

E·R·A·S·E



RACISM

Education Reform Takes Center Stage at ERASE Racism 10th Anniversary Celebration

**- ERASE Racism Celebrated 10th Anniversary on June 7th at Garden City Hotel -
- Honorees included Brown University President Ruth Simmons and Dean Emeritus of
Touro Law School Howard Glickstein -**

“Inequality in education is the civil rights issue of our generation. Unequal treatment in many areas can be overcome, but inequities in education can have life-time ramifications,” warned Dr. Ruth J. Simmons, President of Brown University. As the first African-American president of an Ivy League institution, Dr. Simmons believes that a good education is one of the most powerful tools to create opportunity and equity.

On June 7th, 2011, at ERASE Racism’s 10th Anniversary Celebration and Benefit Reception, Dr. Simmons spoke to more than 350 Long Islanders about her journey as the granddaughter of slaves in the deep-south to become one of the most respected educational leaders of our time. Dr. Simmons attributed her success to caring teachers who believed in her and encouraged her to go to college. She reflected on the educational inequities that deny such opportunities to black and Latino students in racially segregated areas, such as Long Island, and said, “Education is the critical component to eradicating racism and ending discrimination, and yet educational structures are contributing to the very racism and discrimination that education seeks to end.”

Dr. Simmons joined ERASE Racism and its supporters to accept the Abraham Krasnoff Courage and Commitment Award, given by ERASE Racism every year to a leader who has demonstrated a life-time commitment to racial justice.

Howard A. Glickstein, Esq., Dean Emeritus of Touro Law School, also received the award for being an exemplary champion for racial justice. Mr. Glickstein, whose career in civil rights law spans half a century, helped to draft both the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. He was thanked by Dr. Simmons for his role in providing her with opportunities that her generation could not have imagined.

In his acceptance speech, Mr. Glickstein also spoke about the importance of providing a high-quality education to all students, and the dangerous effects of teaching students in a racially segregated environment. He opened his remarks by saying:

“I hope you all will read Elaine Gross’s [outstanding op-ed piece](#) in Newsday that...graphically describes how Long Island’s segregated school districts cheat black and Latino students. Elaine explained that because she is African-American, she risks being accused of playing the “race card” by pointing all of that out. I hope I will not be accused of playing the race card when I say our segregated schools and neighborhoods also cheat white students and families.”

Mr. Glickstein further explained, “We do damage to their hearts and minds when we educate children to merely be successful in an apartheid society...We do damage when we raise our children in an educational incubator where they develop false notions of racial and cultural superiority.”

While the 10th Anniversary Celebration called upon individuals to join ERASE Racism’s efforts, it also made the case for the important role and responsibility that corporations have in achieving racial equity. For the first time, ERASE Racism recognized two corporate honorees with the Corporate Leadership Award. John D. Cameron, Jr., Cameron Engineering and Associates LLP, received the honor for his efforts to further racial equity in public schools.

Mr. Cameron, who is the Chairman of the Long Island Regional Planning Council, explained that after completing a 25-year sustainability plan for Long Island, the Council found that the number one strategy for the region has to be improving academic achievement and ensuring equal education opportunities for all students in the k-12 system. "It is an issue that goes right to the heart of our sustainability, affordability, competitiveness and, yes, equity," Cameron explained.

The ERASE Racism Corporate Leadership Award was also given to Omni New York LLC, for its efforts to significantly increase quality, affordable housing on Long Island. The company, which has acquired and rehabilitated 4,516 affordable housing units in New York, focuses not only on the real estate aspect of revitalization but also on the social aspect by partnering with community and neighborhood groups to provide social services to the community, such as after-school programs for children.

Omni New York Managing Director and former Major League Baseball player Maurice "Mo" Vaughn accepted the award. In his acceptance speech, Mr. Vaughn spoke about his Major League Baseball days and the experiences that he had working with teammates from all over the world. After elaborating on the important bond that the team members developed, he concluded, "There are tremendous examples every day that there doesn't need to be racism in this world."

Noting that all of the honorees' remarks highlighted the urgent problem of educational inequities that plague Long Island, Elaine Gross, President of ERASE Racism, pointed out that "Since 2001, ERASE Racism has been working to eliminate barriers to racial equity in the region by bringing racial disparities to light and advocating for policies and practices that address structural racism. Most recently, the organization has launched an Education Equity Campaign that seeks to catalyze a strategic dialogue about the benefits of racial diversity and to develop policy and institutional changes that support its goal of equity, excellence and racial integration in Long Island public schools."

For information on ERASE Racism's work, visit www.eraseracismny.org. For information on the Education Equity Campaign, or to get involved, contact Olivia Ildefonso at 516-921-4863 x14, or email olivia@eraseracismny.org.

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