



BLACK EDUCATORS' ALLIANCE OF MASSACHUSETTS, INC.

*P.O. BOX 191014
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A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE B. COX

June 4, 2020

On behalf of the Black Educators' Alliance of Massachusetts (BEAM), we extend our sincere heartfelt condolences to our beloved George Cox's family and loved ones.

We too share in your grief and deep sense of loss, because George was a member of the BEAM family for over forty-five years and he forged priceless friendships, relationships and mentorships with so many of us. BEAM is devastated, we are heartbroken and we are keenly aware that George's passing leaves a tremendous void in our organization as well as our hearts. We are grateful to all of you for sharing George with BEAM and affording us an opportunity to learn and benefit from his humility, brilliance, wisdom, expertise, witty sense of humor and love. We will treasure the indelibly wonderful memories of our work together with your dear brother and uncle, always.

George was a trusted colleague who believed in and advocated for educational justice relentlessly, for all students and all adults, especially African Americans and people of color. George worked tirelessly in many official, and yet unofficial capacities in our organization, simply because he loved the students and their families and he believed that all children, particularly African American students deserved a high quality education. And, a high quality education included students learning from teachers who looked like them. BEAM's mission and George's mission was one of the same. BEAM fostered a forum for George and many other Black educators to collectively advocate for themselves as well as our children and their families. George's unassuming and inclusive leadership skills promoted excellence, supportive guidance and inspiration to all who interacted with him. His work in the organization was truly a labor of love and no task, was ever too small for him to do or beneath him, because he just wanted to support the mission of the organization.

George served on the Executive Board of Directors representing the Educational Issues Committee as a co-chair for many years as well as the Membership Committee and Administrative Caucus. George used his brilliant intellect, excellent research and data skills, thorough and concise prolific writing skills coupled with his ability to touch all of his colleagues in a profound manner, to then lead them in an effective and purposeful manner that resulted in many accomplishments and successes.

For example, George and Barbara Fields co-chaired the Annual BEAM Conferences that attracted teams of educators from many schools in the Boston Public Schools, superintendents, higher education/state department colleagues, central office senior officers/administrators as

well as the greater Boston and suburban areas. The conferences focused on providing all participants with opportunities to learn about and apply culturally relevant professional development strategies into their pedagogy to better teach their students, but especially African American students.

The conferences attracted up to four hundred participants, were highly sought after and provided the missing elements for successfully teaching African American students. The Educational Issues Committee, chaired by George and Barbara, secured expert culturally competent presenters from all over the United States to provide a highly professional, motivational and meaningful conference for educators. Another example, of George's leadership abilities was to offer Educational and Community Forums, Panel Discussions and Symposiums.

George Cox's name preceded him, he was an icon in the Boston Public Schools way back in the mid to late 1970's when many of us met him. George would never allow us to acknowledge him in any way. Once, he left a Scholarship Awards Ceremony at the John D. O'Bryant Institute at Northeastern University, before he could be publicly acknowledged with an award of recognition.

We could all take a lesson from George on humility. He never promoted the fact that he had attended Howard, Boston or Harvard University and received degrees from all of these universities. Many of us only found out that he attended Tufts University when City Counselor Charles Yancey talked about their advocacy days together at Tufts University during their undergraduate studies at the BEAM "50th" Celebration.

It almost feels like a betrayal to George, revealing only a small portion of what he did to support the Mission of BEAM. I pray that he forgives us, because he never allowed us to pay homage to him when he was alive, so BEAM felt compelled to do so now. It is time to honor George's humble faith walk in service for his Lord and his people.

George freely and gladly gave of his entire GOD given gifts and talents to BEAM. His financial generosity was commendable, he never expected reimbursement for the supplies, materials/refreshments that he purchased. He supported new teachers in the district by purchasing tickets for them to attend our fundraisers.

We/everybody loved George from the day we met him, especially when he treated us with such love, respect and kindness. And we are grateful to George, for always making us feel better and encouraged in our work!

We are honored to announce that the BEAM Executive Board of Directors, unanimously voted to rename the Annual BEAM Scholarship awarded to deserving high school students, to the GEORGE B. COX BEAM Scholarship henceforth and for evermore!

These Bible verses epitomize George's life legacy!

“His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord”
(Matthew 25:21).

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing”

(2 Timothy 4:6-8).

Nora L. Toney
Past President of BEAM
1996 - 2013