



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Phil Boyle

## Black History Month Award Recipients' Biographies

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### Black History Month Award Recipients



#### James Cornigans

A native Long Islander, James Cornigans was born in 1947

and grew up in Bay Shore. Throughout his time at Bay Shore

High School, Mr. Cornigans worked various jobs including

delivering newspapers and stocking shelves at a grocery

store in order to earn money to pay for college.

After graduating from Bay Shore High School, he pursued

his higher education at the University of Dubuque in Iowa,

where he earned a degree in social studies and history. Once he completed his

college studies in 1969, he was hired to teach social studies in the Bay Shore

Middle School where he made his career for 34 years.

Mr. Cornigans grew up in the First Baptist Church of Bay Shore. He is presently a

deacon and a Sunday school teacher at the church. Additionally, he is working

on a committee to help write the church's history.

Mr. Cornigans married his wife, Linda an elementary school principal in the

Longwood School District in 1984. They have one daughter, Tanzania, a senior

in the Brentwood High School, Ross Center.

Mr. Cornigans and his wife joined the Gideon Association in the mid 1980's

where he has held every camp office except for Treasurer. At the present time,

he is the President of the Central Long Island Southwest Camp. He also holds

the position of Church Ministry Chairman and serves as a renowned church

speaker who shares testimonies of how the Scriptures have helped to bring

hope and to bring many of the recipients to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

In addition to working with the Gideon Association, Mr. Cornigans serves as the Chaplain of the Gideons for New York State. In this role, he has participated in a number of New York City Scripture Blitzes, which are activities where they hand out Testaments to people on college campuses, high school and middle school students, hospital and nursing homes, along with placing them in motels and hotels.

He has also taken part in three International Scripture Blitzes where he had accompanied teams to Ghana, India and Thailand and handed out over 1.1 million Scriptures.

Presently, Mr. Cornigans is working on booklets to assist and guide teens and young adults as they make their way to adulthood and beyond.

### **Jasmine Chisholm**

A member of the National Honor Society, Jasmine

Chisholm is currently in the twelfth grade at

Wyandanch Memorial High School. Throughout

her high school career, she has always been

an active member of the student body and

participates in countless extracurricular activities.

Jasmine is a SMART scholar at Farmingdale State College, where

she has earned college credits in a number of different courses.

In the tenth grade, Jasmine traveled to Albany to present a

research project in psychology and sociology and placed third.

At the present time, Jasmine is pursuing a certificate as a nursing

assistant at Wilson Tisch's Republic campus and serves as the

President of Skills USA- a technical organization.

She is also currently involved in the executive council and

the drama club. Jasmine is also a member of the Ujima Alumni

Foundation and is a volunteer at the Wheatley Heights Ambulance

Corporation.

After graduating a year in advance, she aspires to practice law and

launch her own clothing line.

## **Felice A. Holder**

Born in Danville, Virginia, and the daughter of a preacher, Felice

Holder's life journey has taken her down many paths. Some she recalls

with great joy and eagerness. While others, like a dark forest in her

soul, only bring a shudder and sometimes a tear.

For Felice Holder life has been anything but a joy ride. Abandonment

and abuse haunted her early years. Yet, she has taken every turn with

fierce determination and instead of wallowing in her own pain, she

used each bump in the road as encouragement to hold up others.

"I grew up knowing the truth but, it's not what I lived. What you were taught was not what

was being executed in the way people behaved," Felice said. "After all that I have been

through, I wanted to help people realize you don't have to live your life that way. You can do

better." And, "better" is what Felice Holder did.

Tired of moving from town to town, Felice began searching for a place to settle down. With

a brief stop in Amityville she finally put down roots in Wyandanch. She recollected that after

living in so many different places that Wyandanch is the only place that ever felt like "home"

to her. Once settled in, she did not waste time before she began extending her hand to help

anyone in need. Her list of deeds began in varying sizes and scopes – from providing safe rides to young people, donating food, clothing and furniture to those in need and locating items and services for those that only had to ask. Felice did everything she knew how to do to make a difference in her new hometown - and, like a true philanthropist, her efforts did not stop there.

Professionally, Felice has had a career on Long Island that continued her passion to help others. For seven years she held a position with BOCES working as a Teacher's Assistant for Disabled Children; for over 10 years she worked as an Assistant with the Developmentally Disabled Institute; and, for the last 5 years, she worked through a grant in the Wyandanch Central School District as a Community Relations Specialist, acting as liaison between the School District and the Wyandanch Community and Coordinator of outreach services for students and families needing drug and alcohol prevention support.

