



Dr. Andrea D. Sullivan
Naturopathic Physician/Author

“A Beacon of Light on the Road Less Traveled”

By Tawainna Houston, ND, MDiv.

Dr. Andrea Sullivan has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to the profession of Naturopathic Medicine that has intersected with her dedication to the African American community. Several years after completing a PhD in Sociology/Criminology from the University of Pennsylvania, Sullivan headed westbound in 1981 to fulfill a calling into greater academic ambitions. She landed on a campus to study with other students in a former elementary school building that had been transformed into Bastyr College. Up from the humble beginnings of that institution, today its rigorous program is fondly referred to as the Harvard of Naturopathic Medicine. As a former social science major now studying medical science, Sullivan disciplined and focused herself on her immediate goal of graduating. She worked through the challenges that came with initially being the only African American student on campus where the ignorance of racism was perpetuated among some students and faculty members alike. In spite of the racism, academic stress, and the uncertain landscape of the foundational years of Naturopathic Medicine, Sullivan states, “I would do it all over again because I love what I do (as a physician/author) that much.”

While matriculating through Bastyr, Sullivan had a desire to raise campus-wide awareness and appreciation for Black History. She pleaded with then college president Joseph Pizzorno to recognize Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the school a few years before his birthday would be observed as a federal holiday in 1986. After repeatedly stating to President Pizzorno that, “racism is the greatest disease in America from which we all suffer,” that year in 1982 President Pizzorno consented to a half-day program for students to gather for discussions on race and presentations that honored the legacy of Dr. King. This would be among one of other occasions that would etch Dr. Sullivan into the memory of President Pizzorno as, “One of my all-time favorite students! She had such a positive impact on Bastyr and our profession.” He adds, “we both loved the process of advancing and evaluating diverse ideas on how to improve education and developed huge mutual respect.”

A couple of years after graduating from Bastyr University, Dr. Sullivan would become even more fervent in her efforts to bring accessibility of Naturopathic Medicine to the Black community when she moved to Washington, DC, also known back then as “Chocolate City.” Before becoming the highly esteemed physician she is today, there was important political groundwork that needed to take place to legalize and advance the profession in The District of Columbia. Dr. Sullivan acquired an administrative assistant position with a local politician that created an opportunity for her to be invited to join the DC Board of

Medicine (BOM), serving in this role from 2001-2006. She leveraged this role to educate local DC politicians and Congress about Naturopathic Medicine. She reinforced her message by arranging appointments for Dr. Pizzorno and the National College of Natural Medicine President to present academic and clinical data to the BOM in a petition for licensure for the profession. Sullivan would also invite students from Bastyr and other ND schools to come to DC and present to the board from a student's perspective. These efforts initiated by Dr. Sullivan would pave the way for DC providing licensure to the Naturopathic Medicine profession in 2012.

This is only a snippet of the tireless efforts Dr. Sullivan has contributed towards spreading the awareness of Naturopathic Medicine across the United States. Her voice has resounded from various platforms. Among notable highlights are *Essence* magazine, Abyssinian Baptist Church, Georgetown University, National Medical Association, American Lung Association, and so many others. She has also had numerous publications on both traditional and non-traditional platforms. Her first book, *A Path to Healing: A Guide to Wellness for Body, Mind and Soul* was published by Doubleday in 1998. Her upcoming book scheduled to be published in late 2023 has the working title *The Sacrifices of Superwomen: It's More Than Enough!*. Her long list of achievements has been recognized by her alma mater during the 2004 commencement when Bastyr University presented her with the Distinguished Alumni Award. In addition, she was granted an Honorary Doctor of Science Degree from Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine, now known as Sonoran University in 2021.

Amid speaking engagements, writing, and actively practicing Naturopathic Medicine in the heart of Washington, DC, Dr. Sullivan has spent decades keeping herself accessible to ND students. She has been available for preceptorships and allowed ND seekers to simply pick her brain before making critical decisions about it becoming their chosen profession. Dr. Sullivan's demonstration of passion and commitment has forged a path towards a standard of excellence for future generations of both the African American community and Naturopathic Doctors at-large. She took a road less traveled during very uncertain times and that has made all the difference.