

The Karson Institute for Race, Peace & Social Justice

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY MARYLAND



Karsonya Wise Whitehead, Ph.D.

[Dr. Karsonya “Kaye” Wise Whitehead](#) is an associate professor of communication and African and African American Studies at [Loyola University Maryland](#) and the founding director of [The Karson Institute for Race, Peace & Social Justice](#). She is the host of the award-winning radio show [Today with Dr. Kaye](#) on [WEAA](#), 88.9 FM and the 2021 recipient of a Regional Edward R. Murrow Award for Excellence in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

She is the author of four books, including *RaceBrave: new and selected works*; *Notes from a Colored Girl: The Civil War Pocket Diaries of Emilie Frances Davis*, which received both the 2015 Darlene Clark Hine Book Award from the Organization of American Historians and the 2014 Letitia Woods Brown Book Award from the Association of Black Women Historians; and *Letters to My Black Sons: Raising Boys in a Post-Racial America*. She is a K-12 master teacher in African American history; an award-winning curriculum writer and lesson plan developer; and an award-winning former Baltimore City middle school teacher.

In 2021, Dr. Whitehead was selected by the Baltimore Business Journal to receive the [Leaders in Diversity Award](#). In 2020, Dr. Whitehead was selected by [The Daily Record](#) as one of Maryland’s Top 100 Women. In 2019, she received the Collegium Visionary Award from the College of Holy Cross; the Exceptional Merit in Media Award ([EMMA](#)) from the National Women’s Political Caucus; the *Baltimore Sun* named her as one of Baltimore’s 25 “Women to Watch in 2019”; and *Essence* magazine included her on the 2019 “[Woke 100 List](#),” of “black women advocating for change.” As one of only a few daily drive-time afternoon radio shows hosted by a black woman, *Today with Dr. Kaye* received the 2021 and 2020 Chesapeake Associated Press Award for Outstanding Editorial or Commentary; the 2019 Chesapeake Associated Press Award for Outstanding Talk Show, and the second place Award for Outstanding Editorial or Commentary. In 2020, the *Baltimore Sun* selected Dr. Kaye as the Best Radio Host.

In February 2016, Dr. Whitehead received the Joan B. Kroc’s Institute for International Peace Studies “Distinguished Alumni” Award for her work as a peace activist, scholar, filmmaker, writer, and poet. In 2014, she received the 2014 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC); was selected as one of the top 25 women professors in Maryland by Online Schools Maryland; and in 2013, received Loyola University Maryland’s Faculty Award for Excellence in Engaged Scholarship for her work documenting the stories of women who are temporarily experiencing homelessness.

Dr. Whitehead also received the 2006 Gilder Lehrman Preserve America Maryland History Teacher of the Year Award (sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and the Maryland State Department of Education); was one of 50 alumni to receive the Distinguished Black Alumni Award from the University of Notre Dame, Indiana (2005); and was a winner of both the Langston Hughes, David Diop, Etheridge Knight Poetry Award (1999, 2000) and the Zora Neale Hurston Creative Writing Award (1998) from the Gwendolyn Brooks Creative Writing Center at the University of Chicago.

Prior to her work in academia, Dr. Whitehead was a documentary filmmaker with MetroTV, a PBS-affiliate, and a senior producer for Music Television Networks (MTV). In 2001, she directed and produced *Twin Towers: A History*, a documentary film that describes the technical problems that were overcome and challenges the ironworkers faced in constructing the landmark buildings, and recounts the daredevil stunts that the buildings attracted. The film was nominated for an Emmy in 2002—Dr. Whitehead's third nomination. It has since become the second-largest selling film about 9/11 and airs regularly on PBS stations around the country.

Dr. Whitehead writes a bi-monthly column, "Conversations with Dr. Kaye," for the Baltimore *Afro* newspaper based upon her deep ethnographic study within the Black Butterfly neighborhoods of Baltimore City. She is also one of the most sought-after keynote speakers in the country, having given over 500 keynotes worldwide.

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