Mrs. Gretchen A. Haynes Woods

Gretchen Woods is a native of Cape Girardeau, Missouri. She is the youngest of seven children born to the late William H. and Malinda Ward Haynes. The Woods family moved to Iowa in 1993.

Gretchen graduated from Cape Girardeau Central High with the class of 1973, received the Bachelor of Arts from Lincoln University of Missouri in Jefferson City and the Master of Arts in Education from Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, MO. She attended Drake University and received Iowa State Educational Consultants Licensure. She is continuing her education through the Certificate of Progress Program with specialization in Christian Counseling.

In Iowa, she was employed by Heartland Area Education Agency as a Special Education Consultant. She is a passionate educator and serves as a Sunday school and VBS teacher at Faith Missionary Baptist church; where her family members worship. She is a member of and former director of the Christian Education ministry, the deaconess and mission ministries, the Praise Team and adult choir. She is a certified instructor and Dean of Faith Academy of Religious Studies. She is a mentee of Dean Martha Frazier. Gretchen worked diligently with Deacon Bradford Woods, Rev. Dr. Kenneth R. Adderley, and Dean Frazier in the accreditation process of Faith Academy of Religious Studies.

An important part of her Christian service is mentoring youth in civil rights advocacy and leadership development. For the past nineteen years, Gretchen has worked with middle and high school students in Des Moines and the greater metro area as their NAACP Youth Council adult adviser. She is the former IA/NE State Conference of Branches Youth & College Division adviser. During her tenure, the Des Moines Youth Council has maintained a 100% high school graduation rate. Members of the Youth Council have received state, regional and national awards and recognition for service, advocacy, and leadership. Gretchen was recognized in 2007 as the National Youth Adviser of the Year during the annual National Convention. She was the Des Moines adult branch Freedom Fund Banquet Committee chair 2017-2019. During its 2019 Annual Black History Banquet, the Des Moines Youth Council has named its annual Individual Advocacy Award in honor of Gretchen A. Haynes Woods. This award is given each year to an individual in the community who goes above and beyond to encourage and support the unit.

Her hobbies include reading and writing. As a part of her bible study, she enjoys reading bible commentaries written by Warren Wiersbe. She is a published play write and director. She enjoys planning events and organizing Christian education training initiatives. She enjoys traveling and hopes to visit each of the fifty states and sites abroad.

Gretchen and Deacon Arnold A. Woods, Jr. have been married thirty-seven years. They are the proud parents of two outstanding adult children. Their daughter Ebonee Nelson (Terrance) lives in Jefferson City, MO. and son, Arnold A. Woods; III (Alisa) lives in Des Moines. She is ever so grateful for their three-year old granddaughter Rosa Esther Louise Woods.