During her tenure in the Wyandanch Schools Felice also served at the Vice President of the Wyandanch High School PTO, was Vice President of the Wyandanch Old Timers Day Coordination Committee and a Wyandanch Library volunteer working in the children's literacy program.

To add to this year's honorarium from New York State Senator Phil Boyle, Felice received

the Town of Babylon Community Service Award for her exemplary efforts as a community volunteer and advocate for those in need.

“My heart is filled and happy for who I am,” Felice spoke in a whisper. “I am nice and I am proud to say that. And I’m going to share it with other people. After all, that’s the least I can do.”

Continuing her volunteer efforts in the Town she loves, Felice Holder proudly lives in Wyandanch and has 5 children, ages 11 to 35, 4 sons and a daughter.

### **Nancy Holliday**

Nancy Holliday is a longtime resident and activist of the community of Wyandanch, New York. She is a retired school teacher. She is an active member of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church in Wyandanch and is a member of the African American Ancestry.

She has worked tirelessly in the community for the welfare of all those who are voiceless and seek to be heard. Over the past 33 years she has volunteered and diligently worked to help individuals and communities.

She is always in the forefront to assist those in need through her listed

civic activities and on an individual basis. Ms. Holliday assisted the police

with the Combat Task Force, Neighborhood Watch, Wyandanch Weed and Seed.

Nancy served four years as a board member and the Educational Chair on the Suffolk Chapter

of the American Civil Liberty Union where she worked to ensure that people's civil liberties were

not violated. She also volunteers her time for the youth of the community as a Parent Advocate

and one of the community founders of the patrols for the safety of the neighborhoods numerous

latch key youth due to their parents work hours.

She co-founded the South Side Neighborhood Watch in 1999 and participates in a weekly patrol

with Suffolk County COPE Officers to help ensure a safe community. She started patrolling the

bus stops to make sure the children had a safe corridor to and from school.

As President of the Wyandanch Union Free School District Board of Education, Ms. Holliday has

developed a reputation over her entire two terms of service as a high energy, fiscally conscious



and goal driven trustee.

She also serves as a Trustee on the Library Board for the last 10 years, serving two years as Board

President. During her time as a Trustee for the library many improvements have occurred such as

the basement renovation, Patricia Van Noy Computer center, the children's and adult's computer

center, numerous innovative programs including the very informative Black History Month, Women History Month, Hispanic History Month, and Kwanzaa programs, traveling exhibits from

the Schomburg Center for Research and author book signings, meet and greet to name a few.

Ms. Holliday has been at the forefront to prevent violence in our communities especially among

the youth. To this end she founded the Save Our Children and Youth Organization in Wyandanch.

She convened and met with students, federal, state, local politicians and community members

to stand up and confront youth violence at its root causes as a way to save our children and communities. This resulted in a coalition she founded and secured a \$300,000 community grant

to fund a violence prevention afterschool program and summer camp.

Over the years Nancy has received many gifts and awards for her work in the community, from

the town, the state and federal government.

Nancy Holliday is a blessing to her family and community. From her early years of participating

in the Civil Rights Movement, SNIC, the NAACP to the present she has continued to be woman

of strength, integrity and kindness. Her door is always open to help those in need. She is a wife,

sister, aunt, great aunt, and friend, one who is always willing to think of others first.

### **Dr. Tracy Hudson**

Dr. Tracy Hudson's strong belief in education is the key to her

success. While she is an example for her colleagues, friends,

and peers, it is most important to acknowledge the impact she

has had in the arena of academic excellence. After graduating

Central Islip Senior High School, Dr. Hudson attended Cortland

State University and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree

in Education. She continued on to achieve three Masters

Degrees: one in *Health Education*; another in *Conflict Resolution and Peaceable*

*Schools*; and the other in *School Administration*. In May 2009, she reached the

highest academic degree in any field of knowledge by completing her doctorate in

*School Leadership* at St John's University.

Dr. Hudson has been an educator for over 27 years. Her commitment to her

hometown community of Central Islip is evident in every aspect of her life.

Currently, she is the Principal of the Mulligan Middle School in Central Islip. She

has also served as an Assistant Principal in South Huntington, Bellport, and Central

Islip. Her dedication to the children and families in the school is evident by her

implementation and development of the following programs: a variety of ongoing

parent and student workshops i.e. *Parent University, College, Career, and Beyond*;

collaborations with outside agencies i.e. *YES, (Youth Enrichment Services), Girls*

*Scouts, Girls' Inc.*; and a myriad of activities to support and uplift students and

parents alike i.e. *Men of the Future, GREAT* (a police-community program,) and

*BAM, Be a Mentor*.

