



## KAREN J. PITTMAN

### President and CEO, the Forum for Youth Investment

Karen J. Pittman has made a career starting organizations and initiatives that promote youth development. Currently, she is President and CEO of the Forum for Youth Investment, co-founded in 1998 with Merita Irby. Committed to increasing the quality and quantity of youth investment and youth involvement in the United States, the Forum supports organizations and communities that invest in young people by promoting a “big picture” approach to planning, research, advocacy and policy development among the broad range of national organizations that help communities invest in children, youth and families.

A sociologist and recognized leader in youth development, Karen started her career at the Urban Institute, conducting numerous studies on social services for children and families. Later, she worked six years at the Children’s Defense Fund (CDF), launching its adolescent pregnancy prevention initiatives and helping to create its adolescent policy agenda. In 1990, she left CDF to become a Vice President at the Academy for Educational Development where she founded and directed the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research and its spin-off, the National Training Institute for Community Youth Work. In January 1995, Karen handed the Center’s reins to Richard Murphy, former Commissioner for Youth Services in New York City, in order to accept a position within the Clinton Administration as Director of the unfortunately short-lived President’s Crime Prevention Council, where she worked with 13 cabinet secretaries to create a coordinated prevention agenda. In the fall of 1995, Karen joined the executive team of the International Youth Foundation, charged with helping the organization strengthen its program content and develop an evaluation strategy. In 1998, she and Rick Little, head of IYF, took a six-month leave of absence to work with General Powell to create America’s Promise. In 1999, she returned to IYF to lay the seeds for what has become the Forum.

A widely published author, Karen has written three books and dozens of articles on youth issues and is a regularly featured columnist in the youth development newspaper, *Youth Today*.

Karen is also a respected public speaker and served on numerous boards and panels. Currently, she sits on the America’s Promise Board of Trustees, and the boards of the National Human Services Assembly and YouthBuild USA.

She is the 2002 recipient of the National Commission for African American Education Augustus F. Hawkins Service Award and the 2003 American Youth Policy Forum Decade of Service Award for Sustained Visionary Leadership in Advancing Youth Policy.

Karen was named one of the top 50 CEOs in nonprofits with power and influence. This 12th annual edition, published August 1, 2009, of *The NonProfit Times* list is the first time Karen has been recognized for her leadership in the youth development field.

Karen earned a Masters degree in Sociology from the University of Chicago and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Oberlin College.