

Wanda J. Smith
Chief Executive Officer
HEAD START of Greater Dallas, Inc.

Wanda J. Smith is the chief executive officer of HEAD START of Greater Dallas, Inc. Employed with the agency for over 30 years, Smith rose to her current position in 1997. As chief executive officer, Smith is responsible for the administration of a \$33.4 million budget, which includes the supervision of 700+ employees and the operation of 38 full-day early childhood development centers in Dallas County with an enrollment capacity of 4,259 children. Under her leadership, HEAD START of Greater Dallas has come to be regarded as one of the premier Head Start programs in the country. In March 2005, Head Start of Greater Dallas was recognized as a Program of Excellence by the National Head Start Association.

Prior to becoming chief executive officer, Smith served as the executive director of HEAD START of Greater Dallas, Inc. from 1989 to 1996. During her tenure as executive director, Smith was responsible for supervising senior management and overseeing a budget that grew from \$5 million to \$17 million.

From 1975 to 1988, Smith served as the director of HEAD START of Greater Dallas, Inc. and its predecessor. In late August 1988, she founded Dallas County Family Services (now Head Start of Greater Dallas). As director, Smith was responsible for supervising management and administering a budget that grew from \$425,000 in 1975 to \$4 million in 1988.

Born and raised in Temple, Texas, Smith holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of North Texas, Denton, and has completed 36 graduate hours in early childhood education at Texas Woman's University, Denton. Smith is also a 1992 graduate of the Head Start Johnson & Johnson Management Fellows program at the University of California, Los Angeles, where she was named the Johnson & Johnson Outstanding Fellow.

Active in civic and social circles in the Dallas area, Smith is a member of the National Head Start Association, the Texas Head Start Association, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the Dallas Association for the Education of Young Children, and is an active member of Concord Missionary Baptist Church. Smith serves on the boards of directors of the Texas Head Start Association and the Holmes Street Foundation. She also serves on the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Child-Care Licensing, Committee on Foster Placement for Children of Color, and the Foundation for Community Empowerment Dallas Kids Executive Committee. Smith previously served on The Science Place board of directors (2000 to 2002). She was also appointed by Councilwoman Dr. Maxine Thornton-Reese as commissioner of the Dallas Planning and Zoning Commission (2002/2003).

For her extensive work in early childhood education, Smith has received numerous awards, most recently being named to the Head Start Hall of Fame, an honor bestowed on only 30 individuals throughout the United States. Her photo is on permanent display in the National Head Start Association headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. Other awards include the AMERIGROUP Foundation 2002 Healthy Hero Award and the 2001 Trailblazer Award from the South Dallas Club of The National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs. In 1980, Smith received the Margaret H. Cone Award from the Dallas Association for the Education of Young Children, and was awarded the South Dallas Professional Women's Club Award in 1972.

Smith resides in Dallas, Texas, with her husband, Elbert, and is the mother of two adult sons and a stepdaughter. Smith is also the doting grandmother of seven grandchildren.

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