

Celebrating the Contributions of Edmund W. Gordon

Words of Gratitude and Recognition on the his 100th Birthday

We could fill a book with all of the wonderful work Professor Gordon has done, and another with all of the words of praise from those whose lives he has touched. Today we take a moment to pause, recognize the magnitude of Dr. Gordon's work, and wish him a very happy 100th birthday.

Donna Dinkins Hoggard, LCSW, Community Health Center, Inc. Casimir Pulaski Elementary School Based Health Center

"Dr. Edmund W. Gordon was a significant influence for both me, and my late father, David N Dinkins. My father passed peacefully from this earth last year, and regrettably cannot share his own words, thoughts, and perspective on Dr. Gordon. However, I know that he would express that Dr. Gordon was his mentor, friend, and an innovative educator, intellect, and human being. The familial connection to Dr. Gordon continued decades later when he became my college professor. The experience of having a compassionate, brilliant, dedicated and committed professor in the psychology department was instrumental to my academic and personal development. Dr. Gordon was, and continues to be, a remarkable and innovative educator with commitment to racial, social and educational equity and justice. He appreciated students' academic, in classroom, performance, as well as their dedication to cultural and social causes critical to one's political and educational development. Dr. Gordon is a role model and an exemplary human being. In addition to being my teacher, his daughter, Jessica, is my close friend and I have been blessed with knowing the Gordon family and their excellence in all their endeavors. Happy 100th Birthday Dr. Gordon! With love and blessings on your special day."

Ezekiel Dixon-Román, PhD Associate Professor Director, MS in Social Policy Program Chair, Data Analytics for Social Policy Certificate Program at UPenn

"I believe he's gifted so many of us with two absolutely rich and important qualities of practice. First, for me, I've learned from him that to be a scholar and intellectual one has to be humble and open to new ideas and perspectives, have a voracious hunger and desire to know and understand the world around you, and to have no limits in that pursuit, even if it is cutting normative scholarly or disciplinary boundaries. Second, his legacy of mentoring so many and in so many different ways toward intellectual competence has been so rich and so impactful that I believe the seeds of knowledge that he has imparted will be growing for generations to come. And, finally, one that cuts through both of these is to have an ethics of radical love for Black folk, in particular, and humanity, more broadly."

Pedro A. Noguera, Emery Stoops and Joyce King Stoops Dean, Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California

"Dr. Edmund W. Gordon has been one of the leading intellectuals in the field of education for longer than I have been alive. I have the privilege of counting him as one of my mentors and guides for over 30 years. From the first time I met him at Yale University, I was impressed not only by his towering intellect but his warmth, compassion, and humanity. As a young scholar just beginning my career in academia, I learned through his example that intellectual greatness does not have to be accompanied by arrogance and self-centeredness. Throughout his long distinguished career, Dr. Gordon has demonstrated a deep commitment to using his scholarship

in service of justice and the betterment of society. For this reason, the 100th anniversary of his birth is a moment when I and countless others must give thanks for all that Edmund W. Gordon has done, personally and professionally, to advance education and justice.”

Hugh Bernard Price, Past President, National Urban League

“Ed Gordon is an intellectual, spiritual and physical force of nature. What's most dazzling to me is that even as he enters his second century on this earth, Ed continues to reflect and write, provoke and inspire, and thus shape the fundamental debates about equity and opportunity, education and development, and, above all, social justice in our society. Ed has spawned a cadre of devoted proteges, fans and followers who will carry his work forward for generations to come.”

Claude M. Steele, Professor, Psychology at Stanford University

“Ed Gordon has been, and continues to be a beacon for me throughout all the stages of my career. Early on he was an “existence proof” role model who I revered. He, along with Kenneth Clark, showed that it was possible for an African American to become a top-flight psychologist in this society. But at every subsequent stage of my now quite long career, I have looked to him for insight, wisdom and guidance. I have never been disappointed. My career would not be the same without him leading the way--often at a distance, but nonetheless, leading the way in ways that he was probably barely aware of. I cannot thank him enough. He is a great man! I send my deepest and heartfelt congratulations to him on this great occasion!”

Erin Mote, Executive Director, InnovateEDU

“Professor Gordon is unquestionably a giant in the field and one of our country's foremost civil rights leaders for equitable education, it is a gift to be able to celebrate 100 years with him. It is such a pleasure to celebrate a man who not only is an icon but has a generosity of spirit, knowledge, and being that I have rarely experienced in my career. Dr. Gordon’s insatiable curiosity is only matched by his love and passion for bettering our education system for all students.”

