high level positions in the Executive Branch of the United States Government, his achievement as a Superior Court Judge hearing all types of cases, and now his role as the Chief Executive Officer of the National African American Drug Policy Coalition, Inc. have combined to give him the ability and influence to improve the lives of all minority individuals in this Nation.

One of the highest recognitions he has been given is that in a national radio broadcast in which he was being introduced as the hour long interviewee, he was reliably told by the narrator who had been a former candidate for the U.S. Congress that had the U.S. Senate rejected Clarence Thomas for appointment as Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, President George Herbert Walker Bush was considering nominating him for appointment as an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. The totality of this life experience leads Burnett to emphasize that “African American families need to work to foster a strong work ethic and self-value in their children.” Burnett strongly asserts “We need to encourage educational excellence and a commitment to self-determination, so that our children will excel.”

“We are developing a plan that if a child drops out of school in D.C. if we are notified, we will send a mentor within ten days to talk to that child and ask him why and we plan to determine his or her strengths and aptitude and persuade that youth to get back on track and to be there to help that youngster. We are now sending speakers into the schools beginning at the third grade, to place heavy emphasis on education in our outreach to African American youth and to arrange to provide free tutors for youth in these grades to make sure they function at grade level... We want to



change their attitude toward not excelling in their studies on the grounds they would be imitating Caucasian youngsters. We stress developing a work ethic and desire to succeed in academics to the same extent that African Americans desire to take excel in sports and in musical and entertainment endeavors. If minority youth are falling behind in math or reading, we ask college students to volunteer 2-4 hours per week as a tutor,” explains Burnett.

“We send African American professionals into schools to talk to youngsters about the health consequences of underage drinking of alcoholic beverages, smoking cigarettes, using illegal drugs such as heroin, cocaine, meth, ecstasy and synthetic drugs, and prescription drugs to get a high. This is part of the NAADPC goal in developing and implementing a drug education and prevention program for youth.” They then tell them their own personal stories of obstacles they overcame to be role models for these youngsters and then promise them that at the 8th grade level we will give them counselor-mentors in whatever field they might want to go into as adults to guide them as if they were their children.

Burnett advocates, “That illegal drug abuse and addiction be treated as the manifestation of a disease, to be dealt with in a medical manner with a public health approach.” He urges drug courts to consider individuals who may be at greater risk of relapsing because of length of their addiction, or the number of prior arrests- be ordered to treatment, over incarceration.

The first drug court was founded in Miami-Dade County Florida in 1989. As of December 31, 2013, there were 2907 drug courts operating in the United States and its territories. “We ask that prosecutors consider dismissing the criminal charge when the individual successfully completes a pretrial diversion or drug court program,” says Burnett. “When a convict successfully completes probation, we ask that the prosecutor allows a plea of guilty to be withdrawn and the case dismissed, or that the judgment of conviction be set aside. We urge that the laws be revised to allow

a practical and effective means of dealing with individuals whose crimes are non-violent.”

Of the 2.3 million inmates in our nation’s prisons and jails, 1.5 million meet the Diagnostic criteria for substance use disorder. “The costs of incarceration of individuals in prison range from \$35,000 - \$45,000 per year,” and frequently more when the individual has a long sentence and has serious medical problems, Burnett reports. One full year of methadone maintenance for heroin treatment is approximately \$4,700 per patient. Community based drug and alcohol treatment programs range from \$2,000 to \$4000 per month per individual. This not only cuts costs, but provides more effective results for drug offenders.

Burnett concludes, “Americans need to change how we view those who have had misfortunes in life so that we do not treat them as lepers for life or throw them on the ‘junk heap’ with the attitude that they will never amount to anything. We must work assiduously to change the cultural attitude as to how we treat individuals who once were addicted to illegal drugs or who once were imprisoned or jailed for a criminal offense. A significant number of people do overcome these misfortunes in their lives and become outstanding successful individuals in their future pursuits.”

Burnett continues to volunteer full-time with the NAADPC as an African American leader and forerunner in strengthening African Americans to be responsible parents and contributing citizens in their community and this Nation but is also reaching out to all other minority groups in America to get all minority groups working together in unison in a collaborative effort to achieve this result for all minority groups in America. Judge Burnett is one of the leaders in Fathers & Families Coalition of America and a catalyst for our social justice and public policy forums.





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*Professor Edwin González Santín, Member of the Board of Directors*



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*Bishop Henry Hearn's Family*



*Anthony Mossburg with Kevin Toney*



*103 years young, Ms. Mattie McCoy*



*Debra Samples, James Rodriguez, Elizabeth Lower Basch and Nicole Wood*





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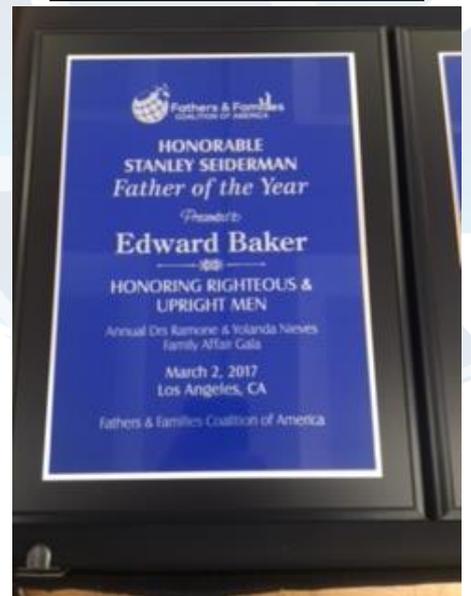
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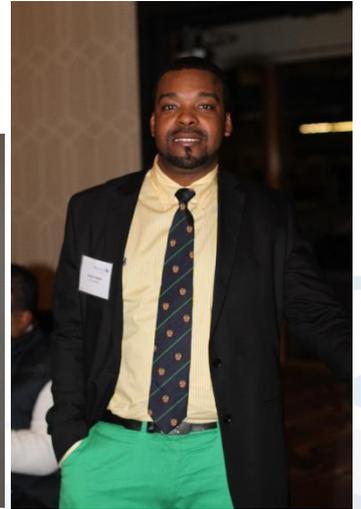
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