

SHEILAH D. VANCE, ESQ. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sheilah D. Vance, Esq. lives in Paoli, Pennsylvania and maintains a law practice in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Vance has a B.A. in Communications from Howard University, where she majored in journalism, and a J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center. She also works as Executive Director of the Institute for Educational Equity and Opportunity in Washington, DC, a nonprofit that focuses on public school finance research, education and training issues. Vance teaches Education Law at Villanova University Law School, where she previously was Assistant Dean for Academic Support and a legal writing professor.

Vance had a successful career as a journalist and editor before graduating from law school. She was born in Bryn Mawr, PA and has lived in the Main Line and Philadelphia area for most of her life.

Vance created The Elevator Group in 2004 to manage her creative pursuits. One New Year's Eve, she decided to take control of her future, step out on faith, and publish her first novel, *Chasing the 400*, which was released in February 2006. *Chasing the 400* went on to be honored as the first selection of the African American Museum of Philadelphia Book Club in September 2007. That novel is about a working class brother and sister in suburban Philadelphia in the 1950s who try to make their dreams of a better life come true despite obstacles being thrown in their way by some members of Philadelphia's Black Bourgeoisie, otherwise known as "the 400".

Vance released her second novel, *Land Mines*, in January 2009. That novel is about a woman who keeps a journal to help her navigate the land mines of separation, divorce, and dating again, and how she rebuilds her life through self-reflection, self-help, and the grace of God. *Land Mines* was recently named a finalist in categories of Multicultural Fiction and Best Cover Design Fiction in the 2009 Next Generation Indie Book Awards, sponsored by the Independent Book Publishers Group and open to independent publishers, small presses, university presses and self-publishers. It was also named a finalist in the categories of Fiction: Women's and Fiction: African American in the National Best Books 2009 awards.

She has grown The Elevator Group to a true independent publishing company publishing six other authors and at least eight other books through March 2010.

Vance received the 2006 Woman of Distinction Award from the Barristers Association of Philadelphia, a National Bar Association Chapter, for outstanding contributions to the legal profession, legal education and community service. She has published and presented extensively in the area of education law and legal education, including at Oxford University and the American Association of Law Schools.

She has been interviewed in numerous media outlets about *Chasing the 400*, and has given many talks about topics mentioned in the novel, such as the Black Bourgeoisie, African American social organizations, The Talented Tenth, and the history of the African American community in the Main Line area of Philadelphia.

Vance also has been interviewed and quoted in numerous media outlets about issues related to separation, divorce and dating again, including CNN Radio and *The Washington Post*. She is now doing presentations on many topics related to separation, divorce, dating again and rebuilding her life. They include: Top 10 Land Mines of Divorce, 10 Things Every Married Woman Should Know, Divorce from the Client's Perspective, How to Chase Your Dreams and Make them Come True, and Reinventing Yourself.

She is a member of the Penn Towne Chapter of The Links, Inc.; the Board of Directors of the American Red Cross, Southeastern Pennsylvania Chapter, and a recipient of its "Rookie Board Member of the Year Award" in 2009; the Board of Directors of Bethel Academy, an afterschool program at her church, Bethel AME in Ardmore, Pa., and a member of and former Counsel to the Main Line Chapter of the NAACP.