Jean-Claude Brizard, CEO of Digital Promise

“We often look at students of color from low-income backgrounds with a deficit lens, without acknowledging the wealth of experiences and potential they bring to us. Thanks to Dr. Gordon’s work, we have the foundation for all educators to understand the role that student agency plays in educating our most historically marginalized students, and the work that we need to do to help students persevere and advocate for themselves with authority.”

Michele Cahill, Senior Advisor, XQ Institute

“What a privilege to join in celebrating and honoring and Dr. Edmund W. Gordon on the centenary of his birth! As one educator among thousands influenced by Dr. Gordon’s powerful intellect, brilliant research and dedication to social justice, I offer deep gratitude to Dr. Gordon. At this time in our country we are especially reminded of Dr. Gordon’s pioneering research contributions to early childhood learning, the development of intellectual competence and identity throughout youth, and the deep connections among racial justice, family empowerment, and educational equity. We have learned so much from Dr. Edmund W. Gordon and, with our gratitude in his continuing presence, we are challenged to do more to reach his vision.”

Kenji Hakuta, Professor of Education emeritus at Stanford University

“The words that come to my mind in describing Professor Gordon are breadth of intellect, purpose, morality, and generosity. He illustrates each of these qualities through the way in which he engages with people across the sociological spectrum – colleagues, students, parents, neighbors, and even strangers. He lifted my own personal mission and purpose by modeling these qualities, and I know that he has done the same with his many students and proteges. With every action, he models the best desirable qualities of humanity.”

Ana Mari Cauce, Professor of Psychology and President, University of Washington

“Professor Gordon’s mentorship was all about guiding me towards developing my own deep understanding of the questions I was tackling and of developing my own sense of agency – not just a belief in myself and my abilities, but an understanding of that I could, and must, use those to make a positive difference in the world, to have an impact.

Professor Gordon taught me that the goal of education, and not mere “schooling,” should be to develop a sense of agency in learners, together with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to put it into practice to achieve self-selected goals that are consonant with one’s values and that will make a positive difference in the world.”

Dr. Haki R. Madhubuti (Publisher Emeritus, Third World Press Foundation) and Dr. Carol D. Lee (Edwina S. Tarry Professor Emerita, Northwestern University)

“Our cultural mother was the great poet Gwendolyn Brooks and her religion was kindness and it is a known fact that Professor Gordon works in the same life giving and life saving world. In line with his mentor, Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, he uses scholarship to accomplish good in the world. He has spent his life, along with his late wife Dr. Susan Gordon, in creating conditions that build strong, healthy, and intellectually robust children.”

Lameesha Nunn, Founding Family and Mother of Two Founding Scholars, Edmund W Gordon Brooklyn Laboratory Charter School

“Happy Birthday Dr. Gordon, and thank you!!

It is paramount that we salute, applaud, and honor you today. All students and educators should know that your insight, and influence has been an unfailing catalyst for progress and change! We acknowledge that a quality education is a viable option, because of your hard work and dedication.

Words can not express how we truly appreciate your longevity, as well as your pursuit to holistically uplift mankind. Your efforts have afforded many with undeniable urban success. Myself, and my own children, who are scholars at Brooklyn Lab, are not excluded! I’m a 70’s baby that was a HeadStart participant, that eventually progressed and earned 2 Master’s Degrees. My children, classified as GenZ, have been shaped by your inspiring principles being implemented at the middle school and high school. Your thought provoking focus concerning the potential of assessments, will bring about even more access, and opportunity; for generations to come. For all of your achievements, we are extremely grateful; as they are remarkably beneficial.

We want you to know that your courage and diligence has not gone unnoticed. It is just what our society needs, and commands respect at every angle. We look forward to your continued guidance, impact, and success. Your great legacy warrants celebration.”

Emile Sessions, Director of Policy Data and Evaluation, Black Entrepreneurs NYC

"Those of us who have been fortunate enough to work with Dr. Gordon know that he is always reminding us that 'Education is not coterminous with schooling.' I carry Dr. Gordon's wisdom that the classroom is only one of the environments we have to invest in to support the growth of young people into their intellectual prowess, and that the ways we assess who is 'right' an opportunity or an investment teach their own lessons. His insistence that we consider the holistic ways we provide for the education of students has helped me identify opportunities to help make students' and families' lives easier during the pandemic, and I hope to apply that knowledge many more times in the future."

