

PRESS RELEASE

October 10, 2013

ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS HONOR DR. LOVIE LILLY ON HER RETIREMENT AS PRINCIPAL OF COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL

(Newark, NJ) – The Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders honored Dr. Lovie Lilly on her recent retirement as Principal of Columbia High School during its Wednesday, October 9th, meeting held at Maplewood Town Hall, when Freeholders Carol Clark of East Orange and D. Bilal Beasley of Irvington presented her with the Board's Commendation.



Dr. Lovie Lilly (center) was presented with a Commendation by Freeholders D. Bilal Beasley (left) and Carol Y. Clark (right) to honor her on her recent retirement as Principal of Columbia High School. The presentation was made during the Board's Wednesday, October 9th, meeting held at Maplewood Town Hall. (Photo by Glen Frieson)

“As a former educator,” said Freeholder Carol Clark, “it is always a pleasure for me to recognize teachers and students, and that is certainly the case tonight, because we are honoring an outstanding woman and an outstanding educator for whom it has never been about herself, but rather always about the students and what’s best for them.” “Tonight”, continued Clark, “we are here to honor Dr. Lovie Lilly, who retired as Principal of Columbia High School on September 1st after 7 years of service, a total of 12 years of service to the District, and a 34-year career in education.”

Dr. Lilly earned her Bachelor’s degree in English from Rowan University, her Master’s degree in Reading from Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, and then, years later, her Ed.D. in Educational and Organizational Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania. She began her teaching career in 1980 as an English teacher in Los Angeles before returning to New Jersey where she continued to teach and chair the English Department at Williamstown (NJ) H. S., while also serving as an Adjunct Professor at Roman University. She then moved on to be the Vice Principal at Oakcrest H. S. in Mays Landing.

In 2001, Dr. Lilly joined the South Orange-Maplewood School District as Columbia’s Vice Principal, and served in that role until 2006, when she became Principal. She was responsible for countless innovations, studies and changes to the curriculum, always with the goal of helping teachers to advance their professional development, and helping students to learn and grow. She worked especially hard to increase minority populations in higher level

classes and to assist immigrant students or the children of immigrants, in particular those from Haiti, along their often difficult road to inclusion and advancement.

Dr. Lilly initiated a “Scholars’ Day Breakfast” for the highest-achieving students who earned National Merit and A.P. recognition. She also established a “Most Improved Students Day” for students who made dramatic academic progress, a day that included a celebratory breakfast as well as a field trip and tour of the University of Pennsylvania’s campus.

Dr. Lilly is a member of numerous professional organizations, including the Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, and the National Association for Multicultural Education, and is a much sought-after speaker at workshops, seminars and even cable TV talk shows. She has also published numerous studies and articles.

She has received numerous special honors and recognitions during her outstanding career, including: a NJ Governor’s “Teacher of the Year Recognition” way back in 1990, and more recently, she was named to the Williamstown H. S. Academic Hall of Fame and was the recipient of a Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation Grant for Educational Leadership.

“Dr. Lilly, you have truly been an inspiration to your staff and your students, as well as a beloved and treasured leader in the South Orange-Maplewood School District, and the community at-large”, said Freeholder Clark. “You will be sorely missed, and I’m just happy we were able to entice you back from your retirement long enough to present you with this Commendation from the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders for your invaluable service to the students and residents of Maplewood and South Orange.”

Lilly spoke about how happy she was to have had a chance to impact the lives of children and to work with teachers, especially at Columbia High School where, she said, “I’ve enjoyed working with the diverse student population and with a brilliant group of teachers... I’ve worked at five different high schools during my career, and those at Columbia were by far the best and the brightest.” She went on to say, “The work at Columbia was great, but the rewards were greater.”

The presentation was also attended by Dr. Lilly’s colleagues at Columbia High School: Kirk Smith, Acting Principal; Elizabeth Aaron, Assistant Principal; and Judy Mason, Dr. Lilly’s Administrative Assistant.

For Additional Information:
Gary Kroessig, Public Information
Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders
973-621-4452
gkroessig@freeholders.essexcountynj.org