



In honor of Black History Month, Dillard University is spotlighting notable alumni who have made contributions to their communities and to African-American culture. Our current two subjects have made great strides in the rights for women and for African-Americans in higher education. Dillard alumnae Dr. Barbara Thompson and Ms. Pearlle Elloie were trailblazers in the 1960s. Both women were part of a lawsuit to force Tulane University to open its doors to African American students. Though neither of these women set out to become civil rights advocates, the need to further their educations led them to look to Tulane and legally force them to accept them as students in the 1960s, a time when the university was for whites only. The women were honored for their efforts in a special ceremony held at Dillard University during the MLK Week of Peace in January, 2013 and will be honored by Tulane University on Wednesday, February 27, 2013.

Pearlie H. Elloie Director, Office for Children, Youth and Families, Total Community Action, Inc.

Pearlie H. Elloie is the director of the Office for Children, Youth and Families at Total Community Action, Inc., where she has worked since 1965. She directs, administers and coordinates all child development, family development, and education related programs operated by and for the agency, including Head Start and Early Head Start. A native of Houston and a graduate of Dillard University, she had dedicated her life's work to nurturing the physical, social, emotional, cognitive and cultural development of young people. She has worked to inform policymakers of the value of quality early education and its role in preparing children for success. Elloie coordinated the first collaborative childcare effort in the city of New Orleans, Community Coordinated Child Care. She was a founding member and later president of the New Orleans Council for Young Children, a founding member of the Early Childhood and Family Learning Foundation, and a charter member of the Southern University board of supervisors from 1975 to 1994. From September 2006 to December 2009, she served as acting executive director of Total Community Action, Inc. Elloie's pioneering spirit was most evident in the suit she and Barbara Guillory filed against Tulane University's board of trustees to admit African Americans to the school. In 1965, she became the first African American to complete the two-year graduate program in social work at the Tulane University School of Social Work. In

1997, she earned a master's in quality management from the Loyola University School of Business. Her many awards include the YWCA's award for Outstanding Service and Commitment to Women and Children, and the Tulane University School of Social Work's Instrument of Change award. She has one son, five grandchildren and one great-grandchild. She is a member of Christian Unity Baptist Church.

Dr. Barbara Guillory Thompson Retired Chair, Division of Social Sciences, Dillard University

Dr. Barbara Guillory Thompson served Dillard University in many capacities for 42 years. She retired from the university as chair of the Division of Social Sciences, chair of the sociology department, university marshal, and chair of the tenure and promotions committee. Thompson also served as director of institutional research from 1974-1976. She is a native New Orleanian, a product of the public school system, and a cum laude sociology graduate from Dillard's Class of 1957. She earned an M.A. in sociology from Louisiana State University in 1960. She was the first Black female student to live in the dormitory at LSU. She wrote a thesis on the "Career Patterns of Negro Lawyers in New Orleans." By 1960 she was ready to challenge another educational barrier, and became a litigant in a class action suit against Tulane University. The court decision made possible the attendance of Black students at the graduate and undergraduate levels. She completed the requirements for the Ph.D. degree by writing a dissertation on "The Black Family: A Case for Change and Survival in White America." Thompson made a tremendous impact outside the academy by advocating equity for voiceless government workers. The City Council of New Orleans appointed her a member of the New Orleans Civil Service Commission from 1981-1992, and chair of the august body from 1989-1992. She was the first Black, the first woman, and the first non-attorney to be named chair. Thompson was active in numerous professional and learned societies, such as the American Sociological Association and the Southern Sociological Association. She has numerous publications, some written independently and some co-authored with her late husband Daniel C. Thompson. She is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, ranging from membership in the Louisiana Black History Hall of Fame, to citations from the governor, mayor, and UNCF. She is currently a board member for Chatham School for Girls, a consultant for Minority Issue with Innovations Consulting, Inc., and a proposal reader for the Department of Education.