Connie Yowell, Senior Vice Chancellor, Educational Innovation, Northeastern University

“Ed Gordon has been my mentor since the moment I met him at Yale University as an undergraduate. The University service workers were on strike at the time, so our class met in Ed’s home for the semester. We literally sitting at his feet on his rug, talking books, theory and life. My life and education were never the same after that class. I stopped taking classes at Yale and did independent studies with Ed. I worked for Ed after graduation, he was on my dissertation committee years later and we published together during my academic years. I then had the privilege of funding the Gordon Commission on Assessment while at MacArthur Foundation. Ed has been a thru line in my life and career. For any student with the privilege of working Ed, the world tilts on its axis. He shares his brilliance, of course, but it is the gentle, patient, humanity with which he does this that keeps us engaged and encourages us all to be better humans in the world. Anyone working with Ed is smarter and wiser for the experience. More importantly, in this highly fractured and chaotic world in which we now live, we are better humans for it.”

James Paul Gee, Presidential and Regents Professor, Arizona State University

“Ed lives what he teaches. He is to academics what the great Bill Russell was to basketball. They both played their hearts out so that their team would win, not just themselves. Ed is an academic superstar, but he also has taken us all with him on a journey to redemption. It’s a work in progress, one that will always bear Ed’s mark.”

Robert J. Mislevy, Ph.D., Frederic M. Lord Chair in Measurement and Statistics, Educational Testing Service, MS 12-T

“Beyond his astute scholarship and tireless advocacy, Professor Gordon is the very embodiment of the values of intellectual character and intellectual competence he advocates. I have been privileged to contribute in some small way to his vision for learning and assessment through the Gordon Commission on the Future of Assessment in Education and the Gordon Fellowship program—to be a part of and to experience firsthand the growth, the insight, the enthusiasm, and the fruition of ideas that his efforts have brought forth--decade after decade.”

Madhabi Chatterji, Ph.D., Professor of Measurement, Evaluation and Education, Director, Assessment and Evaluation Research Initiative (AERI), Teachers College, Columbia University

“For me, Professor Gordon’s laser-focused commitment to improving the lives of others in affirmative ways is the most inspirational aspect of his 100-year life and many good works. He has been guided by a desire to enable the most disadvantaged children and their families to become agents of their own lives, their own destinies. He has not stopped working towards that end—does not see his age as a barrier at all!”

Howard T. Everson, SRI and Graduate Center, City University of New York

"We often acknowledge that we "stand on the shoulders of giants" as we do our work in social science and education. Today we recognize and honor one of those "giants", Edmund W. Gordon. Professor Gordon's scholarship and praxis--at the intersection of developmental psychology, education and social justice-- has inspired and guided subsequent generations of scholars. We remain in his debt."

John Hattie, Emeritus Laureate Professor, Melbourne Graduate School of Education Chair, Board of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

“In his writings, speeches, commissions, and via his very being, Dr Gordon’s depth of caring, humanity, and expertise is so evident. As a measurement researcher, his positive focus on ensuring the quality of tests are a function of their value, information, and interpretation by students is powerful and must still be shouted from the rooftops. It is not the tests, it’s the interpretations. I learnt this from Dr Gordon over many years and this “Gordon principle” about the power and value of assessment for learning is still critical. Happy 100th birthday.”

Girlie Delacruz Adreani, Northeastern University

“Dr. Gordon was one of the earliest proponents of the need to use assessment *for* learning. As part of the Report of the Commission on Tests in 1970, Dr. Gordon wrote a paper titled, “Toward a Qualitative Approach to Assessment,” in which he asserted that “...the stage must be shared with an emphasis on *description* and *prescription*--that is, the qualitative description of intellectual function leading not to the selection of those most likely to succeed but to the prescription of the learning experiences required to more adequately insure that academic success is possible.” This statement reflects the idea that assessment should be repurposed to better serve learning and teaching and underlies many advancements in the field today.

My time with Dr. Gordon as part of the Edmund W. Gordon MacArthur Foundation/ETS fellowship is one of the reasons I have dedicated the last 10 years of my career to equity and social justice. He pushed my thinking about the purpose of education as being essential to physical and mental well-being, in addition to preparing individuals to be productive members of society. While he continues to amaze me with his brilliance and insight, I am also touched by Dr. Gordon as a human being. A few months ago, we were communicating about his recent work and he took that time to also check up on me months after the loss of my father-in-law. He is a wonderful person and I feel honored to have been able to work with him.”

Tony Dinkins, President/CEO of Unlimited Events & Marketing, Inc.

“My name is Tony Dinkins Senior. Brother Gordon and I are brothers of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., whose four cardinal principles are Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance, and uplift. Brother Gordon is the living embodiment of those principles. All of us have benefited from him living the creed of an Omega Man. He has always been available to lend an ear or offer

up his understanding of an issue or topic, which is always very thoughtful. This year we celebrated his 80 years of being a member of our organization. The virtual celebration led by the International Leadership of the fraternity created an opportunity for Brother Gordon to provide his thoughts on Friendship, Leadership, and our responsibility to our families and communities.

