

Vanessa J. Ward, M.Phil, M.A.T.S.



Reverend Vanessa Ward is the President of the Omega Community Development Corporation (Omega CDC) and Pastor Emerita of the Omega Baptist Church. As President of the Omega CDC, she oversees the organization's mission of providing services that help to develop and improve the lives of the youth, the families, and the community of Northwest Dayton. Under her leadership, the Omega CDC has served as co-developer with MVAH in the construction of an 81-unit, \$13 million dollar affordable senior housing facility and as the developer of the newly constructed \$11 million dollar Hope Center for Families which focuses on the 2-Generation whole family wellness in Northwest Dayton. Partners of the Hope Center for Families include Dayton Children's Hospital, Sinclair Community College, Mini University, and Omega CDC.

Rev. Ward currently is a member of the Learn to Earn Dayton Board of Directors; the Two-Generation Advisory Board and Two-Generation Place-Based Committee; The Dayton Chamber of Commerce; The Dayton Children's Center for Community Health and Advocacy Advisory Board; Dayton Early College Academy (DECA) Board of Trustees; the Sinclair College Board of Trustees; the St. Mary Development Corporation Board of Trustees; and 1st Vice-President of the Dayton Chapter of the Links, Inc.

Rev. Ward has served on numerous boards, including the Alliance Community Schools Governing Board; the ReadySetSoar Advisory Cabinet; the *Mayor's City of Learners* (Dayton, Ohio) Advisory Team; After-School and Summer Learning sub-Committee; the Good Samaritan Hospital Board and Diversity Committee of the Premier Hospital Boards.

In 2000, Rev. Ward founded the Omega School of Excellence and served as Chairman of the Board of Directors. The Omega School was a chartered K-8 public school. Although a difficult decision was made to close the Omega School of Excellence in June 2008, both the Omega Church and community celebrated the eight years in which this school provided quality education to hundreds of Dayton children. Many of its graduates were admitted to competitive high schools and boarding schools both locally and nationally.

Rev. Vanessa Oliver Ward has been a recipient of various local awards, including the Dayton YWCA Woman of Influence Award (2002); the YWCA Lifetime Achievement Award (2022); and the 2018 Brother Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., Ph.D. Award.

She is a graduate of The College of Wooster, United Theological Seminary, and in 2012 she received the Master of Philosophy in Hebraic and Cognate Studies (M.Phil.) at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio, focusing on II Temple History, Language and Culture. As part of her studies, she was awarded a fellowship that gave her the opportunity to spend the summer of 2010 excavating at an 8th-century BC Philistine settlement in Israel.

Rev. Ward was ordained as a Minister of the Gospel on November 12, 1998, by The Omega Baptist Church where she served in pastoral and community leadership for over 30 years. She is sought locally and nationally to speak at churches and conferences. She is the wife of the Reverend Dr. Daryl Ward; a proud mother of three adult children and four grandchildren.