

Virtual Mentor

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VIEWPOINT

Gary LeRoy, MD

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As an African-American, Dr. Gary LeRoy grew up in Dayton, Ohio, at a time when people were segregated based on the color of their skin. "It was an unspoken law that if you were African-American, you stayed on the west side. I was told never to go on the east side of Dayton. I couldn't live with that. There are poor people on this side of town and that side of town, and my challenge is to bridge that gap and dispel those rumors that cross the river." In many respects, Dr. LeRoy's career is marked by his tenacity to overcome barriers and make positive changes in his community.

As a young man, Dr. LeRoy never thought about attending college, let alone becoming a physician. Instead, he intended to find an assembly line job after high school. But, his guidance counselor convinced him to go to college, and he eventually enrolled in and graduated from Wright State University. He credits his success to the guidance that he received from his professors and other "angels" who ultimately inspired him to apply to medical school. Dr. LeRoy graduated from Wright State School of Medicine, after which he completed a residency in family practice.

As the medical director of the East Dayton Health Center, Dr. LeRoy cares for a poor community in Appalachia, many of whom are white. "At first, they didn't feel comfortable with a black man taking care of them. But patience is like little drops of water that gradually wear away the stones of misconception. Now, I have patients that will tell family members [that they refuse to see any other doctor]." In addition to his clinical work, Dr. LeRoy chairs the Ohio Academy of Family Physicians Minority Health Affairs Committee offering his experience and guidance to minority physicians, residents, and students. He also sits on the Board of Directors for the Wright State University Alumni Association and is the Chair of the Ethical Standards Committee at Wright State's School of Medicine

For his many contributions, Dr. LeRoy was named one of *The 50 Most Positive Doctors in America* (ed. Mike Magee, MD). Adding to this well-deserved honor, we are proud to present the Virtual Mentor Award to Dr. Gary LeRoy for his commitment to the physical and social health of his community.

Audiey Kao, MD, PhD is editor in chief of *Virtual Mentor*.

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