When I first met Brother Gordon, I was unaware of his many accomplishments. He has such a wonderful spirit and a way of communicating that you can see the thoughts and ideas firing in his mind as he conveys them in such an orderly fashion. I was so amazed he was still involved with the fraternity since he became a member in 1941 on the campus of Howard University, the location where the fraternity was founded in 1911. After fellowshiping with him at one of the first meetings we attended and discussing various topics, I knew I needed to find out what his story was. It took me hours to go through the entries on the internet about his background and his many achievements. I was so proud and grateful to be friends with such an accomplished man. If you know Professor Gordon, you will know he is a man of action.

One of my early memories of Professor Gordon was at a Fraternity meeting where he nominated me from the floor for a leadership position in our local chapter. I had no intention of assuming a leadership position, but I could not decline the nomination because it came from Brother Gordon. Little did I know that was the beginning of several recommendations or assignments from my dear and beloved friend Brother Edmond Gordon. I once had the privilege of introducing him at an event where he was being honored, and his bio was several pages long. I still remember while I was rattling off his awards, degrees, and successes, his wife, the late Dr. Susan Gordon, proudly proclaimed he is a husband, father, grandfather! Her declaration occurred well before I got to the portion of my remarks that highlighted what he has expressed to me on several occasions, out of all the many things he was most proud of his family. The only honor above family was his marriage to his beloved wife, the late Dr. Susan Gordon.

I am so honored to give my brother his flowers now so he can enjoy them. His impact on me has been so profound as a role model. His active and meaningful longevity, combined with the arc of his accomplishments mixed with the commitment to relationships, demonstrates what is possible through hard work, sacrifice, and a commitment to understanding and excellence in your profession and at home. That is a life worth living and a job well done. In closing, Friendship is essential to the soul, and I am proud to call you a friend.”

Richard Durán, Professor Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, University of California, Santa Barbara

“Thank you Professor and Happy Birthday!!! You have expanded our notions of assessment beyond a narrow focus on evidence of learning and mastery of skills and knowledge as isolated accomplishments of learners. Instead, you have invited us into a quest for deep understanding for how assessments can be designed to serve the development of human potential in innovative learning activities--this all made possible through systems of learning and instruction, building on social and cultural understandings of human dignity and shared purposes serving social justice.”

Jonathan McIntosh, Chief Academic Officer, Prospect Schools

“Dr. Gordon was instrumental in shaping a humanizing perspective of education for me, that challenged the root of inequality grounded in access to quality educational experiences for all students. The intersection between class, income and intergenerational wealth was a profound perspective that situated my understanding of the importance of supplemental educational experiences when addressing achievement gaps in our society.

In an analysis Dr. Gordon gave about Bourdieu’s notion of human capital, he powerfully noted that capital is so much more than an analysis of wealth and income, but rather the level of access you have “to other people that are more developed than you, and can guide you in your learning.” This statement really stuck with me, as it affirmed my belief that liberal arts learning, that emphasizes an interdisciplinary, well-rounded approach to exposure and opportunity was an essential lever in closing achievement gaps. Students need more than mathematics and literacy to be part of civil society. The importance of the arts, health, humanities, and the like are fundamental in developing educational programs that are student-centered and ignite a lifetime passion for learning.”

Ed Davila, Board Member, The Edmund and Susan Gordon Community Partnership

“Dr. Edmund Gordon is a massive intellectual possessed with extraordinary sensitivities, gifts and talents, and whose resourcefulness and vision have enhanced the human condition in America.”

Michael Cole, Emeritus Distinguished Professor

"I count myself incredibly lucky to have known Ed Gordon for 50 years. It was a lot harder to make your voice heard in the 1970's than it is today, but Ed's clear voice for equity, dignity, and social justice has always echoed in my ears. Carrying on his great work is the challenge for us all at a time when Fascism and Racism have return to remind us that we've been here before. Happy Birthday Ed."

Mikki K. Harris, Senior Assistant Professor, Morehouse College

“Professor shines light in my day. It can be through a conversation, the mention of him to other people, or the reflection of a moment from the past. Who he is, and how he challenges all of us to think beyond ourselves is what truly improves humanity. As a storyteller and educator, Professor’s influence has helped me to not only learn and teach “how” to do the work, but why we do the work, and the importance of emerging technologies to enrich the way that we use our intelligence. Happy Birthday to my intellectual grandfather. I love you, Professor.”