As a member of many prestigious organizations throughout Long Island, Dr. Hudson

is well known amongst her peers. Dr. Hudson is currently the Youth Advisor for the ***Town of Islip Youth Council*** for the ***NAACP***. She also serves as the “Facet Chair” for the adolescent program for the eastern shore chapter of ***L.I.N.K.S.*** In addition, she is a long time member of the sisterhood of ***Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.*** With these organizations, Dr. Hudson has made it her mission to educate not only the youth, but also adults through her modeling of community service.

Dr. Tracy Hudson resides in Bay Shore with her husband and three children; two of whom are college age and attend Hofstra University and Missouri State.

### **Kimberly Jean-Pierre**

Kimberly Jean-Pierre’s parents migrated from Haiti to the United States and settled in Brooklyn, NY where she was born and raised. After high school, she attended Brooklyn College, and earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing in 2005. In pursuit of her Master’s Degree, Kimberly relocated to Suffolk County, Long Island, in 2006 and attended Stony Brook University,

earning her Master of Science in Public Policy in 2007.

In 2008, she was employed by the Suffolk County Legislature, working for Legislator DuWayne Gregory of the 15th legislative district as a Legislative Aide. After two productive years serving Leg. Gregory, Kimberly decided to broaden her career path and began working for Congressman Steve Israel as the Community Outreach Coordinator in the 2nd and after the redistricting, the 3rd Congressional District. In late January of this year, Kimberly took another direction and began working for the Town of Babylon Industrial Development Agency (IDA), focused on an integral part of the Town's economic growth and development. The IDA has been working closely with officials, the community and the developer on the Wyandanch Rising Project. With that experience, Kimberly recently joined the Wyandanch Community Resource Center as the new Director. She is excited to work with the community to identify avenues and resources for the residents in conjunction with the physical changes happening in Wyandanch.

She is also very involved as a community activist and is the current

Vice-President of Haitian Americans United for Change, (H.A.U.C) Inc., a community grass-root organization.

### **Joshua Johnson**

Joshua Ryan Johnson was born in Good Samaritan

Hospital in West Islip, New York on March 1, 1996. Joshua

began his scholastic career in the Wyandanch Union Free

School District at the LaFrancis Hardiman Elementary

School. He then proceeded to the Martin Luther King

Elementary school and graduated in good standing.

In middle school, Joshua participated in the STEP

(Science Technology Entry Program) at Farmingdale

State University. This program exposes young adults and sparks their

interest in science through hands on studies on topics of their choosing.

In the summer of his 8th grade year, Joshua participated in the STEM

(Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics) program. This week-long

program gave students the opportunity to experience college and campus

life where he had first chance to become an independent.

As a high school freshman, Joshua joined the Wyandanch Memorial High School U.S Army JROTC (Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps). He was guided by his Senior Army instructor on his path to becoming a better citizen. His volunteering work includes Toys for Tots, Veteran Plaza cleanups, tutoring peers, color guards and various other activities. Each of these experiences has given him the leadership he needs to succeed in life. He participated in the Early Scholar Program in his freshman and sophomore year. This program offered college courses to high school students free of charge. He was enrolled in Psychology and an Intro to Photography course. Joshua also was a captain of his football team his senior year and also participated on the track team for 3 years.

Joshua is highly influenced by his parents; Robert and Teresita Johnson who are wondrous model citizens who guide their son as best as they possibly can. His mother has taught him to always fight for what he wanted and to pursue his dream, while his father has shown him how to be a gentleman and how to conduct himself as a growing young man. He also looks up to

his brother and heeds his advice and wisdom. He owes these three people for his current and future accomplishments for their total support and influence.

### **Paula K. Santorelli**

As the daughter of two immigrants from Trinidad, Paula Santorelli's parents' hopes and dreams were to provide her with a quality education that would allow her to have opportunities far beyond their own. As a student at John Dewey High School in Brooklyn, Paula's teachers were supportive and passionate about their subject; her coaches pushed her body and her mind beyond her own expectations, and her classmates were there for her through the laughter and the tears associated with high school experiences.

When she was a sophomore in high school, her brother's life was tragically taken. Paula remembers the love, support, and concern from teachers, coaches, and friends during those dreadful days. Through their kindness and support, she was able to not only get through those very challenging times but to continue to be successful in her



academic endeavors and extra-curricular activities. In the summer of 1991, Paula and her friends decided to pack their bags and head off to Syracuse University together.

