



Sharon (far right), AME Church New Brunswick Director of Christian Education, with North Stelton Winners of the AME Church First Episcopal District Founder's Day Contest.

Sharon Carmichael Ward 3 Councilmember

Sharon Kay Carmichael hails from Dillon, a small town in South Carolina. It was the longtime home of the Carmichael family and Sharon's mother Wilma – whom was very smart, outgoing, and outspoken – excelled as an “A” student and drum major in her high school's band.

Wilma Carmichael understood the power of education and hard work, and as a young woman believed that better opportunities may be found “up north.” So, she traveled to New Jersey, found work and moved herself and her

two young daughters, Sharon and Antoinette, to their new home in Newark.



Sharon, PR Director (left) and another AME Church Lay Organization member make their voices heard at a “Call to Conscience” voting rally near the White House.

Sharon and her younger sister began their elementary education at Bergen Street School near their home in the Clinton Hill section of the city.



Wilma (Mother) & Sharon Carmichael

However, her mother, focused on her girls' education, was able to take advantage of a program for them to attend a different public school out of their district where she thought a better education would be available. So, Sharon and her sister would take the Number 14 bus across the city to Chancellor Avenue School in the Weequahic section. Wilma had one requirement for her daughters: bring back As and Bs.

Sharon learned much from her mother and would uphold the family tradition of excellence by becoming the valedictorian at Weequahic High School. With scholarships in hand, Sharon would come to New Brunswick to attend Douglass College where she earned her bachelor's degree in math and computer science.

She caught the attention of AT&T which selected her for its Long Lines program but Sharon would first have to pass an intensive, three-month computer coursework held in White Plains, NY to get the job. She succeeded, but rather than stay in Westchester County, she preferred moving to Central New Jersey to work at AT&T in Piscataway where there were opportunities for UNIX/C programmers. Sharon would be a programmer for many years then rise to become a technical team manager and later a Project Manager with a master's certificate from Stevens Institute of Technology.

While originally living in Somerville, she chose to move to Piscataway for more affordable homes and educational opportunities for her kids. For Sharon, living in a community means being involved in her community. Volunteering was a way to give to others and be engaged strongly in her children's lives. She was always an involved parent as her children Raqiyah, Marc and Jasmine



L-R Raqiyah, Sharon, Marc & Jasmine

enjoyed Girl and Boy Scouts, school extracurricular activities and other local programs such as soccer, track, cheerleading, T-Ball, Little League, basketball, Pop Warner and the Superchiefs Marching Band. Sharon also worked with the PTO in her children's schools acting for a time as secretary in the Randolphville PTO. She was often reliable help. It never felt like a lot to Sharon but that it was just what you were supposed to do.

All three of Sharon's children would become well educated and successful. Raqiyah would attend Penn State and Hampton University and become a popular DJ for New York radio station WBLS, author, activist for human rights and a writer for Showtime. Marc would attain his Ph.D. in biomedical engineering and pursue his M.D. at Stanford University. Jasmine would become an accomplished actress, even performing in London, and work as an Adjunct Professor



Sharon (right), AME Church New Brunswick District Director of Christian Education with Travis Smith (left), North Stelton winner of the AME Youth of the Year Contest, and former Pastor Rev. Dr. Kenneth L. Saunders, Sr. (middle). Sharon personally trained Travis in preparation for the contest and continues to train AME Church youth for the annual contest.



Sharon received the Superchiefs Marching Band Service Award

of Performance Ensemble at Rutgers. Sharon is also blessed to be the proud grandmother of five.



Sharon was awarded the AME New Jersey Conference Lay Organization award for service and leadership.

Remembering her church upbringing and wanting that same influence in her family life, Sharon joined North Stelton AME Church in Piscataway in 1991. She expressed a desire to be an active member and was mentored by Christian Education Directors Gwen and Reggie Dorsey to be the Secretary to the Board of Christian Education. Sharon's role would lead to becoming the Director of Christian Education followed by a Presiding Elder District level appointment to New Brunswick District Director of Christian Education. Sharon recalled that her mother too became intensely involved in spiritual affairs, serving as Sunday School Superintendent of all her church's diocese and becoming an ordained evangelist and elder.

Sharon never thought that she would be as involved but believes that God had other plans for her. She became very involved in all levels of the AME Church. She was the New Brunswick District Public Relations Director, creating its first

website, newsletter and monthly calendar for the district. She later was elected the First Episcopal District Director of Public Relations, a position in which she currently serves.

Sharon became a parent volunteer in the New Jersey Orators, a program that trains youth ages 7-17 in public speaking, after enrolling her daughter Jasmine who excelled in the program. In her work as a volunteer, Sharon learned the art of public speaking and decided to coach the 11- & 12-year-old group. Sharon's involvement would last 21 years, 17 as a coach and four as the Competition Chair.



Sharon (sixth from left), New Jersey Orators Competition Chair with the New Jersey Orators Board and Orators Competition participants.

Always a thinker and planner, Sharon realized the importance of financial planning for her retirement and her family's future. She researched options and became so interested in the

opportunities she found that she joined a wealth management group, studied insurance and finance, completed securities industry financial courses and passed the New Jersey State life and health insurance exams which resulted in her earning a license as an independent insurance producer.

When longtime Councilmember Steven D. Cahn decided to retire from the Township Council, Sharon was presented with another opportunity to be of service to the community. She would win election to the Ward 3 seat where she looks to continue as a servant leader and utilize her project management and public relations skills to increase resident awareness and involvement and broaden opportunities for everyone.



Sharon was a longtime volunteer coach with the New Jersey Orators program.

