

Judge Tanya Bransford: A Minnesota African She-ro

Written by Kyalah Allbritten, Ananda White and Abucar Mohamed
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Often times when African Americans teach their children about their incredible history and culture and the tremendous contribution that people of African descent have made to the United States and the world, they forget to teach their children about the giant heroes and she-roes that are right here in Minnesota.

For the last several years, WE WIN Institute, Inc has been teaching Black children, ages 5-18, about the enormous impact that African Americans in Minnesota have made. Living in a state that has a Black population of less than 5 percent, it is essential that African American children have a thorough understanding of the contributions of people who look like them.

Students in WE WIN's summer program studied the life of Judge Tanya Bransford. Reading materials about the judge were developed for the five-year-olds and the 15-year-olds. They discussed her life, answered questions and drew her pictures.

Coming to WE WIN in her work robe, with gavel in hand, Judge Bransford talked about her life and the law; she entertained questions from sixty children. Judge Bransford was impressed when an 8-year-old asked her the question: "Is it true that Governor Arne Carlson is the one who appointed you judge?" She affirmed his statement and praised WE WIN for preparing their students about her work before her visit.

Three students in WE WIN's summer program wrote about Judge Tanya Bransford:

Tanya M. Bransford has served in the Hennepin County District Court since 1999. Judge Bransford is a graduate of Hamline University School of Law and a cum laude graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College. Judge Bransford began her judicial career as a Worker's Compensation Judge in the office of Administrative hearings. Judge Bransford is the recipient of several honors and awards including the distinguished alumni award from North St. Paul High School. Judge Bransford currently presides over civil and criminal court as well as juvenile cases. From all her experience, it is clear that Judge Bransford is a great lawyer and judge.

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Hearing Judge Tanya Bransford speak was very good for me. She was a good speaker and is a great role model for me. She showed me that Black women can do anything. I can see myself being the first African American female president of the United States. **(Kyalah Allbritten-13-years-old)**

Judge Tanya Bransford is very smart. She received "A's" in all her classes. She is married and has a teenage son. From meeting Judge Tanya, she is a strong minded African woman. She has never had a nightmare about her decision to be a judge or any sentences that she gave to any of her defendants. She brought her gavel when she came to speak to students at WE WIN. She told us that she doesn't use it very much in court. We got to see her use it as she spoke to us. Her family gave her the gavel when she was sworn in as a judge. They had her name engraved on it.

Judge Tanya Bransford helps me see that I can be anything I want if I really give my best. WE WIN always talks about excellence; black excellence and educational excellence. After seeing Judge Tanya, she inspires me to always give my all to all that I do.
(Ananda White, 11-years-old)

Judge Tanya Bransford came to visit our summer program at WE WIN Institute. One thing that I noticed when Judge Tanya came is that she looked tired. I cannot believe that she wakes up early, early in the morning to go to work. I have to say this about Judge Tanya; she must be a hard worker because she has been a judge for 16 years!

Judge Tanya Bransford inspired me to become more than a judge and even more than a governor. She has inspired me to become the president of the United States. We appreciate her coming and spending time with us.
(Abucar Mohamed 11-years-old)