

Dr. La Vonne I. Neal



La Vonne Neal is Dean of the College of Education at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. She describes herself as a person who enjoys challenges that require her to move quickly and traverse difficult obstacles. Indeed, her record of accomplishments as an athlete, businesswoman, educator and leader proves her to be a woman of her word.

Neal is a teacher-educator whose work in the design and implementation of culturally responsive teaching methods has earned wide recognition both among educators and in the popular press. For example, her research on the correlation between African American male students' walking styles and their placement in special education courses has been featured in USA Today, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, DiversityInc.Com, and radio and television stations across the country.

A native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Neal was 16 years old when she set an American record for the 80-meter hurdles. This accomplishment, along with many others, would lead to her induction into the Pennsylvania High School Track and Field Hall of Fame. Track and field afforded her the opportunity to travel extensively throughout the United States, Europe and the former Soviet Union, igniting her intellectual curiosity and giving her visceral appreciation for the beauty and diversity of the world and its people. That curiosity, coupled with success in both the academic and athletic arenas reinforced her understanding of the value of multiple intelligences.

After earning a Bachelor of Arts degree from LaSalle University in Political Science, Neal entered the United States Army as a 2nd lieutenant and later earned the rank of captain, specializing in military intelligence. There she gained experience in leadership and strategic planning and that she successfully applied as a manager for such leading corporations as Johnson and Johnson Inc., Kraft Foods Inc., and Miller Brewing Company Inc. Neal's professional experiences and personal commitment to the development of human potential converged when she decided to become an educator. She enrolled at The University of Texas at Austin and received a Master of Education degree, followed by a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Special Education with an emphasis in multicultural education.

Neal served five years as a secondary level public school social studies teacher for Round Rock Independent School District in Texas and was grade-level academic team leader for four years.

Neal became a teacher-educator when she joined the faculty at Southwestern University in Georgetown, TX and was the director of the university's secondary education teacher certification program. She has also served as a consultant to several schools and school districts in Texas and around the country seeking to institute culturally responsive curricula and teaching methods.



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