

HELC Commissioner Bios

Mary E. Dilworth

Mary E. Dilworth is a nationally recognized expert on education research, policy and program development. She is best known for her work in teaching, teacher education, and teachers' professional development and has received special recognition for her accomplishments in the areas of teacher and learner diversity and equity issues. Dr. Dilworth is editor of an upcoming book focusing on millennial teachers of color and serves as an advisor to a range of non-profit education organizations and institutions. She recently completed work as a co-principal investigator for a National Science Foundation (NSF-DR12) project designed to recruit, prepare, license and employ middle and high school science teachers from under-represented groups. In 2012-2013 she served as a visiting professor and director of the Center for Urban Education at the University of the District of Columbia and prior to this worked as vice president for research and higher education at the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Before joining the Board she was senior vice-president of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE).

Prior to joining the staff of AACTE, Mary E. Dilworth was affiliated with Howard University in Washington, D.C. She was a research fellow with the University's Institute for the Study of Educational Policy (ISEP) and subsequently the coordinator of education and training for Howard University Hospital. While at ISEP, Dilworth wrote the book *Teachers' Totter: a Report on Teacher Certification Issues* widely recognized as heightening the national discourse on the disparate impact of licensing tests on under-represented groups. Earlier in her career, Dilworth worked for a national advisory council on education professional development, and a Washington, D.C. based research consulting firm, where she managed research and professional development projects with federal agencies and the District of Columbia Schools (DCPS). She taught second and six grades in DCPS while pursuing a Masters degree.

She has written, edited and contributed to scores of scholarly books, articles, policy and research reports and essays. Her recent contributions include: a 2014 NEA report, *Time for a Change: Diversity in Teaching Revisited*; a chapter in the 2013 International Guide to Student Achievement; an entry in James A. Banks' *Encyclopedia of Diversity in Education* (2012); the 2012 article, *Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Teacher Education Reform* in the *Journal of Negro Education*, and guest editor with Michael Knapp of the summer 2010 issue of the journal, *Theory into Practice*.

Dilworth holds and has held a number of elected and appointed positions on boards and commissions including: the American Educational Research Association (AERA); the Educational Testing Service (ETS); the National Education Association (NEA); the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the Ford Foundation. She has been an invited lecturer at a variety of institutions e.g., International Forum on Teacher Education – Shanghai PRC, Texas A&M University and the University of Wisconsin. Throughout her career, Mary E. Dilworth has received a number of honors and awards for community service including Frito-Lay and the National Council of Negro Women's Black Women Who Make It Happen award. Dilworth received her BA degree in elementary education, and MA degree in student personnel

administration in higher education from Howard University and a doctorate from Catholic University of America in higher education administration.

John M. Cross
Vice Chair, Higher Education Licensure Commission

John M. Cross was appointed by Mayor Muriel Bowser of Washington, D.C. to the Higher Education Licensure Commission in 2015 to a three year term. His interests on the Commission have centered on the financial and academic viability of the post-secondary schools that it regulates. He became vice chair in 2016.

Mr. Cross has over 47 years experience in government and government affairs, business management, corporate relations, and news media, with nearly 40 of those years spent in Washington. His wide experience includes service as president of three businesses, four years as a TV reporter, several additional years in print and audio journalism, and positions with public interest organizations, as well as government. He focussed on management issues affecting business for several years including business development and human resource issues.

Throughout his life, government has continued to be at the center of his interests. It began with several years at *BusinessWeek*, reporting in its Washington bureau, then continued as professional staff with the US Senate's Small Business Committee and President Carter's White House Conference on Small Business.

He was vice president for corporate communications for a housing subsidiary of GE Capital, based in Alexandria, where he was involved in issue-related government relations as part of his overall position in charge of internal and external communications. For several years he was in charge of the subsidiary's minority development programs.

He was president of an Australian business information company's American subsidiary where he produced *Business Essentials* audio magazines with particular emphasis on management and government issues. He also managed his own communications firm for several years with a variety of clients.

During the early 1980s in Pittsburgh, he was an on-camera reporter for business news at WPXI-TV. He also was a news anchor for Pittsburgh's WTKN-AM news and free-lanced for KTVU-TV Salt Lake City.

DC Habitat for Humanity named him vice president of its board of directors during the 1992 Jimmy Carter Work Project that constructed homes on Benning Road SE. He was also active as a volunteer for over 15 years with the Servicemember's Legal Defense Network ending the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

He earned a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in Chinese studies from Brown University. Following that, at Columbia University, he studied journalism, receiving a master's of science. He has lectured and served as an advisor at Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh. He lectured on government relations and journalism at Columbia and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Mr. Cross' primary education began in his native UK. He graduated from Barrington, Rhode Island, High School. He was naturalized a US citizen in 1974.