Sam Abramovich, Director of the University of Buffalo Open Education Research Lab

“When I met Dr. Gordon as a young Assistant Professor, I had been taught to think of assessment as a tool for learning. But what I thought was a progressive view, that assessment is best when meeting the needs of the learner, was quickly changed when listening to Dr. Gordon. In a short time, he pushed me to think more radically. That a truly progressive view is to go beyond meeting needs and use assessment to empower those who have been marginalized. We should aspire to give control of assessment to the learner; to fight against assessment that is used for a status quo that serves only a few. My research now aims for this goal, and I pass along this view of assessment to students and colleagues - and I would never have done so without Dr. Gordon’s profound influence.”

Ilya Goldin, Principal Data Scientist at Phenom People

“Dr. Gordon's ideas are still society's goals today, just as they were decades ago. This evidence gives rise to inferences: Dr. Gordon is a visionary, and social progress is slow. Moreover, progress is not inevitable. Dr. Gordon's lifetime of hard work in service of these ideas and ideals is a model for the next generation of researchers and practitioners. Assessment-for-learning, in particular, emphasizes the obligation for assessment creators to consider how their work can further human development rather than serve to merely categorize people. I'm deeply grateful for the opportunities afforded to me to learn from Dr. Gordon.”

Leah Cohen, Barrett Professor of Creative Writing, College of the Holy Cross

“In the thirty years since I came to work for Ed Gordon (it was my first job upon graduating from college), his teachings have remained strongly with me. Two things in particular I think of on an almost daily basis - in my own work as a writer, in my capacity as a professor working with students and colleagues, and as a human being interacting with family, friends and strangers. These two teachings I carry with me are: 1) that intragroup differences are at least as important as intergroup differences, and 2) the beautiful, deep way that Ed has of elevating thought and discussion to a higher level by asking a question that begins with the simple phrase, “Under what conditions would it be possible to imagine that...?”

Russel Shuler, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Youth Education Through Sports, Inc.

“Youth Education Through Sports, Inc. will be forever grateful to Dr. Edmund W. Gordon for inspiring and laying the foundation for the development and re-invention of Youth Education Through Sports, Inc. (YES Inc.) and the creation of its SMARTBALL Education Initiative which adopted his “Affirmative Development of Academic Ability” principles.

Dr. Gordon as a mentor provided me lifesaving insights by sharing with me his humanity which developed me into becoming a forward-thinking person and providing me a better vehicle to learn and know and understand, and most importantly, to use my imagination.

The lives of the student-athletes the YES Inc. SMARTBALL Initiative engage has been significantly impacted by the teaching and learning philosophies and principles of Dr. Edmund W. Gordon, and will continue forever.”

Emily B. Campbell, Center for Cultural Sociology, Yale University

“For myself, and generations of scholars, Dr. Edmund W. Gordon is the embodiment of achievement, excellence, and dedication. Dr. Gordon, a scholar and educator that never retired, has offered his gifts and vision in service of those least considered and often marginalized by education systems. As one of his many mentees, I am forever grateful for the wisdom and knowledge he imparted on me as a young educator and scholar. I had the privilege of working for him during the Gordon Commission on the Future of Assessment in Education. During our collaborative work, Dr. Gordon imparted on me the prioritization of context and perspective in education, in assessment endeavors, and in the understanding of human intelligence in service of humanity and human flourishing. His nimble, exhaustive, expansive, and visionary approach to these undertakings has since shaped how I plan and design my courses and my approach to teaching. His mentorship has guided academic children, grandchildren and great grandchildren

all of whom are better educators to their students thanks to his efforts. It is not hyperbole to say that thousands of children and adults have been touched and have had their lives bettered by his path breaking contributions.”

Rena Matison Greenblatt, Ph.D. Psychologist

“I had the privilege of being a neighbor and friend of the Gordon family throughout my childhood and adolescence and later a close friend in adulthood. When I would visit his daughter, my friend Jessica, I remember seeing Dr. Gordon working at the kitchen table, sometimes with students around, discussing various papers or projects. I was lucky because he also took an interest in my schooling and my career. Therefore, I had the opportunity to observe how important higher education and mentorship and serving as an example to young people were to him. From that point on, I would seek the wise counsel and opinion of Ed at various important points in my educational career. Professor Gordon was such an important influence to me throughout my career and his counsel was indispensable to the successes I had in my work.

As an example, I began to work with young people while at Barnard College and was the director of the playroom at the Neurological Institute at Columbia University, a place for children to go as they waited to see their physicians. There, I saw and interacted and created a drama, music and arts program for young people with neurological problems. In this way, I began my interest in cognition and in young people. He and Susan considered that my once weekly work at such a program was a good choice.

