

Sharon Maria Williams began her journey as an educator at Arthur A. Richards Jr. High School in 1978. She left Arthur Richards School in 1985 when she accepted a position at the University of the Virgin Islands Extension Service from 1985 to 1988. In 1988 she joined the faculty at St. Croix Central High School. She remained there until 2007 when she retired, ending a fruitful, career as an educator. Over the span of those 30 years Sharon taught the strata of students from preteens to teenagers to adults, who in some cases were much older and had more life experience than her.

Long before Sharon embarked on the road to receiving her formal education she was trained and instructed by her mother Mrs. Inez Williams. Her mother was a classy lady with impeccable taste. It was in her kitchen that the love of cooking and all things relating to food preparation was sparked in Sharon. In that family Sharon lived and learned the value of service to others. This was a home where everyone, from princes to paupers, were welcomed openly and treated equally well.

Every Governor, of the U.S. Virgin Islands, was graced to sit and partake at the table of Mrs. Inez Byron Williams. They came out of friendship and political affiliation with her husband, Mr. Patrick Williams. They left with great admiration, love and respect for the charming Mrs. Williams.

Other members of her family also played a major role in developing Sharon's love for cooking. Her aunt Icilma Byron Christian stirs up some of the best kallaloo you can taste. Another aunt, Mrs. Florabell Byron Miller, is highly recognized around St. Croix for her tart making. Sharon was also mentored by distinguished ladies in the field of cooking and home making, namely, Mrs. Lena Schulterbrandt and Mrs. Olivia Henry.

In 1978 Sharon graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in home economics from Cheney State College. In 1983, she graduated with a Master of Science degree in Special Education from the University of Phoenix. Without a doubt Ms. Sharon Williams entered the arena well prepared for the rigorous profession of teaching.

Armed with her educational background, pedagogical trainings, personal development and skills Ms. Sharon Williams was duly prepared. She had complete knowledge of the curriculum, its standards, outlines, textbook contents, methodologies, and best practices. She was capable of entering any classroom on any level and delivering a great lesson. She did so many times.

In her classes she impressed on her students the actuality that cooking is as much an Art as it is a Science. She clearly explained the scientific facts drawn from biology, chemistry, and physics to help her students understand why and how certain techniques must be applied to cooking. She also made her students aware in the other direction. She encouraged that it is acceptable to be spontaneous in the kitchen, to depart from a recipe and apply your own creativity to the mix. That's what makes cooking an Art form.

The teacher, herself, is known for making adaptations to her recipes. Sharon will make a dish that calls for salmon, the first time. Then make the dish with shrimp, conch, lobster the second time around.

When it came to adaptability in the classroom, Ms. Sharon Williams was first rated. God blessed her with the gift of patience. Her positive attitude and engaging personality naturally carried over in her teaching style. She believed in making real personal connections with her students and peers. She practiced encouraging her students to explore, learn new methods, expand their knowledge to change the trajectory of their lives. She shared warm hugs. She was committed to the idea that her classroom would be a space where all her students felt accepted and cared for. She was adept at nonverbal communication. If she detected something was off with one of her students her reaction would be a direct eye contact, a nod of her head, a smile of acknowledgment and a look that says "let's have a conversation".

Sharon Williams was the consummate Home Economics teacher. she taught Nutrition, Cooking Parenting Skills, Budgeting, Consumer Education, Clothing Construction, Sewing, Interpersonal Relationships and Human Sexuality. All of these topics presented occasions for deep discussion and dialogue. Quite often, the expressions, questions, and ideas from the students were unfiltered. However, as long as their curiosity and responses were sincere and respectful Ms. Williams allowed them the freedom to express themselves in their words. Their delivery was addressed at a later time. Every student in the class was invited and expected to contribute. As you can imagine, some students shared feelings and secrets buried deep within. In today's terminology students would say the room was lit. These teaching and learning experiences required a delicate balancing act between maintaining boundaries and maximizing her students learning opportunities. There was nothing to be alarmed about.

Ms. Williams possessed the communication skills that are indispensable to teachers. She was an active listener. She knew when to lean in and redirect, when to reserve her comments and when to speak. She was attuned to all this in order to guide her students through the process of thinking critically, resolving conflicts, making wise choices and setting goals for their future.

Ms. Sharon Maria Williams years as an educator has long since ended. She has moved on to other phases and interests. One of which is her catering business. She is enjoying as she still be to demonstrate that for her cooking and feeding others in an act of love.

Across generations, grade levels, and various ages Sharon Willingly has maintained her zest for life. As a teacher, she made her mark. Her influence goes beyond many borders. Evidence of this is found in the multitude of former students who claim her as

their mother, their second mother, their godmother, or their coolest teacher. For everyone of them and for many more she is a treasured teacher and friend.