



D. Etta Wilcoxon's Biography

On April 26, 1957, D. Etta Wilcoxon, was born in Brundidge, Alabama. On or about age six (6), D. Etta's father; the late Everett Wilcoxon, felt that his wife; Louise and his then four (4) children would be able to realize a better life in the north and he moved his young family to Detroit, Michigan. Learning that he was suffering with leukemia, Everett felt that Louise could better raise their children in the south, given the strong family network that they had left behind, he moved the family back to Alabama. Establishing a strong bond with the City of Detroit and reluctantly leaving Palmer Elementary School on Detroit's north east side, D. Etta vowed that when she became an adult, she would return to the City of Detroit and make it her home.

Again in Alabama, D. Etta's desire to be a part of the American political process was soon realized. The Wilcoxon family often discussed politics at the breakfast, lunch and dinner tables. While still in elementary school, D. Etta's class took a trip to the Governor's mansion to visit then Governor George C. Wallace; America's most effective segregationist. As her classmates filed around the oval shaped conference table to shake the Governor's hand, D. Etta opted not to shake the Governor's hand. Needless to say, this act was the talk of the town. When Everett and Louise were summoned to pick their young

daughter up and told of her refusal to shake the Governor's hand, they thanked the school administrators for their concern and walked their daughter to their car. On the way, Everett asked D. Etta why she had not shaken the Governor's hand to which she replied: "Daddy, George Wallace does not like black people and I am a black person". Although the subject never really came up again, it was clear that D. Etta held strong political views.

While the south desegregated their public schools as desegregation was intended, D. Etta took stances and became a voice for the underdog. This, today, is one of her strongest traits.

Hailing from a family that was extremely committed to higher learning, having grown up during the time of the desegregation of the south, D. Etta was no stranger to trials and tribulations. These facts are undoubtedly responsible for the fact that D. Etta was able to graduate from the then University of Detroit, with a Bachelors in Political Science and without temporal interruption, also receive a Masters in Public Administration from the University of Detroit as well, when the University admitted very few African Americans. While at the University of Detroit, Wilcoxon was the first person to be selected as a Woodrow Wilson Fellow from the school of political science. This task mastering ability was probably responsible for the fact that D. Etta received a law degree from Cumberland School of Law as its only African American graduate in her graduating class, as well.

D. Etta Wilcoxon has enjoyed stimulating career stops in the public and private arenas. Always bent on utilizing all of her skills, Wilcoxon was the first African American and the first female to serve in 3M's government and community affairs management. She went on to serve 3M as the Community Relations Director for the nation. Wilcoxon has served as the President and CEO of DEW's Consulting Agency and Wilcoxon Enterprises, Inc. She served the City of Birmingham, Alabama as a City Magistrate and one of her earliest professional jobs was an administrative aide to the City of Detroit's first African American President of City Council; Erma Henderson. Wilcoxon was also one of the last legal minds to work in Mayor Coleman A. Young's law department. D. Etta also assumed the helm of the Northend Community Development Corporation; a Michigan non-profit firm. Consistent with her spirit of giving, D. Etta has taught from pre-school to law school. Teaching assignments at the college level have included the University of Detroit Law School, Alabama State University and Wayne County Community College. Her teaching assignments from pre-school to 12th grade, were all in public schools. Her passion for educating manifested itself in her current undertaking as the founder, CEO, Publisher and Editor In Chief of the *Renaissance Observer, Inc.*

Ms. Wilcoxon is divorced.

Wilcoxon's memberships and affiliations have included being:

Board Member - American Society for Public Administration, Member - International Law Society, Member - Pi Sigma Alpha - The National Political Science Honor Society, Board President and CEO - Art Center Music School, Board Member- Erma L. Henderson Legacy Foundation, Member-Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), The Underground Railroad Families Historical Society – Canada, Distinguished Women In International Service – DWIS, 2nd Vice President of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), National Action Network (NAN), Keep The Vote No Take Over, Rainbow Push, Disabled Veterans-Commanders Club, St. Jude and the American Federation of Teachers; AFT.

Her honors have included: Municipal Government Book Award - Law, Proctor of Admiralty, Earl Warren Legal Scholar, Distinguished Service Award - United Negro College Fund, Woodrow Wilson Fellow, SEMCOG Scholar, Who's Who Among American High School Students, Disabled American Veterans-Commanders' Club -Bronze Leader, Pioneer Award - 3M National Advertising Company.

In the spirit of "giving back", D. Etta's Volunteer Undertakings have included: Rev. Dr. Oscar King Northwest Unity Missionary Baptist Church --- Lead person in development of Church Newspaper, Fought to Preserve the Right Of Detroiters To Vote being lead person in raising several thousand dollars through Keep The Vote No Take Over, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Erma Henderson Legacy Foundation, The Art Center Music School and The Northend Community.

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