



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH All of God's Creation

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, February 12, 2023

Environmental Justice Pioneers

“This month is Black History Month, and Interfaith Power & Light is honoring Black communities and individuals who have taken bold and just climate action and advocated for the rights of everyone to live in a safe and healthy environment.

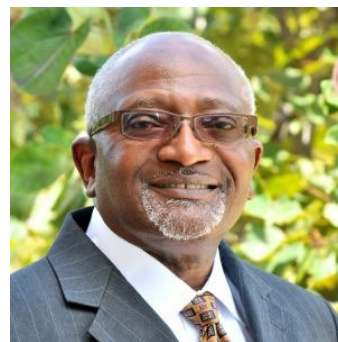
From scientists such as **Annie Easley**, who developed computer code that was used to analyze wind and solar energy projects, as well as batteries for early hybrid vehicles, to activists and scholars such as **Dr. Robert Bullard**, who campaigned against harmful waste being dumped in predominantly Black neighborhoods in the southern states of the US since the 1970s, to IPL's Board Chair Emeritus, **Rev. Dr. Gerald Durley**, who preaches and teaches about the link between pollution and civil rights, Black leaders have always been at the forefront of the climate and environmental justice movement.

The environmental justice movement started in a small, mainly African American town in Warren County, North Carolina. The term environmental justice, which refers to the disproportionate harm that low-income communities and communities of color face from the causes and effects of pollution, was coined in response to the systemic inequities that many communities of color face, such as illegal toxic dumping. It was leaders of color who led efforts to convene hundreds of communities of color across the country and members of the federal, state, and local government at the **first National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991** in Washington, DC, to create and adopt the [17 key principles of environmental justice](#).

The environmental justice movement addresses a statistical fact: people who live and work in America's most polluted environments are people of color and the poor. As people of faith and conscience, we are called by our beliefs and values to carry on the legacy of these Black leaders by ensuring that everyone has access to healthy and safe environments, regardless of race, class, gender, socio-economic status, or another social status. It is our moral obligation to help create a just and livable society for all....” (Rev. Susan Hendershot, *Interfaith Power & Light*, February 3, 2023)



Annie Jean Easley
(April 23, 1933 – June 25, 2011)
was an American computer scientist, mathematician, and rocket scientist.



Dr. Robert Bullard is a distinguished Professor of Urban Planning and Environmental Policy and Director of the Bullard Center for Environmental and Climate Justice. He is also known as the father of environmental justice.