

JANETTE WILLIAMS-PETTAWAY

Distinguished Graduate

W. A. Pattillo High School Class of 1966



I, *Janette Pettaway*, was born Martha Janette Williams on August 13, 1948 at *The Quigless Clinic* (called out for its significance within the annals of African American history) in Tarboro, North Carolina, and grew up and lived in the East Tarboro Community at 717 East Church Street, the family homestead since 1936. Mostly, I am called by my middle name; however, during adolescence, I acquired the nickname, "*Jean*", given me by my loving siblings, and later picked up by my peers. My spiritual journey began for as long as I can remember. Nurtured and raised in a Christian home, I was baptized in 1958 and joined the Eastern Star Missionary Baptist Church, located right across the street from our home.

My grandmother (*who taught me how to save*) was an extraordinary woman who loved to write. Closely monitored, she would at times allow me and my siblings to tinker with her typewriter. I took the most interest. By 9th grade, my Christmas present from my beloved, dearly departed mother (*who taught me how to manage*) was my very own typewriter - a *tan, leather-cased Remington portable!* Having been selected as one of two eighth graders to represent our school at the student council convention in Charlotte, NC; and, my junior ministry reporting at quarterly church conferences, exposed me to organizational structure, and loving the "*Perry Mason*" show, particularly the "*Della*" character, I had my sights on making it in the corporate world!

Educated in the Edgecombe County Public School system, I graduated from the Walter A. Pattillo High School - a proud member of the Class of 1966. After graduation, I was all set and ready to enroll at one of North Carolina's accredited business colleges. Prompted though by a conversation with my aunt (*who has always encouraged my pursuits*), I reconsidered, should there ever be a career change; and, with the help of a very dear friend, matriculated at Elizabeth City State University in Elizabeth City, NC. Attending Elizabeth City was one of the best decisions I could have made! I am a proud member of the graduating Class of 1970, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in business education.

After my studies at Elizabeth City, I moved to New York. I pursued a career as an administrative professional. I served top executives and legal counsels for such city & state government agencies as the Mayor's Commission on Youth and Physical Fitness, and the New York State Mortgage and Loan Corporation; and non-profit organizations such as the United Presbyterian Church (USA), the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) - *Channel 13*, and the New York Metro Area Postal Union (APWU), before retiring in 2007.

My husband, Justice Earl Pettaway (*who taught me the importance of investing*), and I met in 1973 at Harlem's *Renaissance Ball Room*. He hails from Goldsboro, NC. We married in 1987, and our beautiful family consist of a son and daughter, a grandson, four great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandson. Having the desire to return to the south after retirement, we purchased a home in Tarboro, living there and in New York.

I am a member of the renowned *Abyssinian Baptist Church* in Harlem, New York since 1991. *To God be the Glory!* Prior to that, I was a member of the Second Canaan Baptist Church in Harlem. In Tarboro, I am under watch care at Eastern Star. I'm abundantly blessed to have held office and served in various capacities in all my church affiliations, and to have enjoyed membership through the years with other civic and grassroots organizations in the country.

I am a life member of the ECSU National Alumni Association, Inc. and served the ECSU New York Chapter for nearly 25 years, holding positions as secretary, and vice president respectively.

I've been affiliated with the W.A. Pattillo High School National Alumni Association almost since its inception. Being asked to serve on the reunion committee in 2011 was a significant moment for me. I'm a sustained member and have served on the board of directors since 2012. What a wonderful experience it has been! I've witnessed its growth under the finest leadership. Keeping connected as alumni renews, strengthens and establishes lifelong relationships. I believe strongly in doing something that will make a positive impact in my life and the lives of others. Helping to provide scholarships for deserving students is one of those things at the top of that list.

My pastime is traveling -- staying connected with siblings, loved ones, and friends in the DC/Metro area, New York and Ohio. Amongst the many other things that I enjoy are writing, reading, and watching & attending sports and cultural events. I love classic movies, music, dancing, playing games, and interacting with people -- the things that make you laugh, have fun, and *think*.