



**The Mercer Group, Inc.**

## **GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA EQUAL OPPORTUNITY DIRECTOR**

June 9, 2015

Summary

**Gwendolyn D. Saffo**

- **Master in Political Science; Bachelor – Criminal Justice**
- **Interim Equal Opportunity Director, City of Gainesville**
- **Salary: \$75,600**
- **Internet Research**
- **January 28, 2015** – Appointed Interim Director Office of Equal Opportunity - Gainesville, FL
  - <http://www.gainesville.com/article/20150128/GUARDIAN/150129588>
- **April 6, 2015** – Gainesville article – neutral mention as Interim Director
  - <http://www.gainesville.com/article/20150406/ARTICLES/150409734?p=3&tc=pg>
- **March 13, 2015** – Gainesville article – neutral mention as Interim Director
  - <http://www.wuft.org/news/2015/03/13/gainesville-responds-to-low-grades-on-naacp-report-card/>
- **Previous President – National Forum for Black Administrators – North Central Florida chapter**
- **Various news articles - neutral**

**THE MERCER GROUP, INC.**

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**LETTER OF INTEREST  
&  
RESUME**

**THE MERCER GROUP, INC.**  
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## GWENDOLYN DELORES SAFFO

3432 NW 37th Avenue Gainesville, Florida 32605 • saffogd@cityofgainesville.org • (352) 339-3977

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission:

This correspondence serves to express my interest in becoming the next **Equal Opportunity Director** for the City of Gainesville. I am a consummate professional with many years of experience. I possess a broad base of knowledge that spans over twenty-nine (29) years. I am committed to Equal Opportunity, Diversity Management, Affirmative Action, Human Resources/Employee Relations, and the Small & Minority Business Enterprise. I am a highly responsible and forward thinking leader with a proven record of a proactive commitment to equal opportunity and diversity.

Having served in the capacity of Interim Equal Opportunity Director twice; first in 2009 and now since January 2015, I am a proven and trusted asset. I have provided managerial and administrative leadership and policy guidance to the City Commission in all areas of Equal Opportunity. I am dedicated and loyal to the City of Gainesville; both the organization and the community as a whole. As such, I am more than capable and well-equipped to assume the position of the Equal Opportunity Director on a permanent basis. I am uniquely qualified in that I will bring stability to the office as well as a new and positive direction. This allows the office to continue building upon the strength and integrity that currently exists while providing a transformative vision for the future.

My experience shows that I am skilled as a human resources professional, mediator, investigator, diversity trainer and collective bargaining negotiator. This experience has equipped me with excellent problem solving skills in addition to complementing my conflict resolution skills. I have also developed many positive relationships in the organization and the community that will allow me to continue to foster collaborative and diplomatic partnerships.

I am a proven asset and I have the respect of my peers, city staff, the community and the general public. Having served in the field for so many years, I have demonstrated an understanding of the needs of a diverse and progressive community such as ours. I clearly understand the importance of and the necessity for a holistic and balanced strategy which is inclusive of the office, the organization, and the community. I believe in continuous improvement. I have the ability to effectively and efficiently manage and lead both people and processes in a positive way that is motivational and promotes excellence. I am fair, ethical, just, consistent and impartial in my deliberations. Through my leadership opportunities, I possess the ability to be bold, aggressive and unintimidated, with the assurance that I am achieving positive and meaningful results. I have a record of exhibiting sound judgement, composure and patience when dealing with stressful situations.

I have always been highly visible and active in the community. My community outreach activities include speaking to various community-based organizations and businesses regarding the goals and objectives of the Office of Equal Opportunity and serving as a participant and leader in community organizations. I am committed to listening to the varied opinions of the citizens and ensuring that their input is heard and respected. Accessibility, sensitivity and responsiveness to the needs of both internal and external stakeholders are a must; but, at the same time, one must be able to maintain the credibility and integrity of the office through neutrality of actions.

My educational background includes a Master's Degree in Political Science with a certification in Public Administration and a Bachelor's of Arts Degree in Criminal Justice/Public Administration. I have a background in the legal field and I have been certified as a County Court Mediator through the State of Florida Supreme Court. I am a certified Diversity Trainer and I am also certified in the areas of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action from Cornell University. In addition, I have taken numerous courses relating to the equal opportunity investigative process.

My experience is vast both in the Office of Equal Opportunity and in the Gainesville community. This position will afford me the opportunity to make a positive impact while continuing to build upon the foundation of strength and integrity that already exists in this Office. I look forward to continuing the positive working relationships that have been established with the Mayor and Commissioners. Thank you for considering my application. I will await the opportunity to discuss my credentials with you.

Sincerely,

*Gwendolyn D. Saffo*

Gwendolyn D. Saffo



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## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY DIRECTOR

**-Committed to Equal Opportunity, Diversity, Affirmative Action, and Small & Minority Business Enterprise-**

*A highly committed, loyal, forward-thinking, innovative and results oriented leader.*

*A leader focused on achieving exceptional results with experience and knowledge that spans over twenty-nine (29) years.*

*A proven well-respected individual that understands the importance of and the necessity for a holistic and balanced strategy, inclusive of the office, the organization and the community.*

*An accessible and sensitive leader who is responsive to the needs of both internal and external stakeholders, while maintaining the credibility and integrity of the office through neutrality of actions.*

## EDUCATION

<u>University of Florida</u> , Gainesville, FL <i>Master of Arts in Political Science</i>	1983-1984
<u>University of Florida</u> , Gainesville, FL <i>College of Law</i>	1981-1982
<u>Shaw University</u> , Raleigh, NC <i>Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice/ Public Administration (summa cum laude)</i>	1977-1981

