

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

PART 1: VISION STATEMENT

Negro Spiritual: He's got the whole world . . .in His hands . . .

My heritage is characterized by a legacy of deep, settled and resilient faith. Faith which was consistently affirmed through the spontaneous and life transforming songs of my people - songs of triumph, hope and potential. Songs which remain fundamental in establishing me as a woman who has *faith* as an essential value. A woman who has always been taught to live her life from a divine perspective. This faith was nurtured through stories of phenomenal lives, such as Harriet Tubman, Booker T. Washington and Geroge Washington Carver.

I have always known that there is a God and that this God deeply loves me and is intricately involved in my life. I am the second child born in 1956 to an African American couple. My two brothers and I were blessed to spend our childhood on a farm in southwest Georgia. Intimacy with God was intricately woven into my life. His touch was experienced as I tilled the soil, cared for the animals, responded to the weather or gazed at the brilliant stars etched on the midnight sky. Morning and evening worship, mid-week prayer meeting and Sabbath services characterized my life. Consistently my parents prayers expressed appreciation to God for the gift of having been our parents. Confidently - we would be reminded of God's phenomenal dream for our lives and the importance of cultivating the gifts which had been entrusted to us as a context for the fulfillment of this dream. Therefore, the value of *excellence* was a natural outgrowth of this belief system.

While this dream and the assurance of its fulfillment were affirmed through promises from God's written and prophetic Word such as:

- *I know the plans I have for you . . .plans for good and not for evil – to give you a purpose and a hope*
- *Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children*
- *Seek you first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and everything else will be added unto you*

my parents knew that the key to this dream was education – “It will give you a foot in the door” . . . “then you can prove yourself”. I was keenly aware that my access to this key would be opposed, both formally and culturally – but I was also equally confident that through divine intervention – this educational treasure would be obtained.

Negro Spiritual: Every time I feel the Spirit moving in my heart I will pray

It was profoundly clear that this God ordained gift would be obtained only through prayer, blood, sweat and tears. My grandmother, against my grandfather's wishes, obtained her high school diploma through a correspondence course while she worked in the cotton fields and cared for 12 children. Strategically, I heard the stories behind my dad's stooped physical statue. How as the eldest son, he was allowed to go to school three days a week, but had to ride a bicycle approximately 15 miles over dirt roads to get there. He rode in the rain and the heat. He became known by his siblings and those in the community as the “Professor”. It was his calling to teach his brothers and sisters and through this experience, become the first black man in our area to receive a

teaching certificate. He taught me the precious value of books and that indeed, knowledge was not only potential– but power.

Negro Spiritual: Keep your hand on the plow – hold on . . .

At an early age, I was taught that “Living the dream” meant that you gave the gifts back to God who then blessed them to be a blessing which enriched the lives of the community and even the world. That inevitably, living the dream would require the cyclical confrontation of obstacles. Ironically, this challenging context nurtures refinement of the parallel values of *service and joy*. For me, the core value of service is progressively actualized through “leadership”. The value of joy tends to be minimized not only in today’s professional arena but in our world in general. Yet I believe that the effect of joyless striving in the workplace directly correlates with the pervasive realities of burnout and underachievement.

The commitment to confront these leadership challenges, was intensely demonstrated by my parents and my family specifically as it related to the implementation of government strategies to end segregation. At this time, my parents were both in administrative positions in our town’s black public school. The method for integration consisted of providing black parents with a form on which they would indicate via their signature, their willingness to allow their sons and daughter to attend the white school – thereby implementing the process of voluntary integration.

A couple of years went by with no black parents providing this permission. I remember my parents asking my brothers and me if we would be “willing to get

this thing started” by going to the white school – in other words, “to lead” our community’s transition to the provision of a quality learning experience for all members of its community. We agreed that we would be willing to do this. Almost immediately following my parents submission of their approval, we received formal protests from the school system and members of our town who had deeply ingrained racist views . . .so deep were our parents concerns about our safety, that it was decided that my brothers and I would be “sent away” to academy for the balance of our education. We were to keep our “hand on the plow – to hold on” . . .keep our focus on obtaining our educational objectives in spite of the challenges which unfairly confronted us.

It was through this experience that external validation of the gift of leadership was formally affirmed. During my high school graduation ceremony when I was nominated as one “Student of the Year” and one of two students voted by the faculty as “Most Likely To Succeed”.

Since this time, I have discovered, that I enjoy “leadership”. In both the personal and professional arenas of my life I have been entrusted with ever expanding leadership responsibilities. Personally, these have taken myriad forms such as the head elder in my local church, Sabbath School teacher and choir director. As a result of my heritage, I carry into my leadership experiences a profound awareness that for enduring effectiveness as a leader, I must seek daily to be led – by my divine leader. I believe that God’s leadership vision for my life identified through the following verse as adapted from Isaiah 58 . . .

To be known as one who builds things up, who restores what is ruined . . . who repairs broken walls and restores paths to walk in. (Isaiah 58:12)

I have a deep awareness of the leader's opportunity and responsibility to create healthy soil for the growth and accomplishment of desired objectives. I recognize that my final value of *integrity* is a nonnegotiable attribute which ensures the enduring impact of these accomplishments. As an academic leader, I carry in my heart an established recognition for this diamond which we refer to as "teaching and learning" . . . education. As an academic leader who is not a member of the dominant culture, every day, I treasure the opportunity I have to freely affirm access to this quality learning experience for all people.

Through the continued refinement of the competencies as delineated in this PhD program, I will be strengthened by this rigor with its associated credentials for continued expansion of God's leadership dream for my life. This personal commitment to continued growth is reflected in the following excerpt from the writings of Langston Hughes, renowned African American poet:

When a woman starts out with nothing
When a man starts out with his hands
Empty – but clean
When a woman starts out to change the world
She starts first with herself – the strength in her heart
The will to build.

I believe that I will continue to be provided progressive opportunities at the community college where I currently work through promotions to Associate Vice President and then to Vice President. I believe that I will be the first African American Female President of this Institution. Subsequent, to the completion of

this service – I want to potentially transfer the competencies of servant leadership from the public educational setting to our Adventist educational experience, perhaps through an administrative or consultative appointment. In addition, I would like to augment this appointment through the writing of a books and publications as well as speaking engagements which share my insights on enduring leadership.

In summary, these opportunities will provide a platform for showcasing the enduring relevance of servant leadership and its transforming power as uniquely showcased through living my personal values of faith, service, joy, excellence and integrity. Lives will be enriched . . .organizations will be strengthened through sustained progressive excellence in a manner that exceeds anything that I could ask or think!