

Marquette University: Releases “Paying it Forward” conversation series with Dr. Howard Fuller

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MILWAUKEE — Marquette University has released “Paying it Forward: Lessons for a new generation from Dr. Howard Fuller’s life on activism’s front lines,” a conversation series devoted to the issues that have driven Fuller’s activism and mission around education reform and social justice.

The discussions capture some aspects of Fuller’s legacy, experiences, and impact as an advocate and activist working for educational opportunities and social justice in the Milwaukee community. The series is designed to foster conversations and inspire students and future generations of activists in our community.

The conversations were recorded in the Lubar Center for Public Policy Research and Civic Education at Marquette Law School. All four videos are available on the [Marquette Law School website](#).

Fuller was joined by Alan Borsuk and Mike Gousha, distinguished fellows in law and public policy at the Lubar Center, and students from Marquette University and area high schools. Topics include:

- **Discussion 1: Big picture lessons from efforts to improve education outcomes for students, particularly low-income Black students, in Milwaukee and nationwide.** From the debate over the future of North Division High School in the 1970s until now, Fuller offers perspectives on trying to improve both big city public school systems and schools outside those systems. What makes it so hard to get better results?
 - [WATCH DISCUSSION 1](#)

- **Discussion 2: Lessons from the death of Ernest Lacy.** What happened when Lacy died in Milwaukee police custody in 1981, and what has and has not changed since then. Fuller, who along with Michael McGee, Sr., led protests in the aftermath of Lacy's death, puts the case in the context of today.
 - [WATCH DISCUSSION 2](#)
- **Discussion 3: Milwaukee's experience with school vouchers, charter schools and parent choice more broadly.** The history, the impact of choice, the successes and failures, and what the future could hold in Milwaukee and beyond.
 - [WATCH DISCUSSION 3](#)
- **Discussion 4: Paths for pursuing change.** What are the pluses and minuses of working within the system or outside the system? What has Fuller seen and learned from his time both as an activist outsider and as a leading insider in several government bureaucracies?
 - [WATCH DISCUSSION 4](#)

Fuller, distinguished professor emeritus of education, retired from Marquette in 2020. An outspoken advocate and activist for educational opportunities, he initially joined the university over 40 years earlier as associate director for the Educational Opportunity Program from 1979-83 and later founded the Institute for the Transformation of Learning in 1995 to provide quality educational options for students in low-income families.

Throughout his career, Fuller has been a staunch promoter of parent choice and a passionate champion for the equitable education of African American children. In addition to his positions at Marquette, he also served as superintendent of Milwaukee Public Schools, senior fellow in the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, secretary of Wisconsin's Department of Employment Relations, dean of General Education at Milwaukee Area Technical College, and director of the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services.