Ed was influential when I went to his home to talk about how to choose a training program in psychology. I remember sitting at the kitchen table and in his patient, wise way, Ed recommended that I apply to a Ph.D. program in Cognitive Psychology. I began my studies at City College of New York and City University of New York Graduate Center, as a result of Ed’s recommendation. I studied theories of intelligence and Professor Gordon, now teaching at Yale University, introduced me to a professor who wrote on that topic. I found that great mentors always pave the way through connecting you to people and what people have written. I continued my work with young people, and modeling after him, I began teaching.

I returned to Columbia University’s Neurological Institute, knowing that Dr. Gordon encouraged the idea of publishing and doing original research. There I published an often cited paper in the journal *Neurology*, entitled “Tip-of the Tongue Phenomena in Parkinson Disease”, about word finding difficulties in patients with Parkinson disease. Professor Gordon helped Ed Greenblatt and I by reviewing a chapter we wrote on Learning Disabilities and Developmental Disorders, in a series edited by Joseph D. Noshpitz. When Dr. Gordon reviewed the paper, he suggested we read his paper (1991), *Human diversity and pluralism* (1991) in the journal, *Educational Psychologist*. We cited this work as well as his chapter on Problems in the determination of educability in populations with differential characteristics. We discussed Gordon’s focus on motivational factors and the importance of immediate feedback from the environment. My guide and role model was Edmund Gordon. I internalized the advise of my lifelong mentor, Ed, and he had such an impact on my choices that I decided to work at NYU School of Social Work, as an adjunct assistant and later adjunct associate professor mentoring and serving on dissertation committees.

With the advent of the CEJES institute in Pomona, New York, I learned how Drs. Edmund and Susan Gordon worked with young people to try to promote education, literacy, and a fondness for literature, the arts and nature. When I was chair of the Child and Adolescent Training Program at the Institute of Psychoanalytic Training and Research and then co-chair of the Arts and Society Committee at my training institute, my committee brought the arts to psychoanalysis, creating shows and lectures. Jessica Gordon-Nembhard and Edmund W. Gordon co-sponsored the Charles White show and we showed representations of some of the works from the Susan G. and Edmund W. Gordon collection, some of which are now on loan from the Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas at Austin to the Museum of Modern Art. Again, Professor Gordon graciously spoke at our institute at the opening of the show, sharing his thoughts and ideas about the work of Charles White and speaking about their friendship.

More recently, Ed asked me about what I was doing and I told him about some original research on therapists' experiences' doing group psychotherapy in middle schools. In his interested manner, he asked about the research questions. By always being there, by offering wise and patient counsel at major steps in my career, I knew that I could count on my lifelong mentor, Professor Edmund W. Gordon. It is so important to have someone from high school on to guide you and help you with advice, suggestions about scholarly articles and with networking. From my first visits to the busy kitchen table as a young student to more recent visits, I am brought back to the beneficent light of my mentor.

I am so grateful for the impact my lifelong mentor Professor Edmund Gordon has had on me and on my career, and for his interest in family, which extended to my own.

Ed Greenblatt and I attended the tribute and ribbon cutting ceremony for the Edmund W. Gordon Laboratory Brooklyn Laboratory Charter School. We see how important he is to so many people. Most recently, since the COVID-19 emergency, Ed showed such courage and continued his important work, while maintaining friendships and sharing music with me. His creativity, interest in the arts, respect for others and dignity continue to inspire me.

Ed is the true Renaissance man, professor, mentor, fascinated by art, music, teaching and improving life for students and young people. Happy 100th Birthday to my lifelong mentor, neighbor and close friend, as we celebrate you and your important contributions, your legacy. You remain in our hearts, always."

Tony Siddall, Program Officer, Assessment for Learning Project, NGLC

"At the Assessment for Learning Project we often say that we are fortunate to stand on the shoulders of giants. Dr. Gordon is unquestionably one of those giants, and his influence is felt throughout our community of educators. Where we feel it most is in his call to be clear and humane about the purposes of assessment - that it must first and foremost be in service to learning and human development, and that we must constantly work to make our assessment practices live up to the aspirations we hold dear for our children."

Eric Tucker, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Brooklyn LAB

"One of the singular pleasures of my professional life has been serving as a Gordon Fellow on the Gordon Commission for the Future of Assessment in Education. Over the last six years, the

Chairman of the Commission has embraced Erin, our son Robert, our daughter Clare, and me as educators and as family. He is one of the most incisive, wise, and well reasoned public intellectuals of the last century."

