



Valerie Njie

Executive Director/Senior Vice-President, Bidwell Training Center, Inc.

Vice President Pitt Alumni Association Board of Directors 2016-2018

Valerie Njie is committed to making a difference in the lives of those less fortunate. Her professional career started as an elementary education teacher in East Chicago Heights, Illinois. But she quickly realized that most of the children's problems stemmed from societal ills that plagued their parents and the impoverished communities that imprisoned them. Since obtaining a Master's Degree in Management in 1973, Valerie has worked tirelessly to enhance the quality of people's lives throughout the United States and The Gambia, West Africa, by eliminating road blocks to success via quality educational opportunities.

At Bidwell Training Center, Inc. where Valerie recently celebrated 33 years of service, the mission is **WE CHANGE LIVES**. Valerie oversees the operation of a state licensed, accredited career training institution that has trained and placed thousands of graduates in meaningful jobs throughout the region since 1968. She is responsible for ensuring that the highest educational standards and services are afforded to everyone and that her adult students are treated with dignity and respect. She feels blessed to be a change agent and strives to empower students with life-long skills that can free them from a revolving door of dependency and hopelessness. Under Valerie's leadership, Bidwell was named a 2012 School of Excellence by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC).

Valerie was influenced by her mother, grandmother and other African-American women in Homestead who taught her the importance of a higher sense of calling, spirituality, education and service to others. Those early lessons explain why she strives for excellence in everything she does and encourages others to be purposeful about improving their lives and surroundings.

Valerie's husband Saihou, an accomplished artist, has been a source of encouragement and has influenced her creativity and expertise in photography. She is the proud mother of two extremely talented daughters, Lingaire and Njaimeh; both graduates of Washington University in St. Louis and the grandmother of Jibril, age 3. She feels the decades of organizing events with them have stretched her abilities to enormous heights.

Valerie has spent considerable time as a team leader conducting 70 accreditation visits to ACCSC schools throughout the US and Puerto Rico since 2002. In 2007, she became a member of the commission's Standing Appeals Panel and in 2013 was elected to a four year term as an ACCSC School Commissioner.

Other professional and community activities include: University of Pittsburgh African American Alumni Council (Pittsburgh Affiliate President), University of Pittsburgh Alumni Association Board, City Charter High School (Founding Board Member), Health Careers Futures Board, Duquesne University Spiritan Division Advisory Board, Veterans Leadership Program Advisory Board, Pennsylvania Association for Adult and Continuing Education (PAACE), Pennsylvania Association of Private School Administrators (PAPSA), Leadership Pittsburgh XIV, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. (Keeper of Properties and Photographer), Harmony Club of Homestead, National Council of Negro Women, NAACP, and the Urban League of Pittsburgh.

Awards & Distinctions

2003 & 2006 New Pittsburgh Courier Fifty Women of Distinction Award; 2009 WQED TV/Duquesne Light African American Leadership Award for Education; Pitt African American Alumni Association Blue Gold & Black: Colors of Celebration Leadership Award; 2009 Accrediting Commission of Career Schools & Colleges Team Leader of the Year Award; Park Place Church Community Service Award; Steel Valley NAACP Achievement Thru Excellence Award; Alpha Kappa Alpha Mothers of Distinction Award; 2012 ACCSC School of Excellence Award.