

Chair - Eddie Raynord Hadden

It is important to me that I utilize my time in ways and endeavors that are as meaningful as possible. It has been my practice to “happen to life rather than just let life happen to me.” I have headed my own law practice since 1980. I am a member of the Board of Trustees of Englewood Hospital and Medical Center,. I chair the Board Committee for Human Resources and I serve on the Board Committees for Finance as well as the Board Committee for Government Affairs that oversees lobbying activities. I serve as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Community Resource Council, a clearing-house for social services in Bergen County, NJ. I am blessed to have had three primary careers that ran more or less concurrently. Neither of the careers was a job. Rather, each was a “calling.” I define a “calling” as an endeavor that you would undertake whether or not you were being paid to do so. The common theme throughout my professional life has been an unstinting advocacy on behalf of those seeking justice.

- I was among the first African Americans to serve as a Naval Aviator. I rejected a commission in the U.S. Air Force in favor of a commission in the U.S. Navy because the Navy, with its reputation as the most racially segregated of the armed services, was in greater need of input by African American leadership. I helped to create the first U.S. Navy advertising campaign designed to attract African American aviation officer candidates.
- As Executive Officer of the Washington DC Naval Recruiting District, I served as the poster model for that advertising campaign. I served, along with a handful of others, as a race relations advisor to the Chief of Naval Operations. From that vantage point, our small group undertook to revamp long standing Navy policies and practices with regard to people of color. Some of our accomplishments are stated below.
 - We opened the Naval Steward Corps to members of ethnic groups other than African American and Filipino.
 - We developed the first Naval ROTC Units on historically Black campuses.
 - We achieved the selection of the first African American to the rank of Admiral.
 - We arranged for the deposit of Navy payroll funds in African American Banks.
 - The Navy/Marine Crop Base Exchange System, then the largest retail operation in the world, was directed to purchase a percentage of its inventory from minority and women owned enterprises.

In conjunction with Harvard University, we developed the Defense Race Relations Institute in Sanford, Florida. All Navy Commanding Officers were thereafter required to pass its curriculum. The program was later extended to all U. S. Navy personnel.
 - Most significantly, we incorporated an evaluation for effectiveness in managing race relations into the periodic evaluation reports of all Navy officers. This evaluation criterion put the ability to manage race relations on a par with the ability to command ships at sea and significantly impacted each officer’s potential for promotion and a successful naval career. I retired from the Naval Reserve with the rank of Commander.
- I was among the first African Americans to be employed as a pilot for a major airline.
- I was one of the founders of the Organization of Black Airline Pilots, Inc. (OBAP).
- As general counsel to that organization and the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.,
 - I successfully lobbied the U.S. Congress on matters of hiring discrimination in the airline industry.

- I researched and provided statistical data and other evidentiary materials in support of the congressional investigation conducted by Congressional Committees headed by Congresswoman Cardis Collins of Illinois and Congressman Barney Frank of Massachusetts.
- I testified before hearings conducted by the joint committees. The Congressional investigation resulted in a three-fold increase in the number of African Americans being hired as pilots by the major air carriers and resulted in the hiring of the first African American female pilots by the major airlines.
- I was elected Councilman-at-Large for my adopted hometown of Englewood, New Jersey. Never one to be a career politician, I served with two primary objectives in mind, to reduce taxes and racial tension. Englewood was notable for having the highest tax rate in the state of New Jersey. I spearheaded the development of the Cross Creek Pointe residential development that increased the city's ratable base to the point that Englewood was no longer in the top 10% of municipalities with regard to property taxes. There was underlying racial tension in Englewood that flared into openness over an initiative to privatize the Dept. of Public Works. The work force at DPW was largely African American. The issue of privatization was resolved but the underlying tensions required a broader remedy. I led the political effort to hire the first African American City Manager in the history of Englewood. The city thrived and racial tensions disappeared under the leadership of City Manager, Jack Drakeford.
- Independent candidate for the New Jersey State Assembly. I was the standard-bearer for a coalition of organizations concerned that neither major political party would nominate an African American from the 37th Legislative District and that District boundaries limited opportunity for the election of a person of color. This coalition asked me to mount an independent campaign for the State Assembly. It is gratifying to note that many in political leadership give credit to our campaign for paving the way for the nomination and election of our current assembly representative, Gordon Johnson.
- Chair of the Community Reinvestment Act Committee of PNC Bank.
- President & CEO and Trustee of the Urban League for Bergen County
- President of the Englewood Rotary Club.
- Served on State Judiciary Committee on Attorney Ethics.
- Past Chair of the Bergen County Bar Association Committee on Civil Rights & Minorities in the profession.
- Served on the Boards of Trustees of the Northern New Jersey Council, Boy Scouts of America
- Served on Englewood Chamber of Commerce.
- Served on Englewood Community Chest.
- Served on the Bergen County NAACP.
- Six years as a member of the Unitarian Universalist (UU) Funding Program for Social Justice where I participated in evaluating hundreds of domestic and international projects for funding.
- Six years as a trustee of the Board of the Unitarian Universalist District of Metropolitan New York.

I continue to seek opportunities to advocate for justice and equality.