

ISLANDWIDE

ERASE Racism adds 2 to board

BY NEWSDAY STAFF

The former senior judge of the Nassau County Court is one of two new members joining the board of directors of ERASE Racism, a Syosset-based organization committed to addressing prejudice on Long Island.

Jerald Carter, 67, of Mineola, has had an extensive career in law, first prosecuting misdemeanor and felony cases in the Nassau County district attorney's office in the 1980s, and later adjudicating from the bench after being elected in November 1997 to the Nassau County District Court. He retired as the senior judge of the Nassau County Court in December 2017.

Carter said he wants to address educational funding, toxic waste, racial steering and other issues affecting minority communities. Regarding steering, he cited Newsday's recent "Long Island Divided" investigation, which uncovered biased and unequal treatment by real estate agents toward black, Asian and Hispanic homebuyers and minority communities.

"Long Island is finally recognizing there's a segregation problem, which has always been a concern of mine," Carter said. "The fact that some people are living in communities here that are more segregated than the Deep South is mind-boggling to me."

ERASE Racism states on its website that it is "a regional organization that leads public policy advocacy campaigns and related initiatives to promote racial equity in areas such as housing, public school education, and community development." It has a 12-member board whose directors — they include Howard A. Glickstein, former staff director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and Christina Vargas, chief diversity officer

and Title IX coordinator at Suffolk County Community College — serve one-year terms that can be renewed annually.

Jim Smith, 71, a Port Washington resident and former Newsday reporter and editor, is the other new board member. He could not be reached for comment, but has a long list of community service, including being a frequent volunteer at ERASE Racism workshops and activities.

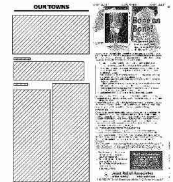
Smith set up a task force committed to fighting against racism after visiting the site where Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, was fatally shot by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, in August 2014. His advocacy helped the organization win a \$100,000 grant from the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock, in Manhasset, that was used on a key initiative to address racial segregation in housing and schools. He is current vice president and former president of United Veterans Beacon House, a Bay Shore-based nonprofit that assists former service members and their families.

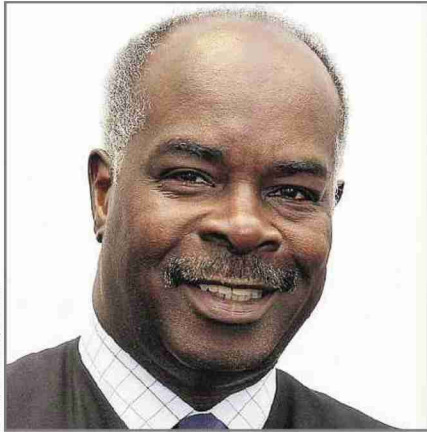
Elaine Gross, founder and president of the organization, said she believes the real-world experience that Carter and Smith bring will benefit ERASE Racism's board.

"Judge Carter is very familiar with the legal system, and a lot of our housing work has much more of a legal aspect," she said. "And in the case of Jim Smith, he has been a volunteer for the organization in the past, related to our education equity initiative."

Carter said he looks forward to meeting with minority residents on Long Island and hearing their concerns.

"In the climate in which we live in now, this organization has a special place and a special purpose," Carter said. "We are all dedicated to the idea that a more diverse board helps society."





PATRICK E. MCCARTHY



ERASE RACISM

Retired Judge Jerald Carter, left, and former Newsday staff reporter Jim Smith.