

Cheryl D. Watkins, PhD

Bio



Dr. Cheryl D. Watkins is an educator by profession and fell in love with teaching as a child. On rainy days, you could find her playing school on the back porch of her apartment building with her sisters and neighborhood friends.

Starting her career as a special education teacher with the Chicago Public Schools, she rose through the ranks. She served in many roles during her 33 year tenure including professional development leader, assistant principal, principal, instructional support leader, deputy chief of schools before, and finally, prior to retiring, chief of schools. She has provided educational leadership and instructional support to more than 70 school principals and their assistant principals on the south, far south and southeast sides of the city.

Dr. Watkins received numerous awards and recognitions throughout her career at the local, regional and national levels. She received the Golden Apple Award (for excellence in teaching), the Kizzy Award, the Kathy Osterman Award for Superior Public Service, the Michael Jordan Education Club Teacher Achiever Award and the Dare to Be Great Award from the Illinois Women in Educational Leadership group. And, as a principal, she was one of two recipients in the state of Illinois to receive national recognition as a winner of the prestigious Milken Award for excellence in education. Further, Cheryl was a recipient of the Margaret T. Burroughs Legacy Award from the DuSable Museum of African History.

In the field of education she is known as a servant leader and believes that it is better to give than to receive. She makes it a practice to embody that motto on a daily basis, serving in her church and within Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Dr. Watkins founded Monarch Education Consultants, LLC to provide supports to districts, schools and school leaders around three specific buckets of work to increase academic achievement for students and to support the instructional capacity of teachers, Race and Equity, Emotional Intelligence and Leadership.

Dr. Watkins has two earned advance degrees from the University of Illinois at Chicago, including a Masters degree and a Ph.D. in special education. And, recently, she became a best-selling author when her book *Releasing Her: Wrestling Peace from the Jaws of Alzheimer's*, was released. Currently, she is studying to become a chaplain at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.