



DISTRICT 7 PALM BEACH COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD VICE CHAIRWOMAN

DEBRA L. ROBINSON, M.D.



Debra L. Robinson was raised in Flint, Michigan, home of the community school concept. She graduated from Flint Central High School in 1974 and Michigan State University in 1977, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology with honors. Additionally, she is a proud graduate of Howard University College of Medicine, Class of 1981. Dr. Robinson is married to Tay Gaines, M.D. They are the proud parents of three sons and grandparents to 3.

Dr. Robinson completed her internship and residency training in Internal Medicine at Hurley Medical Center and McLaren General Hospital in Flint, Michigan. In return for her National Health Service Corps scholarship, she cared for the medically underserved in Chattanooga, TN and Pompano Beach, FL. Her medical practice has ranged from Emergency Medicine in Belle Glade and Okeechobee to HMO medicine to a private practice overlooking the intercoastal waterway. She recently retired from caring for our veteran population at the West Palm Beach Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Dr. Robinson has been an advocate for a high quality education for her sons for 3 decades. Her school centered advocacy has included service on various Parent-Teacher Associations and School Advisory Committees/Councils.

In 1991, Dr. Robinson formed the Progressive Association of Neighbors, Inc. - a neighborhood based organization founded to provide programs for neighborhood children. She successfully lobbied the City of West Palm Beach for a new North Shore campus summer camper. The summer camp provided activities for children ages 5 – 13. Later she worked with the City of West Palm Beach's Recreation Department and the city library to include reading activities in the summer camp. Additionally, she created and supervised an after school program, Academic Sports, at the North Shore campus. The program, which ran for 3 years, tied the desire to play basketball to the need to be academically successful.

She has served as the Chair of the Education Committee of the West Palm Beach branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) for 5 years and also was its past 1st Vice-President. She was a founding member of the Coalition for Black Student Achievement (CBSA) and served as the Chair from its inception in 1998 until her election to the School Board. Under her leadership, CBSA wrote a 57-step plan to close the academic achievement gap in Palm Beach County schools. The Palm Beach County School Board adopted this plan, "Achievement Matters for All," in February 1999.

Early in 2000, Palm Beach County residents formed "A Better County" Political Action Committee (PAC) to work for single member districts for election of School Board members. Dr. Robinson served as Vice-Treasurer of the organization. The voters of Palm Beach County, with a vote of 70%, enacted the new single member form of governance for the Palm Beach County School District. The constituents of District 1 who now had the opportunity for a voice, called for Dr. Robinson's candidacy for the District 1 seat. In September 2000, Dr. Robinson defeated the incumbent with over 70% of the district's vote. Since that time, the district lines have been redrawn and Dr. Robinson is now the School Board member for District 7. She was re-elected in 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2014 and continues to proudly serves the children of Palm Beach County.

As a school board member, Dr. Robinson leads the charge for a focus on addressing the socioemotional needs of students and staff, a single gender school at the historic Roosevelt High School, fairness in the application of disciplinary rules, and the use of disaggregated data to drive district movement to equity.

Additionally, Dr. Robinson is a past President of the Palm Beach County Caucus of Black Elected Officials and a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Dr. Robinson believes that respect for the community is necessary in order to assist the community. She continues to work for systemic change while focusing on the needs of the individual student.