

2005
RICHARD A. DENNIS
HEIRS AWARD RECIPIENTS

WILLIAM E. GARY is active in the total life of African American people in the Plainfield area. A retired Director of Pupil and Special Education for the Plainfield Board of Education, his work in the community bespeaks a lifetime commitment to helping young people grow and realize their maximum potential. Bill was born in Greenville, SC, moving to Plainfield at the age of eight where he currently resides with his wife Karen. A believer in continuous education, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at Central State University; a Masters of Education degree at Trenton State College (now the College of NJ) and pursued advance studies at Kean College earning education related certifications. A tenacious advocate for Special Education students, he led efforts to facilitate district wide inclusion, breaking down years of barriers that had confronted special needs children. Also known for his years of work with his Outreach College Club, now the New Horizons College Club, Bill has guided more than 2,000 students to study and attain professional careers in education, law, medicine, engineering, public service and business. In addition to his work with students, Bill's activism extends to the community where he is or has been an Advisory Board Member of the Union County Vocational Technical School; Member - National Council of Exceptional Children; Past Director- Plainfield Summer Science Camp; Chairman - Plainfield Youth Task Force on Delinquency; Member - Plainfield Family NET Organization; and Member - Employment of People with Disabilities. The recipient of numerous education, public service, and civic awards and commendations for his efforts - more than fifty at last count, Bill has set the tone for "village" excellence and is a role model for not only his village of Plainfield, but for us all.

"As a high school student, I wanted more from my guidance counselor than a directive to "join the service" after I graduated. That and other high school experiences pushed me to make a personal commitment to be a champion for students when I completed college and graduate school. My main goal and purpose in life has been to work with students to help them understand college prep requirements. I have fulfilled that goal, having arranged for student tours to hundreds of campuses, and helped more than 2,000 African-American students to successfully apply, attend and graduate from college. I am so proud of all of the graduates." William E. Gary, November 2005