Paula's love of history was always present, but it was truly solidified at SU. To her, history is the study of everything; there is history in science and there is history in people, places, and even in the post-modern world. This love of history has inspired her love of traveling, reading,

and learning. After college she became an ambassador of People-To-People and had an opportunity to travel repeatedly to Europe and Australia learning about the various people and places she read about in history books.

After graduating from SU in May of 1995, Paula immediately began her teaching career at Brentwood High School. BHS has been her home away from home ever since. As a social studies teacher, she has taught a variety of core and elective classes in grades 10-12. She has also advised several clubs (including the Drama Club), taught summer and evening high school and sat on many committees, including the School Improvement Team.

Paula was also a Union Delegate for the BTA for many years. During that time she was also fortunate enough to create and write the course curriculum for the African American Studies

class. In 2006, she became a Dean and was primarily responsible for the management of students at Ross High School, along with two other Deans. In 2007, Paula became the Social Studies Department Chair and still holds the position. As a result of the recent changes in education, she has lead various Professional Development and Parental Workshops on the Common Core State Standards. In the summer of 2013, Paula became the Education Chair of the Islip Town Branch of the NAACP.

Brentwood has not only impacted Paula's professional life but her personal life as well. One of

the first teachers she met in the district became a very dear friend. She was later introduced to the man who would become her husband in the fall of 2002. Her first born, Andre, was actually born on her birthday in March of 2006. Today, she is the proud mother of 2 boys (Andre and Julian).

Paula hopes to continue to educate, inspire, and protect the interest of each and every student that walks the halls of BHS in the same manner she was looked after by my teachers, coaches, and friends.

**Myles Singer**

Myles Jordan Singer is a 16 year old student who was born in Hempstead and has been a resident of Bay Shore for the last 10 years. He is the first born child of Roxanne L. Singer and Gregory M. Singer and has one sister, Nia Simone Singer. He is a junior at Bay Shore high school. Myles has played on various sports teams ranging from basketball to track which he plans to participate in this spring. Myles is an avid basketball enthusiast as well as comic book collector and loves music and various types of movies. Myles plans to pursue a career as a physical therapist with a concentration in sports injuries and is interested in Adelphi University, Hofstra University and Stony Brook. He has displayed a deep seated belief in doing what's right and helping those that are in need of any type of assistance.

For the past few years Myles has been an invaluable volunteer to the Youth Enrichment Services (YES) program. He has participated in many different community events, which would not have been as successful without Myles' participation. Myles has taken the skills that he has learned volunteering in

YES programs and has successfully transitioned into a Department of Labor youth counselor position in the YES summer programs. Throughout the summer programs, Myles has worked to mentor the youth in his community as well as engaging with them in a variety of different enrichment activities. This past summer Myles participated in the 1st Annual YES and Senator Boyle's 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament that took place at the Brentwood Recreation Center, where he was one of the winners. Myles is an extremely hard working young man who puts the needs of his community and others before himself.

### **Corey Swinson**

When you grow up as the youngest of ten children, you quickly learn toughness tempered with compassion. For the off spring of Eugene and Carrie Swinson, education and public service stand at the forefront of parental expectations. Today, their children occupy significant positions in health care, in law enforcement, the arts, and in education, among

other fields.

All the Swinson children graduated from Bay Shore High School. Corey played college basketball and college football...culminating in stints with several NFL teams. He then embarked on a career in personal security, protecting A-list athletes and celebrities. Through it all, he felt himself drawn to education, a field in which he could contribute to the betterment of young people

In 2002, he joined the Bay Shore Schools as the Director of Security, quickly establishing a reputation as one Long Island's most respected voices in school safety. With responsibilities in policy, procedure, hiring, budget development, and personnel management, Mr. Swinson quickly honed a diverse skill-set. In 2012, Corey assumed the position of Director of Security for the Copiague School District.

Family stands at the core of Corey Swinson's universe. As a single father, Corey dedicates himself to the care and well-being of his son, a seventh-grade honor student at Bay Shore Middle School. Of course, he always found time for his mom – Carrie Swinson, for his siblings – Robert, Betty, Gwen, Ernie, Eugenia, Pam, Lisa, Paula, David, Matthew, and for an ever-increasing assortment of nieces and of

nephews. His sons – Trevor and Messiah were a priority. His extended family includes many of the lifelong friends he met over the course of more than 42 years in the Bay Shore/Brightwaters community.

The list of Corey Swinson's many activities/honors includes the following:

- Recognition by the Suffolk County

Detectives Associate – the only civilian ever honored in this fashion

- Designation as a recipient of a Town of Islip Black History Month Award

- Recipient of a SCOPE Education Award for Excellence

- Coaching PAL football

- Mentoring numerous members

of the Bay Shore/Brightwaters community

### **Mrs. Gina D. Talbert**

Gina Talbert joined the Wyandanch Community over 14 years ago as the

Assistant Principal of Milton L. Olive Middle School and has been a resident

since 2001.

