

2016 Woman of Achievement-Racial Justice LaTasha Wortham



LaTasha Wortham grew up in the Hilltop area of Tacoma in the 80's and 90's, the oldest daughter of a single mother of four. LaTasha counts her mother, who overcame personal struggles, as one of her heroes. **LaTasha's father, who was rarely apart of her life, suffered from mental illness and committed suicide when LaTasha was only 12.** Through daunting challenges LaTasha persevered and became the first in her family to attend and graduate from college.

Giving back to the community has always been extremely important to LaTasha. This is demonstrated through her volunteer work as well as her career. LaTasha has volunteered with the Metropolitan Development Council and the Girl Scouts and has supported a number of organizations that focus on mentoring young people, including the Boys & Girls Clubs, and the YMCA. LaTasha had the honor of working on the staff of Congressman Norm Dicks (Pierce, Kitsap, & Mason counties) and currently is honored to serve as the District Director for Congressman Denny Heck (Pierce, Thurston and Mason counties). In these roles, LaTasha keeps **diversity and women's issues at the forefront**; arranging for meetings with diverse groups, especially with youth and people of color. LaTasha makes it a priority for Congressman Heck to visit and support organizations that serve diverse populations such as SafePlace, Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, Family Support Services, the Hands on Children Museum and YWCA Olympia.

Through her civic engagement and work for Members of Congress, LaTasha organized programs and forums to promote racial understanding and promote

support for women. She organized a civic engagement board to discuss race relations and included prominent African American women and men and she focused attention on veterans of color and women veterans. To promote understanding, she organized a panel discussion at Pierce College after the Trayvon Martin killing which included elected officials from the federal and state governments, law enforcement, academia, the faith community, and local community groups.

LaTasha has a passion for encouraging and helping youth of color go into the sciences and the political arena and for increasing the number of people of color and women in elected office. She has mentored many young women and is currently mentoring a student from Indonesia through her Rotary Club. LaTasha is sought out for political advice for those considering elected office. She helped women of color get elected to positions on the Tacoma City Council and on school boards.

LaTasha's dedication and passion for eliminating racism and empowering women is evident through her actions.