



The Founder's Award



Tarboro Senior High
School Class of 1977

Ms. Rochelle Riley

Art Advocate, Writer, Public Speaker

Rochelle Riley grew up in the East Tarboro Community and attended W. A. Pattillo School from grades one through six. She is a graduate of Tarboro Senior High School, Class of 1977 graduated from the University of N.C. at Chapel Hill in 1981. Rochelle Riley is a self-proclaimed writer by trade, warrior by necessity, who spent a quarter century challenging, encouraging and informing during a long-time career as an award-winning newspaper columnist. Now, she guides the City of Detroit's investment in the arts as Director of Arts and Culture.

In 2020, she conceived the United States' first city-wide memorial to victims of Covid-19 which gained international attention and provided closure for families across the city who could not hold individual funerals.

Also, an essayist, keynoter and photographer, she is the author of several books, and she makes frequent

television and radio appearances, including National Public Radio. She also is a co-founder of Letters to Black Girls, an initiative to give letters of advice and encouragement from women across the country to girls across the country. This acclaim along with a long listing of other awards are outlined on her nomination form.

Rochelle Riley truly exemplifies the spirit of our founders by her deportment as an award-winning and essayist who has provided unselfish service and participation at the local, state, national and international levels since graduating from high school. She is more than worthy of the W. A. Pattillo High School National Alumni Association's Founder's Award.