

## TESTIMONY FOR OREGON LEGISLATURE

Introduce self: Doris McEwen, currently CEO of M.E.C.C.A., formerly worked in the state of Oregon, was superintendent in Washington State; and principal, corporate VP, and university professor.

I am honored to present testimony for the concept bill 204 – a Bill requesting legislative action to increase the effectiveness of teachers and administrators in the Oregon state schools by establishing programs that certify schools, districts, and educators in culturally responsive practices and competencies, require certification in culturally responsive practices, collaborate with TWP on reviewing policies and practices, and declare immediacy of the Bill.

Cultural Will has been my life's work. It started when I was a young girl raised in a family whose central purpose was "to help somebody as I passed along." My dad was an early Civil Rights leader in Mississippi. He wanted to attend college but did not have the means to do so. One of the deans at the University of Mississippi (affectionately known as Ole Miss) told him to go see William Faulkner – the noted author. This was a courageous act for a black man in the south but he went to Faulkner's home and asked. Faulkner paid his tuition and room and board to attend Alcorn University. My father said to Faulkner, "I don't know how I will ever pay you back." Mr. Faulkner said to him, "You don't have to pay me back, just help somebody as you pass along." This enormous commitment of William Faulkner to human conditions with a humane response shapes what we do for others.

During my 46 years as an educator, I have come to know education as the principles of wills: social will, cultural will, organizational will, and political will. Social will is the belief that every child can and will be successful; cultural will is understanding the population of students we are serving, organization will is attention to the organizational structures that impact learning, and political will is the courageous to do what is necessary and what is right so every child can excel. It is this framework that I used as superintendent of schools to change the trajectory of student achievement. I call it collective will power. It is the interface of these four wills that compels us to design schools and school districts that are responsive to the needs of students and staff. Today, I would like to focus on cultural will, interfaced with political will.

Cultural will is intentional and it is done with intent. Given that public schools, by their very nature, were designed to ameliorate inequities and injustices in our