NEA honors Mia Williams, Ed.D., with human and civil rights award

Williams is among a dozen recipients of the NEA Human and Civil Rights Award

HOUSTON—Mia Williams, Ed.D., has launched multiple efforts to eliminate the educational achievement and opportunity gap as well as initiatives to support and develop young female leaders. Her leadership, advocacy, and devotion to education are the reasons she was honored with the NEA’s Mary Hatwood Futrell Human and Civil Rights Award.

“Dr. Mia Williams has been a brilliant leader for women, especially women of color, and is incredibly deserving of a 2019 NEA Human and Civil Rights Award,” said NEA President Lily Eskelsen García. “Our organization is proud to celebrate this educator who embodies our values, and devotes herself to make her community a better place full of future leaders.”

Since 2008, students at Seattle’s Aki Kurose Middle School have been fortunate to have Williams as their principal. In 2016, she was recognized as the Washington State Middle-Level Principal of the Year, thanks to her efforts to foster student growth and achievement. In particular, Williams makes sure the voices of young women and girls of color are valued.

“WEA salutes the work of Mia Williams who works to expand access to a quality public education to all children in our state. She is making a positive difference for our future.”

Williams also is devoted to decreasing the gender gap in leadership roles. In the greater Seattle community, she serves on a local advisory board for the International Order of the Rainbow Girls, a Masonic youth service organization that teaches leadership to young women through personal development and community service.

Mentoring is an important tenet of Williams’ work, and she is deeply involved in programs such as My Sister’s Keeper for young black women and Hermana Unidas for young Latina women. At her middle school, Williams recruits female mentors so that female students have access to leaders who support them in their pursuit of their educational and life goals.

It is clear to Williams that in order for women to attain leadership roles at the highest levels, they must have formal support networks. In her work as a principal and community leader, she creates opportunities for these networks to prosper, and has changed the lives of many young women in the process.

Mia Williams was one out of 12 outstanding social justice heroes honored at NEA’s 2019 NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards, which took place on July 3, in Houston, Texas. Click on link to view video tribute of Dr. Williams.

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