

Dr. Natasha James-Waldon Class of 1994

The late author and columnist Erma Bombeck once wrote, “When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would have not a single bit of talent left, and could say, ‘I used everything you gave me.’” This is Dr. Natasha James-Waldon’s favorite quotation, and an aspiration she surely meets.

For more than two decades, Dr. James-Waldon has led a fight against poverty. After receiving her Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism from Temple University, she came to Syracuse, earning both her law degree from our College of Law and a master’s degree in Media Administration from the Newhouse School. While a law student, she chaired the College of Law’s Black Law Student Association, serving as its Regional Representative and then was elected as National Chairperson for the National Black Law Student Association. From Syracuse, she went to Washington, DC, as a fellow of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, where she worked in the office of longtime District of Columbia Congressional Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton.

Following her work in Washington, Dr. James-Waldon settled into her lifetime commitment to provide legal services and representation to those less fortunate, working first at the Legal Aid Society in New York, and then at the Central Jersey Legal Services in Perth Amboy and New Brunswick, New Jersey, where she represented persons of limited means in matters across the legal spectrum, including criminal, family, mental health, consumer, and housing law.

For the last eight years, Dr. James-Waldon has worked with the Jewish Renaissance Foundation, a community action agency in Middlesex County, New Jersey, dedicated to helping low-income households attain economic self-sufficiency. Her impact was immediate: after joining the JRF staff in 2010, Dr. James-Waldon developed a Family Assistance Center and a Community Education Program, providing financial assistance to those in need and educating individuals about opportunities to assist them in moving beyond poverty. In 2015, Dr. James-Waldon helped JRF establish the Anti-Poverty Youth Summit, aimed at educating high school youth about the issues of poverty and developing tomorrow’s the social justice leaders. After serving as JRF’s Director of Compliance and Community Engagement and representing JRF on various boards and committees, she is now the Foundation’s Director of Educational Services.

Dr. James-Waldon was also a charter member of the Anti-Poverty Network of New Jersey, whose mission is to fight poverty across the state through empowerment, education, and advocacy. She has served as a commissioner on the Perth Amboy Redevelopment Agency, chairperson of the Middlesex County East Health and Human Services Consortium, member of the Middlesex County Human Service Advisory Council, and member of the Raritan Bay Medical Center Community Benefit Task Force.

As if those activities did not keep her busy enough, Dr. James-Waldon recently earned her Doctorate in Education at Wilmington University, specializing in organizational leadership and innovation. She holds certificates in Nonprofit Management and Public Governance from Rutgers University and in Fundraising Management from Indiana University. Dr. James-Waldon was also a fellow in the National Public Interest Equal Justice Fellowship Program and the Prudential Foundation Nonprofit Executive Leaders Fellowship Program.

In recognition of her faithful service in public interest law and dedication to fighting poverty,
Syracuse University College of Law is proud to honor

Dr. Natasha James-Waldon
with the Syracuse Law Honors Medal.