

Chanelle C. McCullum At-Large Councilmember

The Pathmark on Bergen Street was considered to be both the toughest and safest supermarket in Newark in the early 1990s – tough because of the distressed conditions of the surrounding community and safe because of the law enforcement personnel inside the supermarket. A new pharmacist was needed and Pathmark officials came down to Howard University's pharmacy school looking for one. They found an eager young graduate, unfazed by the risky reputation of Brick City, in a 23-year-old Chanelle C. McCullum.

All of Chanelle's life up until that point prepared her for this first career step. She is the daughter of two law enforcement officers and regularly saw her mother – now Middlesex County Sheriff Mildred S. Scott – wear a gun on a holster. Educated first at St. Frances Cabrini then Piscataway High School followed by attending one of the jewels of



America's historically black colleges and universities (HBCU), she had the opportunity to interact with people from a wide variety of backgrounds.

With a strong desire to help people and an innate calmness about dealing with health matters, she always focused her academics to prepare for a career in health care. When Ms. Anne Carey, her science teacher at St. Frances Cabrini, assigned frog dissection and work with worms, Chanelle took it as just another school assignment.

Yet years later it was while waiting on line at the Howard admissions office that she was told that pharmacy is a good way to make money while pursuing a medical degree. She changed her major from zoology to pharmacy, a fortuitous choice both for her career and because she met Larry McCullum, a fellow pharmacy student whom would become her husband.



Chanelle speaks at an opioid awareness event put on by the Piscataway Municipal Alliance of which she serves as a board member

Adding to the formal studies at Howard, living in Washington, DC in the 1980s when that city was known as the murder capital of the world was also an educating experience. Those years living in an area where crime was far too common added another layer of confidence to Chanelle's strong yet cheery resolve.

Now out of school and at her first professional job, Chanelle's time at the Bergen Street Pathmark would still be eye opening. Her co-worker first remarked to her that, "This isn't going to work," and "They'll know you're different." Yet, Chanelle became a reliable and trusted part of the community.

Chanelle noticed a fourth grader whom always seemed to be at the Pathmark. She befriended the boy and promised him a treat if he brought in his report card.



Chanelle participates in a Town Hall meeting alongside (l-r) Township Landscape Architect Henry Hinterstein, Ward 4 Councilmember Michelle Lombardi & Ward 2 Councilmember Jim Bullard to hear from residents about their ideas for Piscataway Ecological Park



Chanelle thanks first responders at a Piscataway appreciation BBQ for Township volunteer firefighters, rescue squad personnel and CERT members

Chanelle came to realize that despite his youthful age he was tasked with the responsibility of food shopping for his family. At some point, the young boy stopped showing up. His family had moved away from the neighborhood. However, his friendship with Chanelle was strong enough that he once got on a bus to come to the Pathmark to say hello to her.

Another customer was a 16-year-old single mother who had a stone-faced expression formed by years of difficult life circumstances. She needed antibiotics for her one-month-old baby but with insurance problems it was not covered. Chanelle paid the \$12 cost out of her own pocket, very much surprising the young mother and bringing out an expression of amazement from her.

Time would pass and Chanelle's career would evolve in the pharmaceutical field. She and Larry would each earn their doctorates, first Chanelle, from Shenandoah University. Chanelle would take remote classes and travel periodically to the Winchester, Virginia campus, all while working and raising her two children Larry, Jr. and Alexis in Piscataway.



Chanelle alongside At-Large Councilmember Kapil K. Shah, Middlesex County Sheriff Mildred S. Scott and Mayor Brian C. Wahler at the grand opening of the An-Noor Academy

Always accustomed to many responsibilities and with a continued desire to improve the lives of others, Chanelle decided to take up the family tradition of politics that goes back to her grandfather Harold G. Lincoln, whom in Perth Amboy founded the area's first Democratic organization for African Americans, as well as her mother, Sheriff Scott. Chanelle would be elected to an at-large seat on the Piscataway Township Council and twice serve as Council President.



Chanelle with her daughter Alexis, son Larry, Jr. and husband Larry, Sr.

Chanelle continues to advocate for healthy living on the Township Council such as having started an annual, free Walk for Your Health 5K that brought out scores of people at its inaugural event in Johnson Park as well as volunteering previously as a softball and T-ball coach. Also with her service on the boards of the Piscataway Municipal Alliance and Sterling Village, our Township's independent living apartment building for senior citizens, Chanelle is making sure that all generations of residents can enjoy a good quality of life in Piscataway.