



ERASE Racism Elects New Co-Chairs and Secretary of its Board of Directors

Elaine Gross, Founder and President Emerita of ERASE Racism, the regional civil rights organization, announced today that it has elected new Co-Chairs and a new Secretary of its Board of Directors. The new Co-Chairs are **Joan K. Lange, Ed.D.** and **Lorna R. Lewis, Ed.D.** The new Secretary is **Wilma Holmes Tootle, L.H.D.** All have been involved with ERASE Racism for many years, including serving on the Board, and all have extraordinary experience in education and in advancing education equity.

Joan Lange, a resident of Westbury and a teacher and education administrator by training, has served as an assistant superintendent in six school districts on Long Island: Rockville Center School District; William Floyd School District; Islip School District; Brentwood School District; Amityville School District, and Roosevelt School District. She has been named Educator of the Year on three different occasions by the School Administrators Association of New York, the New York State Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the Long Island Black Educators Association. In 2015 she was an Honoree at the Suffolk County Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commission.



Lorna Lewis, a resident of Freeport, has been a pioneer over her nearly 40-year career as an educator. In June 2018, she became the first woman of color to preside over the New York State Council of School Superintendents (NYCOSS), which represents more than 800 top education leaders statewide. She most recently served as the superintendent of Malverne UFSD, after having served as the superintendent of Plainview-Old Bethpage CSD and East Williston UFSD. An outspoken voice for inclusion and equity in public education, Dr. Lewis is a founding member of NYCOSS's Commission on Diversity and Inclusivity and also chairs their curriculum committee. In 2019, the NAACP recognized her with a Legacy Award.



Wilma Tootle, a resident of Freeport, has had an extraordinary career in public education. She began her career as a teacher and has served in such administrative roles as Principal of Uniondale High School and District Director of Personnel for the Uniondale School District.



Currently, she is President of W. H. Tootle Consulting Services and Co-President of A Better You Consulting Services LLC. She is the immediate past president of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women (NCBW), Incorporated, Long Island Chapter, and she serves at the NCBW national level as Chair of the Ethics Committee and NGO Representative to the United Nations. In 1988, she was conferred an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Monrovia College in Monrovia, Liberia.

The other officers of the Board of Directors – Lauren Furst, Treasurer, and Craig J. Wolfson, Esq., Assistant Treasurer – will continue in their current roles.

Joan Lange and Lorna Lewis succeed Kalpana Bhandarkar and Ed Pichardo, Esq., who have completed their terms as Co-Chairs.

“ERASE Racism is grateful to the extraordinary leadership exhibited by its Board of Directors, and the willingness of its members to fulfill different roles at different times,” said Elaine Gross, Founder and President Emerita. “We thank Kalpana Bhandarkar and Ed Pichardo for all that they have done and will continue to do for ERASE Racism, and we thank Lorna Lewis, Joan Lange, and Wilma Tootle for assuming their new roles at this crucial time for civil rights. ERASE Racism’s focus on overcoming structural racism to ensure equal rights for all is as vital as ever, and we look forward to their leadership in the years ahead.”