

# Willie Gary

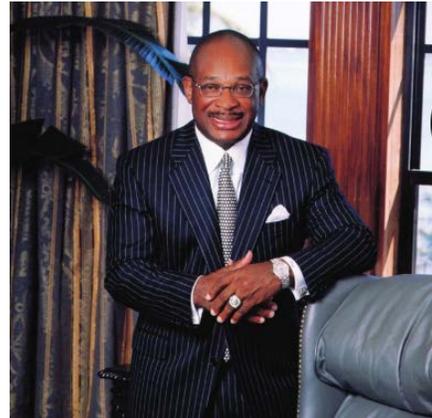
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Today, Willie Gary is a wealthy man and one of the country's most respected trial lawyers.

His life, however, did not begin with private jetliners and global travel. Growing up in Indiantown, Florida, as one of 11 children of migrant workers, Gary was an ambitious child who had an unwavering dream to earn a college education. His tenacity led him to Shaw University, where he earned a degree in business administration, which he flowed with a law degree from North Carolina Central University in 1974.

Upon earning his law degree, Gary and his wife Gloria, his childhood sweetheart, opened the first African American law firm in his hometown; which has since grown into the thriving national partnership Gary, Williams, Finney, Lewis, Watson & Sperando, P.L. (now known as Gary, Williams, Parenti, Watson and Gary, P.L.L.C).

Despite being named one of the "100 Most Influential Black Americans" by Ebony magazine in May 2002, Gary has not forgotten his poor beginnings and is dedicated to giving back to the community. In 1991, Gary donated \$10.1 million to his Alma matter, Shaw University, and has since given millions of dollars to dozens of



historically black colleges and universities throughout the U.S. He also committed \$100,000 to Coastal Health Care Services, which provides 24-hour medical care to migrant workers and residents.

"It's the right thing to do" he said of his community service activities, which run the gamut from fundraising for Evergreen Baptist Church in his hometown to working with the Corporate Angel Network, Flights for Cancer Patients.

With all his successes, one of the greatest Gary believes is having the chance to share his personal time and wisdom with young people.

When he speaks to young people, Gary's message reads like the instruction manual to his own life's success: "Set your goals high. Don't take no for an answer. Whatever you do, do it well, and do it right the first time."