

## **Outstanding Alumnus of the Year 2012**

A native of Bolivar County, Dr. William C. Bell is a 1982 graduate of Delta State University with a degree in biology and behavioral science. He is currently the Chief Executive Officer of Casey Family Programs, a position he has been in since January 2006. Casey Family Programs, based in Seattle, is the nation's largest operating foundation focused entirely on foster care and improving the child welfare system. As CEO, he chairs the executive team and is ultimately responsible for the vision, mission, strategies and objectives of the foundation.

According to Bell, Delta State University is very important to his family, and his time there has helped shape him as a person and in his professional career.

"Delta State has been very significant in terms of an educational opportunity for my family. My youngest sibling, Murray, is a graduate. Carrie (his older sister) graduated. My sister, Mae, took classes, as did my mom. It's been an incredible life-giving opportunity for us, and as our family numbers get smaller, we get closer to each other," said Bell. "I'm grateful for the opportunity Delta State has given me as I try to not only nurture and support all vulnerable children and families in this country, but also my own family."

Bell has over 30 year of experience in the human services field. Some of his past positions include executive vice president for child and family services at Casey Family Programs, commissioner of the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS), deputy commissioner of ACS's Division of Child Protection, deputy commissioner of field services and contract agency case management for the New York City Human Resources Administration, and associate executive director for Miracle Makers, a private sector minority-owned, not-for-profit child and family services organization in New York City.

Bell received his Ph.D. in Social Welfare and his masters of social work degree at Hunter College School of Social Work. He is a trustee for America's Promise Alliance, chair of the board of directors of the Association of Black Foundation Executives, a member of the board of Grantmakers for Children, Youth & Families and United Way of King County. Bell has served as a member of the American Bar Association's Commission on Youth at Risk, the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care, and the executive committee of the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators.

Bell has also served on the board of directors of the Council on Social Work Education and the Marguerite Casey Foundation, and as co-chair of the board of directors of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. He was awarded the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps Embracing the Legacy Award in 2012 for his tireless work to prevent child abuse and neglect and build communities of hope for America's vulnerable children. New York City's CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) honored Bell in 2010 for his contributions and lifelong commitment to improving the lives of children in foster care.

Other award Bell has received include: the Vincent de Francis Award from the American Humane Association, the Lifetime of Service Award from City Year Seattle/King County, the 2007 International Rhoda G. Sarnat Award from the National Association of Social Workers Foundation, the 2005 Valeria

Bullard Black Administrator of the Year Award from the Black Administrators in Child Welfare, and the 2004 Betsey R. Rosenbaum Award for Excellence in Public Child Welfare Administration from the National Association for Public Child Welfare Administrators. In 2003, he was inducted into the Hunter College of Alumni Hall of Fame.