

2004 MLK Spirit Award Recipient

Billie Mayo

Recently retired, Billie Mayo served as the Assistant to the Deputy Superintendent of the St. Louis Public Schools. During her tenure with the district, she coordinated the magnet program, Law and Citizenship Education. She trained St. Louis Public Schools personnel in a number of topics including: learning styles, early childhood education, community education, conflict mediation, and stress management. Before moving into administration, she spent 23 years as a middle school teacher.



In addition to her duties in the St. Louis Public School system, Ms. Mayo has assisted a number of other community organizations in social justice work. She is active with the A World of Difference Institute, Phi Beta Kappa, National Education Association, Caring Communities Program, St. Louis Interfaith Partnership, and the Missouri Association of Black School Administrators.

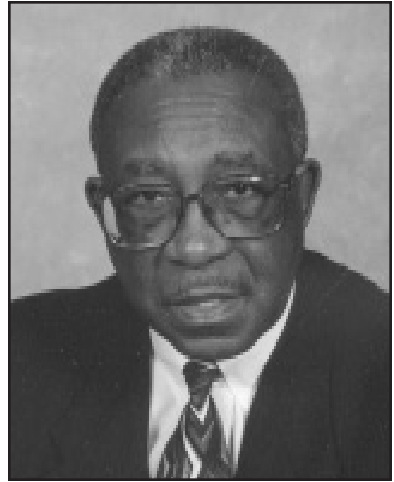
Ms. Mayo's achievements were recognized by the Ford Foundation "Heroes and Sheroes Award for Human Rights" in 1998 and the Sammy Davis, Jr., "Yes, I Can" award in 1996.

Now with more time available, Ms. Mayo pursues her passion of empowering existing leadership and encouraging the emergence of new leadership around the issues of healing from racism and the effects of internalized oppression through her own company, Self-evaluation Concepts, Inc.. She is currently a doctoral student in the St. Louis Educational Leadership Cohort program at St. Louis University.

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Jesse Swanigan

Jesse Swanigan has worked to improve the lives of both fellow African-Americans and the community as a whole by advocating mutual understanding, trust, and respect. In 1999, Mr. Swanigan became the co-facilitator of a newly formed group, the Cote Brilliant Presbyterian Church (CBPC)-Central Reform Congregation (CRC) Mixed Racial Dialogue Group, which is now a central component of the CBPC-CRC Joint Venture Program. Joint Venture was formed in 1991 to strengthen the relationship between these two active community organizations, bringing together people different in both race and religion and creating a group of friends. Mr. Swanigan's work with this program as a Co-Chair of its Board of Directors was instrumental in its receiving the "What's Right with the Region Award" from Focus St. Louis in the category of "Improving Racial Equality and Justice." Through Joint Venture, Mr. Swanigan initiated several projects aimed at helping the community as a whole, including a tutoring at Cote Brilliant Elementary School and work with Habitat for Humanity.



Mr. Swanigan has also worked tirelessly for a large variety of community organizations including: the African American-Jewish Dialogue Group, which works to bridge the growing gap between the Jewish and African American communities; the Annie Malone Children's Home; the United Negro College Fund; 100 Black Men of America, Inc.; the "Race and Diversity Committee" of the A.C.L.U. of Eastern Missouri; Carver House, a community youth center, and the Funeral Assistance Committee of the Metro St. Louis AIDS Interfaith Network

Additionally, Mr. Swanigan has been honored by the National Benevolent Association-Olive Branch, the American Business Women's Association, and Who's Who in Black America. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Leadership St. Louis Program, Sheldon Concert Hall and the Monsanto Branch YMCA.