



William Bernard Robertson

William B. Robertson has been a forerunner in many areas. He was the first African American to be nominated by a major political party in the City of Roanoke (Virginia), the first to serve on the administrative staff of a Virginia Governor, the first to be selected as the Virginia Jaycees Outstanding Young Man in Virginia, and one of the first two African Americans to graduate from Radford University where he earned his Master's degree.

He earned two undergraduate degrees at Bluefield State College and served as a teacher, principal and supervisor in the Roanoke City School System. In 1969, he was asked to run for the Virginia House of Delegates and lost by a narrow margin. However, the newly elected governor appointed Robertson as the first African American to serve on a Governor's Executive staff. He was able to make great in-roads in the employment of minorities in Virginia by virtue of this position. He is responsible for the hiring of the first Black State Troopers, the first ranking Black officials in the penal system, Black toll takers, Black ABC inspectors, and opened other State positions to people of color.

After his service in Richmond, Robertson was appointed to the President's Committee on, then called, Mental Retardation by President Nixon. He was also appointed Peace Corps Director in Kenya during the Ford administration, and served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs under President Reagan. Following his Federal service, Robertson worked as an international consultant, serving as liaison between leaders of foreign governments and U.S. government and business leaders. He retired from this career in 1995.

Robertson was instrumental in forming a Sister City relationship between Roanoke, Virginia and Kisumu, Kenya. He initiated the Sister City relationship between Portsmouth, Virginia and Eldoret, Kenya. He is also founder of the Sister City Program between Reston, Virginia and Nyeri, Kenya.

The single accomplishment of which he is most proud is Camp Virginia Jaycee – a 90-acre year round camp serving children and adults with special needs, located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. He founded this facility forty-five years ago. During this period, over 45,000 people have been served. Robertson came out of retirement to head a \$3 million capital campaign to ensure the perpetuity of Camp Virginia Jaycee. While in the area, Roanoke's Virginia Western Community College also secured the services of Robertson to develop programming in international relations.

Beginning in July 2008, Robertson has carried 38 of his students and 12 teachers from Sligh and Van Buren Middle Schools' Men of Vision Program and Girls Empowered by Mentoring Programs to Camp Virginia Jaycee. They spend a week there interacting with the campers, assisting the international counselors and enjoying the amenities of the camp. His plans are to make this an annual trip. Robertson retired in 2012 from Sligh Middle School, where he shared his varied experiences with his students for whom he had great passion and high expectations.

Bill currently lives in Tampa, Florida with his wife Ruth. He continues to stay involved with Camp Virginia Jaycee and the Men of Vision/Girls Empowered Programs.