
CHAPTER 2

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF MELVIN C. TERRELL

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Dr. Melvin Cleveland Terrell earned his BSFD Degree (1971) in History and Secondary Education from Chicago State University and his MEd (1974) in College Student Personnel from Loyola University (Chicago). Dr. Terrell is a life member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated and was the chair of the Education Committee in Toledo, OH from 1986 to 1988. He received his PhD in Higher Education Administration and Black Studies from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale (1978) and he has continued postdoctoral studies at Harvard University and the University of Virginia. Dr. Terrell initiated his career in higher education, first at Kennedy-King College, then at Eastern New Mexico University, Chicago State University, the University of Arkansas at Monticello, University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh, University of Toledo, and finally at Northeastern Illinois University.

Some of Dr. Terrell's early experience in senior-level leadership in higher education began with his involvement as a fellow with the American Council on Education in the Office of the President and the Office of the Provost from 1993 to 1994. This fellowship consisted of his studying various aspects of higher education administration with major focus on senior-level leadership and management in academic affairs, being

involved in directly observing and participating in central administration, intensive higher education seminars, campus visitations and conferences and being mentored by the President and Provost.

From 1988 to 2008, Dr. Terrell served as Vice President for Student Affairs (and he continues his role as Professor of Counselor Education) at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) in Chicago, Illinois. Selected previous positions held include: (a) Director of Minority Affairs at the University of Toledo; (b) Director of the Multicultural Education Center at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh; and (c) Director of the Learning Development Center at the University of Arkansas at Monticello. During this time, Dr. Terrell also held adjunct faculty positions in addition to his full-time administrative responsibilities. A leader in professional organizations as well, Dr. Terrell is Past President of the National Association of Student Affairs Professionals (NASAP) and served as Editor of the *NASAP Journal*, one of the premier student affairs journals for 11 years.

His 20 plus years as a Vice President of Student Affairs, still stands as the longest tenure for an African American in that position at a predominantly White institution. During Dr. Terrell's tenure as Vice President for Student Affairs at Northeastern Illinois University, he concurrently managed an extremely full and fulfilling life at the University, also serving as president of the Illinois Committee on Black Concerns in Higher Education, the American Association of Higher Education's Black Caucus Executive Board, and director of the American College Personnel Association Core Council for Professionals Issues. His personal mantra was "attaining excellence while maintaining balance."

Since his days as a trail blazing early career professional, who secured a senior-level leadership role and a PhD prior to the age of 30, Dr. Terrell set the benchmark for the Black male professional in higher education. He has immeasurably impacted the diversity in the field of student affairs through his work and commitment with the NASPA Minority Undergraduate Mentoring Program. He has spent 40 years promoting Black males in education producing: College Presidents, Vice Presidents, Deans of Students, Senior Leaders in Student Affairs, and Endowed Professors to name a few.

One of the leading names in student affairs scholarship and practice today, Dr. Terrell has authored more than 30 publications including monographs, book chapters, and articles in refereed journals. This includes countless publications on topics such as mentoring, cultural diversity, student development in higher education, and current trends in higher education. In 2002, he co-authored the groundbreaking book, *How Minority Students Experience College: Implications for Planning and Policy*. In 2007, he co-edited the book, *Creating and Maintaining Safe College Campuses: A Sourcebook for Evacuating and Enhancing Safety Programs*, published by Stylus Publishing. In 1990, Dr. Terrell was the first minority administrator

to receive the Scott Goodnight Award for Outstanding Performance as a Student Personnel Administrator, NASPA, Region IV East.

Of all the accolades and awards that Dr. Terrell has received, one of the most significant is his being recognized as the first recipient of color in 35 years to receive the outstanding Contribution to Literature or Research award on behalf of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)—one of our country's premier student affairs organizations. He has striven to maintain an active research agenda and has been vigilant in regularly publishing to essentially "get the message out" regarding effective student affairs practices—this done in an effort to assist others to remain ready and relevant for the important work in the field. In addition to working with valued colleagues and staff, Dr. Terrell has been afforded the privilege of creating and developing programs, such as the Student Mentoring Program at the University of Toledo and Partners for Success—Minority Mentorship Program, which was recognized by the National Student Affairs Administrators of Higher Education (NASAA) as an exemplary program aimed at integrating student life and learning.

Dr. Terrell has received numerous award from various organizations including the Outstanding Contributions to Higher Education Award from Buffalo State, State University of New York, the Distinguished Service Awards from the National Association of Student Affairs Professionals and the Illinois Committee on Black Concerns in Higher Education, the Administrator of the Year Award from the University of Toledo, and the Outstanding Performance as a Senior Student Affairs Officer from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). Additionally, Dr. Terrell has received two honors from NEIU since his retirement in 2008. The title of Vice President Emeritus was bestowed upon him in August 2008 and recently an award was named in his honor. The Melvin Cleveland Terrell Award for Outstanding Contribution to Research and Literature will be presented annually during Black History Month at NEIU.

In recognition of his significant contributions to student affairs, Dr. Terrell has also recently received the Warrior Award from the International Colloquium on Black Males in Education. This international award and distinction is given to individuals who have provided longstanding service, commitment, and leadership focused on the "most difficult" challenges impacting Black males in education globally. Individuals who have tirelessly fought for what they viewed as right for Black males, thus demonstrating the "warrior" spirit are sought out for this award. Dr. Terrell's life's work has been centered on better understanding, and developing innovative practices and strategies to enhance the lives of college students. Over the past 20 years, his primary goals have been to serve as a vocal advocate for students, as a contributing colleague to faculty, and as a proactive leader among his administrative peers.

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