



White-Williams Scholars

To inspire and support high achieving Philadelphia public high school students of limited financial means to fulfill their potential

White-Williams Scholars
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WHITE-WILLIAMS SCHOLARS' OLDEST LIVING ALUMNA CELEBRATES 103RD BIRTHDAY

Philadelphia, PA – Reverend Olivia Stuard Henry, the oldest living alumna of the White-Williams Scholars non-profit organization, turns 103 years young on August 26th, 2009. Throughout her rich lifetime, Reverend Henry has demonstrated a commitment to education, activism, leadership, and ministry.

Born in 1906 in Philadelphia, Reverend Henry graduated from Girls High in 1924. Though her childhood was rich and full of memories, it was also beset by poverty. Upon her graduation from 8th grade, Olivia was told by her family to obtain working papers for the neighboring tobacco factory. Though she desperately wanted to attend high school, lunch money and carfare almost prevented her from pursuing her academic dreams.

Reverend Henry asserts that had it not been for White-Williams Scholars and its stipend program, she would have spent her life stripping tobacco because she lacked the money necessary to attend high school.

“If I had gone to strip tobacco, I would have gotten lost in the shuffle,” she says.

Upon graduation, Reverend Henry taught in the Philadelphia School District for 24 years. A pioneer in the integration effort, she founded the Teachers Intercultural Group of Philadelphia to integrate the racially-segregated school district. For her efforts, she was appointed the first national chaplain of the National Council of Negro Women by lifelong activist and educator Mary McLeod Bethune.

Appointed the first female pastor of an AME Church in the Philadelphia Conference and its first female Elder in the 1950s, Reverend Henry has been an acclaimed minister and preacher for nearly 60 years.

Despite the demands of her professional pursuits, Reverend Henry always found time for education and academic enrichment. She continued her education at such renowned institutions as Temple University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Harvard University. She also holds an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Monrovia College in Liberia, West Africa. Well-traveled, her endeavors have taken her across Europe and on six pilgrimages to Israel.

White-Williams Scholars is blessed and honored to have such an influential, inspiring woman as an alumna. In her honor, White-Williams Scholars created the Reverend Olivia Stuard Henry Book Scholarship in 2008 for two deserving seniors of our graduating class who embody the life, spirit, and character of Reverend Henry. The students use the scholarship to defray the cost of their college textbooks.

In recognition of Reverend Henry's birthday, White-Williams Scholars alumni, board members, and staff commenced a card-writing campaign. They will mail personal notes to Reverend Henry at her retirement community, with the hope that the cards will brighten her special day and further strengthen her mind and spirit.

Reverend Olivia Stuard Henry has exemplified integrity, courage, perseverance, and a life-long commitment to education and service. She is truly a pioneer and source of inspiration for many. She attributes the turning point in her life to White-Williams Scholars. "It's not just me," she insists, "Think of all the other children that have been helped."

To view a video about Reverend Henry, please click [here](#).

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About White-Williams Scholars

The mission of White-Williams Scholars is to inspire and support high achieving Philadelphia public high school students of limited financial means to fulfill their potential. The organization serves more than 1,400 students each year in most public high schools in the city. It supplies monthly stipends of \$50 to \$75 in return for Scholars maintaining A's and B's in their classes. Scholars use their stipends to pay for meals, school supplies and activities, college test and application fees, and other needs.

White-Williams Scholars also provides academic support services to further prepare students for college and beyond including career, writing, interviewing and financial aid workshops. Our newest initiative, College Connection, is a four-year after school college preparatory program focused on enhanced academics, leadership development, individualized college and career guidance, and civic engagement opportunities.

To learn more about White-Williams Scholars, please visit our website at www.wwscholars.org