



## **Remembering Dr. Vera King Farris**

**(July 18, 1938 -- November 28, 2009)**



The late Dr. Vera King Farris was the third president of [Richard Stockton College of New Jersey](#). President Emerita Farris served for 20-years from 1983 until her retirement in 2003. A distinguished woman scientist, she became the first female [African-American](#) president of a [New Jersey](#) public college, and one of the first in the nation.

Dr. Farris was a native of [Atlantic City, New Jersey](#) and attended [Atlantic City High School](#), graduating third in the class of 1954. She attended Tuskegee Institute (now [Tuskegee University](#)), earning a degree in biology in 1959. She later earned master's and doctorate degrees in [zoology](#) from the [University of Massachusetts Amherst](#). She held administrative and teaching positions at the [State University of New York at Stony Brook](#) and [Brockport](#), and the [University of Michigan](#). She returned home to New Jersey to become Vice President for Academic Affairs at Kean University in Union.

Under the outstanding leadership of Dr. Vera King Farris, Stockton became a nationally ranked institution, increasing SAT scores, minority enrollment and retention. She also established one of the nation's first Holocaust Resource Centers and the first Master's program in Holocaust and Genocide Studies. During her tenure the College constructed eight buildings, including the Sports Center, West Quad Health Sciences Building, one of the world's largest geothermal heating and cooling systems, and the Michael Graves designed Arts and Sciences Buildings.

How proud Dr. Vera King Farris would be to know that in the tradition of AAUW NJ's own highly successful "Teen Tech" program, members of the Atlantic and Cape May branches will hold the state's first **"Tween Tech"** event on Friday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, at Stockton University. What a role model Dr. Farris is for **"Tween Tech,"** the one-day STEM program for girls in 6th to 8th grades. As "Tween Tech" stimulates and guides the interests of middle school girls in science, technology, engineering, and math, Dr. Farris' spirit will certainly be with this innovative program on the campus of her beloved Stockton University.

**Janice Harris Jackson - Retired Kean University Educator**  
**AAUW "Voices" Project, "Leadership the Eleanor Roosevelt Way" and AAUW NJ Virtual Branch**

<http://aauw-nj.aauw.net/projects/tween-tech/>