



Reverend Elizabeth E. Yates was appointed to serve as the Presiding Elder of the Alachua-Central District of the East Conference in the 11th Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church on Saturday, November 21, 2009 in Freeport, Grand Bahamas by the Right Reverend McKinley Young, Presiding Bishop. She is the first female to serve in this post in the 135 year history of the East Conference.

From the Man's Money to the Master's Ministry; prior to acknowledging her call into Christian ministry Presiding Elder Yates was a successful banker with the largest bank in Florida. Among her many positions of leadership she held in the corporate world, she was the first black and female lending specialist in the Mortgage Lending Division in Jacksonville, FL. Her responsibilities included managing residential loans in 14 out of the 32 branches of Barnett Bank, now Bank of America, which included the main facility headquartered in Jacksonville. Her professional aim was to protect the bank from red-lining while staying in compliance with the Community Reinvestment Act; consequently, accomplishing the goal of compliance by training, supporting and intentionally assisting the low to moderate income borrowers. She was also the first black to work in the Human Resources Department as an Interviewer.

Presiding Elder Yates credits her success to the early Christian training she received at St. Paul AME Church, Valdosta, Georgia; where she was baptized by the Rev. W. Penn Carter. She was exposed to leadership early when allowed to serve as the Card Class Sunday School teacher at 9 years old. Early training also included serving as a youth delegate to Tri-State, and as a Church School delegate traveling throughout the South Georgia Conference representing her local

church. She believes those early biblical lessons learned, training received and the exposure given had a great deal of influence on her personal self-awareness of the power of the Almighty God in her life.

As an adult she continued to serve in the church. When officially acknowledging her call into ministry in 1993; she was serving on the Steward board, Stewardship and Finance Commission, Chair of the Finance Committee, local PME Director of the Maggie Pearl Tookes Women's Missionary Society, and singing in the Mass Choir at Greater Grant Memorial AME Church in Jacksonville, Florida. Upon preaching her trial sermon "*Under New Management— 1 Cor. 5: 17*" she was recommended with pride by the late Bro. Hamp Dawson Sr. Vice-Chair of the Steward Board to the quarterly conference for license to preach. The Reverend Thomas B. DeSue, Presiding Elder of the North Jacksonville District examined her and issued the license to preach sending her to the District Conference for further examination. She was examined and recommended to attend the Ministerial Institute chaired by the late Reverend Granville W. Reed, III. Upon her completion of the Class of Admissions was admitted to the East Florida Annual Conference. In 1996, she received her Deacon's ordination conferred by Bishop Frank Curtis Cummings—St. Paul AME Church, St. Augustine FL. In 1998, Bishop Cummings also ordained her as an Elder at New Mount Zion AMEC—Tallahassee, FL in the Florida Annual Conference.

Along with various corporate firsts Presiding Elder Yates has encountered many firsts since beginning her journey in ministry. She was the first female to acknowledge her calling in ministry at Greater Grant Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church. She served there as a staff minister until she was appointed by Bishop Frank C. Cummings to New Bethel AME Church, White Springs, Fla. as the first female pastor in their 103 year history. She served diligently for seven

years and broke many barriers. She was the inaugural Episcopal President of the 100 Distinguished Women for Edward Waters College, an organization established by former 11th Episcopal District Supervisor Martha C. Cummings. The organization was established in all of the Annual Conferences of the 11th District. It was designed to provide financial assistance and mentorship to the students of Edward Waters College. This organization included Christian women of various denominations with a zeal for fundraising and developing character within the student body.

Reverend Yates was later assigned by Bishop John Hurst Adams to Greater Tanner Chapel AME Church; Quincy, FL. She was the first female pastor to one of the leading churches within the Florida Annual Conference, serving the church and the Gadsden County community faithfully for five years. Upon Bishop McKinley Young's arrival and the ratification of the redistricting of the Conferences, he appointed her as the first female Co-Chair of the Board of Examiners in the Florida Conference, the arm of the church that leads the process of ministry training and guidance to those persons called into ministry. While she pastored Greater Tanner Chapel in Quincy she also served as the inaugural Director of Character Education for the Gadsden County Public School System under the direction of Dr. Beverly Nash and School Superintendent Mr. Reginald James.

Her last pastorate before her appointment as presiding elder was New Bethel AME Church-Tyler Street, a leading, prominent, and historical church in Jacksonville's Newtown community. She was the first female to be assigned to the 110 year historical church. She re-established a mentoring relationship with Edward Waters College students initiating the adoption of students while they matriculated at Edward Waters College; and establishing the first "Collegiate Choir."

Reverend Yates has a special loyalty to Edward Waters College, a Magna Cum Laude graduate receiving a baccalaureate degree in Organizational Management. She was also the first graduate of Edward Waters College to be admitted into the prestigious Candler School of Theology at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia where she was a 2003 graduate receiving a Master of Divinity degree. She is currently completing her dissertation to receive the Doctorate of Ministry in Black Church Studies at Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio.

Reverend Yates is a member of the NAACP; The Ecumenical Steering Committee for EWC Unity in the Community; Edward Waters College Board of Trustees; The AME Ministerial Alliance, Jacksonville Coalition of African American Pastors and Gamma Rho Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., She is the mother of two lovely daughters: LaTanya C. Combs, who serves as the District Consultant; and Kimberleigh M. Yates, a 2010 graduate of Florida A&M University; and the grandmother of Krystopher DeVaughn Jones, and Levi Jordan, III.

To God be the Glory for the Great Things that He has done!