

First and foremost, I want to congratulate NAADAC on its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and thank you for offering the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Legend Award (ALA). Next, I want to thank Mr. Thurston Smith, a long-term member of NAADAC and someone I am proud to call friend and colleague, for asking me to support his ALA nominee, H. Westley Clark, MD, JD, MPH. What an honor it is to offer my support for this awesome leader.

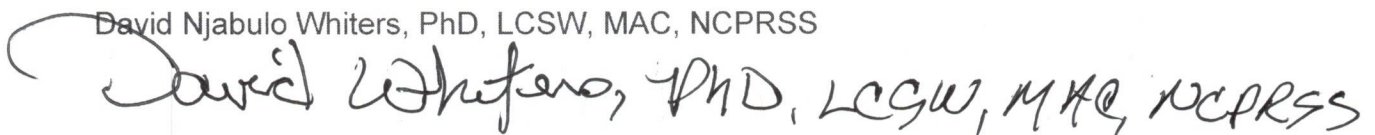
Dr. Clark has been my friend, colleague, mentor, hero, and role model for more than 20 years. Our initial meeting coincided with him becoming Director of CSAT and my becoming employed at the Southeast Addiction Technology Transfer Center (SATTC), a CSAT funded initiative, at Morehouse School of Medicine, in Atlanta. In January 2000, one month after earning my MSW degree at Michigan, I started working at the SATTC. Coincidentally, Dr. Clark started his role as CSAT Director around the same time. I can recall when we first met, I was so proud to see a Black man leading CSAT. I was doubly proud to learn he was a Michigan grad (a Go Blue thing). But what impressed me most was his humbleness and integrity. He shared with me that day something I have heard him say many times and that was "you want to make sure you never do anything dishonest, unethical, or immoral." Dr. Clark showed me and others that this was possible and mandatory if our goal was to ensure evidenced-based treatment and recovery options for marginalized and oftentimes urban-based substance users, while simultaneously ensuring that those of us in recovery maintain our rightful place as leaders in the "recovery movement."

Speaking of the recovery movement, there are many who attribute the movement's success to Dr. Clark. In 2002, the SAMHSA Administration decided to scrap the Recovery Community Services Program (RCSP) grant because in their opinion our work was too close to lobbying, a practice prohibited by Government funded initiatives. Dr. Clark, after seeking input and suggestions from many in recovery, proposed a shift in focus from lobbying to providing services, saving the RCSP grant and ultimately the recovery movement. There were others involved, but the movement is where it is today because of Wes' intuition to save the RCSP grant.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the pride Dr. Clark instilled in so many African Americans who work in the addiction treatment and recovery fields. As I mentioned earlier, a Black man leading CAST motivated many of us. Because of Doc, several of us now feel we can achieve what for years appeared to be unachievable. Yes, Dr. Clark has done much for the addiction treatment and recovery field but what he has done to motivate, encourage, and inspire so many African Americans is a story that must also be told. There are many of us who have improved our careers and education because of his mentorship and encouragement. I have a PhD in social work from the University of Georgia because Doc encouraged and mentored me. There are others with similar experiences. I can't think of anyone more deserving of this award than Dr. H. Westley Clark. Praying that NAADAC feels the same way.

Thanks for allowing me this opportunity,

David Njabulo Whifers, PhD, LCSW, MAC, NCPRSS

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Whifers, PhD, LCSW, MAC, NCPRSS". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'D'.