

HONOREES

ROSCOE R. NIX DISTINGUISHED COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD



W. Gregory Wims

As a champion of community change and a long-time advocate for victims' rights, Greg Wims has dedicated his 50-year career to public service. Deeply rooted in District 39 as a sixth-generation resident, Greg grew up on the land his great-great-grandfather purchased after slavery was abolished. Driven by his humble beginnings, Greg has devoted his life to ensuring that anyone who requires assistance receives the support they deserve.

Greg's commitment to public service began early. After graduating from high school, he was elected to the Maryland Youth Commission, where he advocated for lowering the voting age in Maryland from 21 to 18. In the early 1970s, Montgomery County Executive James P. Gleason appointed Greg to the Montgomery County Maryland Human Rights Commission, making him the youngest member at the time. In 1974, he became the first male Head Start teacher in Montgomery County, demonstrating his commitment to education and early childhood development.

Greg's influence extended to the national stage when he joined the congressional campaign of U.S. Representative Newton Steers in 1976. He became Steers' chief legislative officer, marking him as the first African American from Montgomery County to work on Capitol Hill. He later served as a legislative assistant to U.S. Representative Melvin H. Evans. In the 1980s, Greg worked on Ronald Reagan's presidential campaign and served in the Reagan administration until 1989. He then founded his own government consulting firm, Hammer and Nails, Inc.

Greg has also made significant contributions through the non-profit sector. He has served on over 30 non-profit boards, including Holy Cross Hospital, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and Adventist Hospital. In 1996, he founded the Victims' Rights Foundation in the historic Stewart Town community after learning of the violent and tragic deaths of three women whose bodies were found aside a road in Greenbelt, Maryland. In 2002, he founded the Sniper Victims' Fund to support those affected by the sniper shootings in the Washington DC Metro Area. Together, the foundation and fund have raised over \$2,000,000 providing a voice and support to victims of violent crimes. In 2016, the Victims' Rights Foundation expanded its mission to include support for education. They partnered with Rotary International to promote girls' education and, in 2017, opened a preschool in Kogelo, Kenya.

In the 1990s, Greg served in several roles for the NAACP, the Montgomery County NAACP and the NAACP Maryland State Conference. Greg also liaised with Montgomery County's minority community for the Montgomery County Police Department. In 2000, he was named executive director of the Montgomery Business Alliance and membership director of the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce. In 2021, Greg was appointed by Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich as the UpCounty Regional Services director, where he served until January 2024 when he started in his elected role as the District 39 delegate at the Maryland General Assembly.

Greg continues his legacy of uplifting residents by tackling key issues in education, affordable housing, economic expansion and public safety. For completing 45,000 hours of community service, Greg received an Honorary Doctorate from the School of the Great Commission Theological Seminary. His lifelong dedication to public service and community advocacy inspires all who strive to make a difference.