



The University of Oklahoma
Health Sciences Center
DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS
SECTION OF DEVELOPMENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL PEDIATRICS

27 March 2015

Re: Division 35 Strickland Daniel Mentoring Award

Dear Dr. Forrest:

It is with great honor and respect that I submit this letter in support of the nomination of Diane Willis, PhD, for the Division 35 Strickland Daniel Mentoring Award. She has dedicated her career and life to the promotion of diversity, social justice, and equality for people of color, specifically by addressing the disparity that exist with ethnic minority issues and the encouragement of students of color.

Diane Willis has been a mentor, teacher, advisor, counselor, advocate, guide, and colleague to me. In 1990, before there was a post-doctoral position at the OUHSC Child Study Center for psychology, she developed a post-doctoral fellowship for me that allowed me to gain a foundation in treatment of child maltreatment, policy development, community programming, evaluation, and service delivery with diverse communities. Dr. Willis has been providing direct clinical services to the Cheyenne-Arapaho tribal communities for over 35 years and in the post-doctoral position allowed me the opportunity to accompany her as she worked with the Cheyenne and Arapaho children and their families. She has always maintained a constant and deep level of concern for underserved American Indian children across the nation. Whether it is at a Head Start program on the Hopi Reservation, running for president of APA, facilitating a national meeting on child maltreatment, or gathering clothes for a family, Dr. Willis is always seeking to present the best and making certain that diversity and equality are the guiding principles. She single handedly has initiated major regional and national conferences on American Indian and Alaska Native children's mental health, persistently advocated for policy change to improve clinical services and better treatment interventions, and initiated several publications addressing the mental health and physical needs of American Indian and Alaska Native children. In all of those activities she has gently but unrelentingly included me as co-therapist, co-committee member, co-presenter, co-policy maker, or co-author. I am but one of the many ethnic minority students who has benefited from her mentoring. She is a scholar and researcher. She has mentored many students; in her role as mentor, she has shaped the professional development of all her students in a very positive manner while teaching and practicing tolerance and acceptance. Dr. Willis has used her professional influence to maintain attention on the need of all children, including children of color with a special emphasis on American Indian children.

She retired from her position of clinical director of psychological services at the Child Study Center but she has remained active and involved in many other arenas of cultural diversity. She has continued to mentor interns and post-doctoral students and they continue to be fascinated while maintaining clinical services at the Indian Health Service behavioral health clinic that serves the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. The building that houses the IHS Clinic was destroyed by an EF5 tornado that hit Oklahoma in May, 2013. Dr. Willis did not let that deter her clinical services. She resumed the behavior health clinic in a location that is 2 hour drive now. Given the nature of that disaster, she felt her services were needed even more.

Dr. Willis is motivated by a sense of who she is. She says with pride, "I am an enrolled member of the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma." As is expected by the traditional tribal practices of caring for one another, I can say that, "Dr. Willis is being a good relative." A high compliment within our traditional cultures of American Indian and Alaska Native teachings of how we are to be toward one another and what is expected of one nominated for this prestigious award.

Respectfully,



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