



MichiganWomenForward



Cathy McClelland

(1954 -)

Inducted: **2004**

Era: **Contemporary**

Locale: **Detroit**

Group: **African American**

Area(s) of Achievement: **Business**

As the Founder, President, and CEO of the Detroit Entrepreneurship Institute (DEI), Cathy McClelland of Detroit has helped hundreds of people start their own businesses and achieve financial security. DEI is a private non-profit 501(c)3 corporation that provides entrepreneurial training, technical assistance, economic literacy training, and startup capital to individuals with limited access and financial resources. McClelland described her corporation as "a business and economic development organization with a social mission." That social mission is about helping people with a business dream, some of whom were on welfare, achieve entrepreneurial success. One former DEI client who now owns a successful hair salon said of Cathy McClelland, "I love Cathy. She's not in this for the money. She's got another kind of mission." As of December 2003, McClelland and DEI have served over 6,000 clients, almost 4,000 of whom were enrolled in DEI's entrepreneurial training classes. Sixty percent of DEI's clients are women, and the institute served as an US Small Business Administration "Women's Business Center" for five years.

Not only does DEI instruct low income clients with no business background, but also its programs are so well respected that clients with MBAs and past business experience enroll to learn how to create a successful business from the ground up. Each client leaves the program with a full business plan.

McClelland conceived the idea of her own entrepreneurial training program when she was working with Wayne State University to help people launch their own small businesses. In this role, Cathy's clients were often welfare recipients, something that wasn't always well looked upon by her Wayne State colleagues. After several years of working with Wayne State, McClelland decided to venture out on her own and started DEI.

McClelland is active in her community. She has served on several boards including the Greater Detroit One to One Youth Career Mentoring Program, Metropolitan Detroit YWCA, National Association of Women Business Owners, NAWBO/Excel, and the Association for Enterprise Opportunity. She has received many accolades for her work, including an opportunity to meet President Bill Clinton at the White House in 1999. Her greatest reward, however, is the pride she can take in helping thousands of people improve their lives by achieving economic independence.