

Professor of Social Work Dr. Alice Kay Locklear to be Featured on Close Up Radio

RED SPRINGS, NC, UNITED STATES, September 6, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- John F. Kennedy famously said, "I'm concerned about the recklessness of public policy that endangers people's lives, especially in minority communities, where crime often is such a scourge." Professor of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Dr. Alice Kay Locklear, cannot agree more.

Working through all levels of social work for over 20 years, Professor Locklear was challenged by individuals who did not really understand social work and the importance of ethics. "For example, when services were provided to clients with a dual diagnosis, let's say substance use and a

mental health diagnosis, that client could be assigned to two different professionals—one for substance use and another for mental health. This policy not only depletes resources, but it can also be confusing to clients," explains Dr. Locklear. "The reason overlapping services and waste exists is because policy makers may not have a solid understanding of social work or ethical social work practices. Policy makers may tend to pay attention to financial considerations as they are mostly individuals with business focused degrees."

Professor Locklear continues, "At first, I tried working with decision makers inside these organizations, working alone, I was limited but continued pressing forward to make the difference. When I was offered a faculty position at The University of North Carolina at Pembroke to teach social work courses encompassing ethical practices, I couldn't say no," explains Dr. Locklear. "The best way to make a difference, to have an impact, is to begin with students who are working toward their social work degree."



Successful policy is made by a team of diverse professionals. “But again, with so few social workers holding policy-making roles, diverse teams are difficult to put together. And then, through the social work perspective, we need to include the individuals who we’re serving, to include them in decisions that affect them, that affect their lives. Too often, they are left out,” laments Dr. Locklear.

With a Ph.D. in Public Service Leadership, specializing in Social and Community Services, “Dr. Kay” has been teaching social work for over 16 years. “Our students are accepting positions in agencies and organizations as leaders, as program directors, as supervisors... positions that are



responsible for creating policy. And they are carrying out procedures through the ethical lens of social work that engages everyone, not a select few,” explains Dr. Locklear. “When I was in my undergraduate program , I had an instructor who told me, ‘You don’t choose to be a social worker, rather social work chooses you,’ and it is true. I’m sharing that with my students.”

As a member of the Lumbee tribe, Dr. Locklear is the first and only female Native American who holds a Ph.D. in her social work department. “And that goes along with my life goal—to leave an inspirational mark on this world, not because I want everyone to know me, but rather to know that hard work and perseverance, despite the challenges, oppressions, discrimination does pay off. I’m a Native American female, one of ten children growing up on a family farm, who is now a university professor.”

Although the Lumbee People are the largest tribe in North Carolina, the Native Americans/American Indians are still a small populace. “I didn’t know I wanted to be a social worker or professor when I was a child, but I was immersed in Native American and Lumbee traditions, which includes the medicine wheel,” explains Dr. Locklear. “In use for well over 10,000 years, the medicine wheel teaches the value and importance of living a life of balance. In social work, we teach the Ecological Systems Theory, which also emphasizes the importance of balance. As social workers, we are helping our clients, families, and communities to find their balance by providing needed resources to help empower them.”

Dr. Locklear’s ethical foundation is rooted in her childhood. “Our family grew tobacco, soybeans, corn and other crops. When we were working in the field, each of us would be lined up across

the field from the beginning of the row. When one was able to finish their task on a row before the others, we were taught to help the others until everyone was done. Then, as a team, we'd finish the job together, we never left anyone behind," shares Dr. Locklear. "Today, that family tradition continues to be my motto: never leave anyone behind."

Dr. Locklear serves as the NASW-NC Chair for Pembroke-Lumberton Local Program Unit and is a member of the National Association of Social Workers and serves on the NASW Board of Directors, Executive Board, and further serves on the National Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity.

Close Up Radio will feature Dr. Alice Kay Locklear in an interview with Jim Masters on Tuesday, September 10th at 11 am EST

Listen to the show on [BlogTalkRadio](#)

If you have any questions for our guest, please call (347) 996-3389

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