



## Department of Veterans Affairs

Washington, D.C.

### **Harriett Thorpe Heywood**

Harriett Thorpe Heywood was appointed Associate Director of the Center for Women Veterans on April 22, 2002. In this capacity, she advises and assists the Director of the Center for Women Veterans in the planning, direction, management and coordination of programs and activities of the Center.

Ms. Heywood's VA career began in the Newark, N.J. Regional Office where she served as a claims examiner and later a legal rating specialist. She was subsequently appointed to the District Counsel's Office where she attained the position of Assistant District Counsel. She also served as a member of the N.J. Bar Association's District Ethics Committee.

After moving to Washington, D.C., she joined the VA General Counsel staff where she coordinated a nationwide Debt Collection program and served as a member of the Professional Staff Groups specializing in the areas of civil rights and veterans benefits. She assisted in efforts to improve the benefits system, including eliminating repetitive and unnecessary regulations and providing legal support to a task force charged with reengineering the VA pension system. In 1998, when the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication was formed, she joined that office's legal staff.

Ms. Heywood's interest in the advancement of women prompted her appointment in 1996, as manager for VA Headquarters' Federal Women's Program. During her tenure, she initiated a number of programs for the advancement of women employees including an ongoing mentoring program and the Lunch and Learn Program, a program that allows employees to take courses for college credit at VA during lunchtime.

Ms. Heywood represented VA on the President's Interagency Council on Women's Mentoring Working Group in 1997-98. She has been called upon by Federally Employed Women to share advice on programs for the advancement of women at its National Conference. When VA embarked on its Welfare-to-Work program, she provided training to managers on mentoring.

In February 2001, the Secretary of Defense appointed Ms. Heywood to serve as a member of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services. In this capacity, she visited military installations, viewing working and living conditions, talking with women and men in the services, and listening to their concerns, issues, and suggestions. She also conferred with top officials and provided advice to the Department of Defense on how to best utilize women in the military services.

Ms. Heywood is a recipient of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs EEO Award (the Department's most prestigious EEO award), Headquarters Federal Women's Program Award, a Veterans Benefits Administration Commendation, and a Meritorious Public Service Award from the Essex County Bar Association. In June 2001, the Potomac Valley Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. presented Ms. Heywood with the Women with a Purpose Award for her efforts in making a difference on the national level.

Ms. Heywood received her Bachelors of Arts degree from Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, N.C. and her law degree from Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C. She is a member of the District of Columbia and New Jersey bars.

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