JoAnne Deborah Joyner, PhD, RN, PHMCNS-BC
Adjunct Professor
Behavioral Health and Health Care Ethics Consultant

Dr. JoAnne D. Joyner is an adjunct professor at Trinity Washington University in the School of Nursing and Health Professions. Prior to this position, Dr. Joyner served as Director and Associate Professor in Schools of Nursing at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) and Bowie State University. She also served as a *Buckley Visiting Scholar* at Adelphi University, School of Nursing in Garden City, New York. Before her retirement from the Washington, DC, Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Dr. Joyner functioned as as the Director of Nursing for Behavioral Health Services. She is certified as an Advanced Practice Nurse in Adult Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing by the American Nurses Credentialing Center.

Dr. Joyner's career was greatly enhanced by her professional experiences at the William A. White Building at St. Elizabeths Hospital - a major brance for mental health research by the National Institutes of Mental Health at that time. In addition, she became an experienced nurse ethicist with certifications in Intensive and Advanced Bioethics from Georgetown University and the Veterans Health Administration. She was chair of the Washington, DC VAMC Ethics Advisory Committee for five years and functioned as a nurse ethicist at the VA's National Center for Ethics in Health Care.

Dr. Joyner is a graduate of the Washington Hospital Center School of Nursing and received her Bachelorate from what is now Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Maryland. In addition, she received a Master of Science in Nursing, a Doctor of Nursing Science and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from The Catholic University of America.

Dr. Joyner served as the chairperson of the Board of Nursing for the District of Columbia from 2005 - 2008. Her most recent research activity involved functioning as co-investigator and co-author of a study funded by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing which described the utilization of unlicensed assistive personnel in acute care setting. She currently serves on the Committee for Impaired Nurses for the Board of Nursing of the District of Columbia and was appointed to the Higher Education Licensure Commission of the District of Columbia in August 2014. She continues to provide education and consultation in the areas of behavioral health and health care ethics.

Dr. Joyner lives in Washington, DC with her husband of 32 years; she enjoys live theater, travel, listening to the blues and jazz and preparing gourmet meals for family and friends.

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY FOR Janette Hoston Harris
Historian for Washington, DC

Dr. Harris was the first City Historian for the District of Columbia. She was appointed by Mayor Marion Barry in 1998 and has served Mayor Fenty, Williams, Gray and Bowser of Washington, DC . She is Founder and President of the Washington, DC Hall of Fame Society, a former consultant on the Carter G. Woodson Historical Home which is administered by the National Park Service. She was appointed by the current Mayor, Vincent C. Gray as a Commissioner on the African- American Affairs Commission and Historian-In-Residence. She was appointed by Mayor Bowser to serve as a Commissioner on the Marion Barry Commission and the Commissioner on African American Affairs.

As a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, she was appointed as Chairwoman of the North Atlantic Regional Centennial Committee and has served for eight years as the Sorority's first Regional Historian.

Dr. Harris' professional career included a professorship of African American, Black Women and the District of Columbia histories at the University of the District of Columbia from which she retired after twenty years. She taught at Bowie State University, Bowie, MD as an Adjunct Professor for six years. She has served on the Selection Board-Senior Foreign Service, U.S. Department of State for five years.

Dr. Harris' educational career included being a honorary graduate of Southern University and Central State University with a BA in Psychology. She earned a MA and Ph.D. from Howard University in African American and United States histories. She is a former Commissioner on the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House which is under the federal government, Department of Interior and also formerly served on the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission.

She served under DC Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly's administration as Director of Council Affairs in the Office of Intergovernmental Relations. She was also appointed State Director of Education for the City and as a member of the Historic Preservation Review Board.

A prominent historian and writer, Dr. Harris was elected as National President of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (ASALH) and was the first female historian to serve. She is the biographer of Dr. Charles Harris Wesley, former President of Central State University. She has lectured and published in several journals and books.

An attorney by profession, an educator by choice

Mrs. Cheryl Steplight received a Juris Doctorate from Georgetown University Law Center (1992) and a Bachelor of Science in Economics from Hampton University (1988). After several years in solo practice and eight years as a trademark attorney with the US Patent & Trademark Office, she left the practice of law altogether to homeschool her children. This was one of the highlights of her life.

It was during this time that, in addition to working as a trademark consultant, Cheryl began freelance writing. She's a published author whose works appear in both books and magazines. She's also done ghost writing, business writing, and editing.

Cheryl stepped further into entrepreneurship when she combined her loves of knitting, teaching, and writing. She opened a brick and mortar yarn shop on Capitol Hill called The Knitting Loft. This provided her with on-the-job training in every aspect of owning and running a small business.

After closing her shop, Cheryl has come full circle. She has returned to academia. Noticing a gap when students transition from middle to high school and from high school to college, she developed a study skills course. It includes note taking, test preparation, and what she calls "academic planning". She provides individual instruction through tutoring as well as small group classes.