Additional [Reflections on Edmund W Gordon](#)

Dr. Eleanor Armour-Thomas

"Gentle, generous, wise, learned, [and] compassionate"-Dr. Eleanor Armour-Thomas characterizes Dr. Edmund W. Gordon, her one-time professor who became a lifelong mentor, colleague, and friend, using these carefully selected adjectives. Conveying both his sense of humor and comedic abilities, Eleanor recounts Edmund's entertaining imitation of the "happy walker," his own mockery of someone's attempt to walk uphill to a hotel room after having too much to drink. In addition to fostering a fulfilling personal life by spending time with family and friends, Eleanor cites Edmund's professional contributions to educational research as profound-his most significant accomplishment, according to Eleanor, being his "interactionist perspective" which he used to "account for the relationship between human diversity, learning, and behavior." This lens provided for a "new direction" for research, teaching, and assessment of diverse populations.

Dr. David Berliner

Dr. David Berliner summarized one of Dr. Edmund W. Gordon's many pedagogical lessons, clearly stating: "the interaction between dozens of personal and dozens of environmental variables leads inexorably to the need for some form of adaptive education or differentiated instruction." Rather than pose simple solutions to problems in our ailing educational system, Edmund characterizes the work undertaken by educators as complex. By emphasizing human diversity in his own scholarship, Edmund has profoundly impacted minority students and their communities, especially African-American children from working-class families, through the employment of "culturally responsive" pedagogy.

Dr. Wade Boykin

"A quintessential scholar activist"-Dr. Wade Boykin fondly characterizes Dr. Edmund W. Gordon, his "mentor, friend, and collaborator" of more than three decades, as demonstrating the "perfect blend of scholarship and activism." Wade describes his mentor as "more than just a glorified academic advisor or a teacher." Since first approaching him in 1975 at a conference, Wade has developed a close friendship with Edmund, sharing conversations that often "perseverate with [him] for days" in addition to the joy of working together. Citing Edmund's most significant professional accomplishment as his open-mindedness, desire to grow intellectually, and willingness to alter his perspective with changing times, Wade credits these traits with keeping Edmund "on the cutting edge of issues even after an approximately sixty year career." Kind-hearted and soft-spoken yet strong, Edmund possesses the ability to "speak with great power." To Wade and others, Edmund has proven to be both "a role model [and] confidante."

Chris Gordon

Describing his relationship with his dad, Dr. Edmund W. Gordon, as one built on "love, respect, and admiration for each other as caring individuals," Chris Gordon cites their common interests

as including a "love for learning and...passion for serving the greater good." According to Chris, his dad describes himself as a humanist, insisting that 'it is the responsibility of those who have been privileged, to use the fruits of that privilege...to help those who are less well off.' While Edmund truly lives a "life in the service of others," his time spent with family and friends is equally important. Remembering an incident when his father, a perpetual bargain hunter, bought chicken in a can on a summer vacation to Maine because he believed the purchase to be a "good deal," Chris recalls the pressured cooked contents of the can to be so old that they were hardly edible. Characterizing his father's most significant professional accomplishment as his introduction "into the national dialogue the importance of understanding the learner's frame of reference in the development of an educational plan of action," Chris admires his father's pairing of the nature of learning with the social context of the learner-the subsequent impact of this discussion on teaching influenced a whole generation of educators.

Dr. Jessica Gordon Nembhard

Fondly recalling her father's influence throughout her life without ever remembering him losing his temper or raising his voice, Dr. Jessica Gordon Nembhard describes her relationship with both her parents, Dr. Edmund W. Gordon and Dr. Susan G. Gordon, as very close. Citing the profound impact on her professional growth of her first three summer jobs with her father as a research assistant at Teachers College, Columbia University, Jessica maintained an interest in education long after graduation. Eagerly sharing happy family memories gathered on trips, while playing games, and during social events with friends, Jessica quickly highlights her father's dedication to his work which he "usually brought with him wherever he went, including [to] a dinner party with a neighbor." Crediting her parents with the significant personal accomplishment of raising four "accomplished and lovely human beings who do good in this world," Jessica also praises her father's considerable professional achievements-particularly his efforts to "change how society understands and approaches the education of low status people." Proud of her father, the "servant leader, activist scholar, and problem solver," Jessica describes Edmund as "the most intellectual person [she] has ever met and one the most dedicated human beings" she knows. "A perfectionist"-her dad "puts huge amounts of thought and energy into everything he does, and usually excels at it."