Prior to relocating from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Gina began her professional

career as an educator in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System. Pursuing her life's purpose, she has dedicated more than 27 years to ensuring and overseeing the educational best for others.

Her professional experiences have spanned across the educational spectrum as an elementary classroom teacher ( School Teacher of the Year), EBRP Teacher of the Year Semi

Finalist, Middle School Summer Program Teacher and Supervisor, Coordinator of Student Services,

Participant in the EBRP/Bank Street College Administrative Intern Program, District Wide Staff

Developer for EBRP School System, Consultant to the Louisiana State Dept. of Education for Saturday

Academy Programs, Assistant Principal and Principal of an Elementary and Montessori Magnet

School.

Mrs. Talbert has always had a passion for service. In past years, she has invested countless hours

of community service: reading to the elderly at nursing homes, organizing an annual community

Father's Day Breakfast for elderly fathers, assisting youth in producing community centered based

plays and drama productions, facilitating leadership and career development workshops for youth

and young adults, and coaching a little league boys' softball team.

After locating to Long Island, she has notably served as the Assistant Principal as well as Principal

of Milton Olive Middle School. Her commendable leadership was acknowledged by New York State

Education Department for the school's successful removal from the "*State's Most Violent Schools*

*and Schools under Registration Review Lists*". Gina Talbert has continued to serve the Wyandanch

Community as Director of Grant Funded Programs, Director of Elementary Education and presently

as the Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction of the Wyandanch Union Free

School District.

From the time she moved to Long Island, she wanted to better understand and serve the community



where she would be working and raising a family. Her desire was to have a positive influence on the

community, and with the support of her husband and church family, she has facilitated outreach

efforts such as, “***Warm a Child Project***” in which coats, scarves, gloves and hats are donated to the

local elementary schools for students in need each December; “***Dress for Success***” in which gently

used purses are donated to women in need who are re-entering the workplace; “***Back to School***

***Rally***”, which is a day of learning, food, fun, free school supplies and backpacks for students;

“***Women’s Shelters***” in which food, toiletry items and free bibles are donated.

Mrs. Talbert was a recipient of The National Conference of Christians and Jews Brotherhood/

Sisterhood Award, Louisiana YWCA Woman of Achievement Community/Public Service Award in

Education and The Town of Babylon’s Woman of Distinction Community Service Award.

Mrs. Talbert is happily married to Bishop Michael V. Talbert Sr., Pastor, of the First Church of Wyandanch

Ministries and the doting mother of four children. She serves as a school volunteer and “first rate

class mom” at her children’s school.

Mrs. Talbert earned a Bachelor of Science Degree from Louisiana State University and Master’s Degree

in Educational Administration and Supervision from Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

She has completed numerous hours of post-graduate work in the field of education.

### **Theresa Waldron**

Theresa Waldron has dedicated her life to helping the

needy in the community. A trait instilled in her from

a young age by her Catholic mother who believed

in helping people in need and did so at her church

in Jamaica, West Indies, and the values that became

imbedded in her as she helped at church and in the

community. Theresa was involved in various school,

extracurricular and church activities such as plays,

dance group, choir and modeling.

Theresa's mission is to help those who have lost sight of their dreams to get back on track and realize that even in difficult times when you don't see how you can possibly reach your goal, there is always a way, you just have to stay focused on your goal and work hard to achieve it. When

Theresa was a Residential Manager at The Body of Christ Youth and Adult Counseling Center, a transitional home in Central Islip, New York, she met women from all walks of life who had lost hope, given up on their dreams because of difficult circumstances and wrong decisions that they made.

She helped them to first forgive themselves and let go of their past, which is what holds most people back, and reclaim their lives, their dreams.

There is nothing more important to Theresa than to continue the mandate from God to feed the hungry, clothe the needy and assist those who need help. She is able to stay true to her values by working with Pronto of Long Island as their Executive Assistant where she assists with the daily operations of feeding, clothing and helping those in need. She also extends her time to help at her church, The River of Life, in Bay Shore, with

the feeding, praying and counseling of parents and their children who are in shelters. Theresa assists with the cooking of food for the dinners which the church hosts for them each month and follows up with calls to the parents to see how families are doing.

Theresa will continue her mission of helping those in need for as long as she is able. It gives her great joy, peace and happiness to help make someone's life better, help them realize their goals can be achieved and help them feel at peace.