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Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they could do this is by not voting.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

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Eldridge Hawkins, Jr., once NJ's youngest mayor—age 27, receives youth role model award

Posted by Essex County Politics [1sc](#) on April 27, 2017

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Caption: Pictured Left to right "Community Service Award" recipient Bernel Harrison, "Male Role Model" Eldridge Hawkins, Jr., "Man of the Year" Ravenell Williams IV

His ability to overcome setbacks, keep moving forward and achieve success has made him an example to be followed by young people. "If you could do it, so can I" is the statement the former Mayor of Orange, now 37, hears as he travels through the state inspiring youths in his capacity of Director of Policy, Operations Governmental Affairs, working with AmeriCops and law enforcement related community issues for the New Jersey Department of State.

The owner and founder of Black Belt Security Investigations, LLC, Mr. Hawkins was honored as "Male Role Model", Saturday, by the National Association of Negro Business & Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. (Union County Club), in Garwood at their 45th anniversary luncheon.

The event held at the Westwood, also honored Stacey E. Welch creator and owner of LiVay Sweet Shop of Plainfield as "Business Woman of the Year"; Kim D. Osterhoudt founder and CEO of Osterhoudt and Associates LLC d.b.a Jams by Kim as Professional Woman of the Year; Plainfield Police Officer Bernel

Harrison with a "Community Service Award" and; 38 year career veteran of the YMCA and current President/CEO of the Plainfield Area YMCA, Ravenell Williams IV as "Man of the Year".

The organization whose National Theme is "The Truth is Powerful and it Prevails, Blazing New Pathways with Continuity, Creativity and Confidence" also presented scholarships to 6 impressive high school seniors going on to higher education with career pursuits in medicine, science and technology.

At the event, Hawkins challenged the young scholarship recipients to remember that when they become successful, they too will become role models. Therefore, they "should always try to do the right thing and not do or say anything they wouldn't want the world to see or hear". Hawkins, Jr. stated that was a rule taught to him by his father, Civil Rights Attorney and Former NJ State Assemblyman Eldridge Hawkins, Sr.

Hawkins also urged the students to surround themselves with a "good team of people" which was his secret to success. He cited the old adage, "when you get knocked down, you must pick yourself up."

Hawkins, who has been seen on CNN, FOX and other media outlets, has become an expert in the areas of public safety, management and public/private partnerships between government and community stakeholders has held positions as Acting Police and Fire Director, Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator under Homeland Security and is a Retired Police Officer.

He has received specialized training in weapons, tactics, counter terrorism, neutralizing active shooters inside schools. He is also a 4th Degree Black Belt in Chinese Kempo and has completed the Master Detective Course in Private Investigation from the Detective Training institute in San Juan California, earned a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Rider University and has obtained a second undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice from Thomas Edison State College.

He holds a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) from Seton Hall University and is now pursuing a Jurist Doctorate Degree in Law from Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

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☐ Craig Venson commented 11 months ago

I happened to click on this article from a website and was surprised to see an officer known by me to be a great community servant, Bernel Harrison. I'm glad to know that he received some much deserved accolades, even though he never seeks it nor does he do what he does for the attention. Congratulations Officer Harrison.