Johanna S. Gordon

Johanna S. Gordon, the youngest of the four Gordon children and a healthcare provider, lovingly describes her father, Dr. Edmund W. Gordon as an individual with high expectations of both himself and others. Johanna recalls her father's unwavering support of others, insisting "you can always count on him and he's always there when you need him." Revealing her father's generosity towards strangers, Johanna remembers her father's response to an elderly gentleman who approached him in at a New England dedication to W.E.B. DuBois (one of her father's heroes). Introducing himself as "Mr. Lovejoy," Edmund did not hesitate to offer the man a sandwich and cup of hot soup, both served with a calm smile. Although the stranger did not stay for the dedication, Edmund's kind demeanor left a lasting impression on family members who witnessed the incident. Characterizing her father as "a great writer, teacher, family member, citizen, an incredible mind, very sensitive, always evolving, a great chef, a lover of beauty, and [one who] never gives up," Johanna is always amazed when she meets a stranger who tells her how her dad has touched their life.

Dr. Carl Kaestle

Dr. Carl Kaestle, a longtime friend and colleague, has worked diligently alongside Dr. Edmund W. Gordon as a proponent for the legacy of W.E.B. DuBois in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, the location of the DuBois family farm. As a historian of education, Carl has taken significant interest in Ed having known DuBois personally. Through their joint efforts, the accomplishments of DuBois, "one of the greatest American thinkers about educational opportunity, about civil rights, and about diversity," now enjoy more widespread acknowledgement. In working with Ed to achieve common professional goals, Carl recalls fond memories "of penetrating, important observations [Ed] has made in meetings, in lectures, and in debates, insights that turned the conversation around or cast it in a new light." Describing Ed and his wife, Dr. Susan G. Gordon, as "great conversationalists," Carl characterizes the Gordons as "an inspiring couple, so accomplished, and yet so friendly and caring." Citing his work at the center of federal policy on Head Start, Title I, and national testing, Carl contributes Ed's professional success to his "tone or urgency and grace, along with original ways of thinking about old and emerging problems." Describing "his combination of passion with grace, of broad vision with clarity, of old questions posed in new, fruitful ways" as the hallmarks of Ed Gordon's legacy, Carl insists that Ed's "greatest accomplishment is to push an agenda of civil rights and equal opportunity that is at once activist and urgent and on the other hand, thoughtful and collegial."

Dr. William Trent

Describing Dr. Edmund W. Gordon as a "friend, an intellectual and personal mentor, and a very dear colleague," Dr. William Trent recalls that when sharing stories about their children, Ed enjoyed talking about his four children and their accomplishments. In fact, he "cheerfully mused about whether his influence as parent was what he intended or what they managed to select from it...[he discussed] the challenge of parenting bright and willful children." When attempting to identify Ed's significant personal and professional accomplishments, William insists that "there are too many of each" to name just a few. After careful consideration, William cites "the humanity in his scholarship which is [Ed's] intellectual signature" as one aspect of his professional career that captures people. Ed's "contemporariness" is his second major accomplishment, according to William. Describing his scholarship and leadership as having been "at the center or cutting edge on core issues of race, ethnicity, education, race relations, [and] human development for well over 4 decades," William compares Ed to Miles Davis who gained notoriety for "always learning and listening to the musical ideas of the era he was in, refusing to repeat work from his past." In addition to these professional accomplishments, Ed "fundamentally believes that his most significant, valued, and treasured personal accomplishment is his family." Described as "his badge of honor [and] coat of arms," to Ed, his family is at the center of his obvious, engaging spirituality.

Dr. Ernest Washington

In the course of his thirty year friendship with Dr. Edmund W. Gordon, Dr. Ernest Washington characterizes Ed as "one of the brightest people [he] has ever met." Commenting that he has met some pretty smart people, Ernie is convinced that Ed is very special. Although humor "does not come to mind" when thinking of his friendship with Ed, Ernie identifies instead "a kind of sweet irony in which Ed sees the contradictions but does hold it against us." Comparing the magnitude of Ed's contributions to educational research to legendary jazz artists, Ernie reflects "when I think of Ed I think of a comment Miles Davis made about Duke Ellington. He said that at least

once a year every jazz musician should get down on his knees and thank God for Duke Ellington." Regarding Ed's often unreported contributions to education and psychology, Ernie insists, "I think that each of us in education should at least once a year get down on our knees and thank God for Edmund Gordon."

Kurt M. Landgraf, Past President and Chief Executive Officer, ETS (2000–2013)

"Dr. Gordon is one of the conceptual leaders of several major developments in education, including Head Start, compensatory education, career education, school desegregation, alternatives in educational assessment, and supplementary education." More [here](#).