## TRAININGS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Certified Diversity Trainer, C. Cathy Harris, Inc.

Certified County Court Mediator Supreme Court of Florida

Equal Opportunity Certification - Cornell University, School of Industrial & Labor Relations

Affirmative Action Certification - Cornell University, School of Industrial & Labor Relations

Advanced Instructional Techniques (Train-the-Trainer) - Langevin Learning Services

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**INTERIM EQUAL OPPORTUNITY DIRECTOR**, City of Gainesville 2015-Present

- Provides leadership and policy guidance to the City Commission for the implementation of a comprehensive equal opportunity and diversity program in areas relating to equal opportunity, affirmative action, minority & small business enterprise, disability programs and diversity initiatives.
- Responsible for the budgeting, staffing and strategic planning goals of the Office of Equal Opportunity.
- Develops training and conducts workshops and strategic initiatives related to diversity and equal opportunity, in employment, housing, public accommodation, fair credit and purchasing.
- Reviews and approves all changes to personnel requisition action forms and current or proposed city employment policies, procedures and guidelines, job descriptions, and purchasing policies and procedures for compliance with equal opportunity laws.
- Responsible for the preparation and implementation of the city's affirmative action and diversity initiatives.
- Conducts independent research, and makes recommendations based on developments in equal opportunity law and policy and collects information to evaluate employment practices and determine whether there may be systemic discrimination.
- Supervises and evaluates staff.

## GWENDOLYN DELORES SAFFO – PAGE 2

**SENIOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY SPECIALIST**, City of Gainesville 2003-Present

- Develops, implements and administers the City's Affirmative Action plan for both General Government & Gainesville Regional Utilities.
- Responsible for the implementation and administration of the Dismantling Racism Community Initiative and other special community outreach activities.
- Provides leadership and policy guidance in all areas relating to equal opportunity affirmative action and diversity in the absence of the Equal Opportunity Director.
- Works closely with the Equal Opportunity Director on budgeting, staffing and strategic planning goals of the Office of Equal Opportunity.
- Investigates complaints of discrimination and makes recommendations.
- Conducts independent research, based on developments in equal opportunity law.
- Conducts studies and collects information to evaluate employment practices and determine whether there may be systemic discrimination.
- Supervises and evaluates staff

**CONSULTANT**, University of Florida Office of the Vice Provost-Affirmative Action 2003-2003

- Conducted independent research, and made recommendations to managerial staff based on developments in equal opportunity law and policy.
- Responsible for planning the Regional Affirmative Action conference & other special projects as assigned.

**PERSONNEL/EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COORDINATOR**, School Board of Alachua County 2001-2003

- Conducted investigations of all employment complaints.
- Member of the collective bargaining negotiation team for career service personnel.
- Advised supervisory staff in the area of progressive discipline.
- Personnel representative on administrative interview teams, and advisory groups.
- Supervised and evaluated staff.

**CAREER SERVICES SUPERVISOR**, School Board of Alachua County 1994-2001

- Assisted in the planning, implementation and evaluation of all personnel functions.
- Screened, interviewed and evaluated applicants' education and experience for job referral, assigned salaries and approved other employee status changes.
- Provided career counseling to Career Service applicants and assisted in the administration of the disciplinary policy.
- Member of the collective bargaining negotiation team for career service personnel.
- Supervised and evaluated staff.

**HUMAN RESOURCES ANALYST**, City of Gainesville 1987-1994

- Advised managerial staff on personnel policies and procedures and EEO/AA guidelines.
- Conducted field/desk audits and other specialized technical research of classification, pay benefit and employment data and developed related reports and recommendations.
- Screened, interviewed, and evaluated applicants' education and experience.



# **GWENDOLYN DELORES SAFFO – PAGE 3**

**FAIR HOUSING SPECIALIST**, City of Gainesville

1985-1987

- Drafted the City's First Fair Housing ordinance for approval by U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD).
- Conducted investigations of all complaints of housing discrimination.
- Maintained working agreements with federal, state, and county agencies.
- Provided semi-annual reports to the City Commission concerning the status of housing, discrimination within the city.

## **VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES & ORGANIZATIONS**

### **VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES**

Take Stock in Children (Gainesville Enrichment Mentoring Initiative), The Education Foundation  
 Guardian Ad Litem, Gainesville, Alachua County, FL  
 Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Greater Gainesville  
 Volunteer Coordinator for Phyllis Kotey for Alachua County Judge

### **ORGANIZATIONS**

National Diversity Council, Florida Affiliate  
 Focus On Leadership  
 Leadership Gainesville XX  
 Society for Human Resources Management  
 National Forum for Black Public Administrators, President – North Central Florida Chapter (2007-2012)  
 Florida Sunshine Alumni Chapter-Shaw University, President (2014-Present)  
 Eastside Advocacy Group for Youth, Treasurer (2010-2012)  
 Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Gainesville Alumnae Chapter, Treasurer (2011-2013)  
 Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Gainesville Alumnae Chapter, President (2001-2005; 2007-2011)  
 The Visionaires, Inc.  
 Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Usher

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## PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

### **Honorable Judge Denise Ferrero**

County Court Judge  
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### **Honorable State Judge Phyllis Kotey**

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### **Honorable Alexander Killens**

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Governor's Office  
Former Commissioner, State of North Carolina  
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Former Special Assistant, State of North Carolina  
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### **Richard Williams**

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