

*Guest speaker for NACA's
5th Grade Honors and Awards
Closing Exercise*



M. Joycelyn Elders, M.D.
Former and First African-American
U.S. Surgeon General
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A native of Schaal, AR., Dr. Elders is the oldest of eight children. Now a Professor Emeritus of pediatric endocrinology, at the University of Arkansas School of Medical Science. Dr. Elders never saw a physician prior to her first year in college. At the age of 15 she received a scholarship from the United Methodist Church to attend Philander Smith College in Little Rock, AR. Upon graduation at age 18, she entered the U.S. Army as a first lieutenant and received training as a physical therapist.

Dr. Elders attended the University of Arkansas Medical School (UAMS) on the G.I. Bill. After graduation in 1960, she was an intern at the University of Minnesota Hospital in Minneapolis and did a pediatric residency and an endocrinology fellowship at the University of Arkansas Medical Center in Little Rock and she ascended the academic ladder to full professorship after her fellowship and board certification in 1976. She also holds a Master of Science degree in biochemistry.

Dr. Elders joined the faculty at UAMS as a professor of pediatrics and received board certification as a pediatric endocrinologist in 1978. Based on her studies of growth in children and the treatment of hormone-related illnesses, she has written many articles for medical research publications. She was appointed Director of the Arkansas Department of Health in October of 1987. While serving as director, she was elected President of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers.

Dr. Elders was nominated as Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service by President Clinton on July 1st, 1993, confirmed by the Senate September 7th, and sworn in on September 8th. Dr. Elders served in this post until January 1995 following which, she returned to the University of Arkansas Children's Hospital until her retirement on June 30th, 1998.

Dr. Elders has been active in civic affairs as a member of the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce, Northside YMCA and Youth Homes. She was listed in A100 Outstanding Women in Arkansas@, APersonalities of the South@ and ADistinguished Women in America@. She has won awards such as the Arkansas Democrat's Woman of the Year, the National Governor's Association Distinguished Service Award, the American Medical Association's Dr. Nathan Davis Award, the De Lee Humanitarian Award, and the National Coalition of 100 Black Women's Candace Award for Health Science. Dr. Elders has also received multiple honorary Doctorate of medical sciences degrees and honorary doctorate of letters degrees.

Dr. Elders says her greatest achievement is that she married Oliver Elders and they have two sons, Eric and Kevin.