

# VP Taylor Prepares for Post Illustrious Public Service -Receives Int'l Award, focuses on humanitarianism



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**MONROVIA** : In what could be the anticipated answer as regards what direction her career will take after an illustrious public service, Vice President Jewel Howard Taylor has said at the end of her tenure, her destiny is directing her to doing more humanitarian works that seek to empower women and girls just as she received an international award from The Stars Foundation based in Nashville, TN, United States as one of the 2023 HEROES OF HUMANITY.

The first democratically elected female Vice President of Liberia made the assertion on Saturday, December 9, 2023 when she played host to a delegation from The Stars Foundation in accompany of Bishop Robert SM Bimba, President of the Destined for Greatness Global International, local partner of the guests at the head office of the Jewel Starfish Foundation, Congo Town, Monrovia, where she was able to introduce the activities of her undertaking for which the guests were very impressed.

“I have been working for people right from the time I was 21 years old, working in and outside of Liberia, and my destiny is just going to another phase. I am very

young, I haven't retired and so there is going to be a lot but the central part of what I will do in the next few years is to continue the support for girls and women empowerment , and I think this is where the work needs to be enhanced.

"I want to thank God for opportunities, just like as I am winding down as Vice President in a few weeks, we have new opportunities for working with the Jewel Starfish Foundation. As you are aware the Jewel Starfish Foundation is what I have been operating for 23 years and in 2025 we would have been 25 years so I have been excited about the work", she told the excited delegation

She said the institution looks forward to the celebration of its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025 where it is expected that beneficiaries of the various projects will be coming around to look back at the 25 awesome years that have seen "these beneficiaries who cut across various fields of human endeavors including doctors, business people, financial analysts, other fields will be back here to tell their stories".

She said most of the beneficiaries came from very difficult environments and backgrounds who ordinarily were written off from becoming somebody better but through the guidance of God, the support she has been giving over the years and the resilience of the beneficiaries themselves, there have been resounding sources.

"I think it has been a blessing to me, to the nation, because in Africa when you train the girl child, you are actually training the entire nation, so for me this is the important part of our work, and we pray that God will continue to find the means to support their work, because for them, it is their first generation in the family to go to school, some for the first time going to university from their family, a turning point indeed for their families and communities", she said

She told the gathering that the foundation started with a few girls of about 6 but have grown astronomically to over 5,000 girls across Liberia and that in every

county there is an operational office catering to the needs of their local beneficiaries.

The driving force behind the initiative said beyond the national scene, the foundation has in her book to support 21 girls each in Malawi, Sierra Leone and Ghana and a girl in China all pursuing careers of interest to them.

“So our NGO has gone beyond local NGO to an international NGO. So today, empowered by the prayer of the CEO, The Stars Foundation, Cheryl Piggott, who has given me an award as a humanitarian , as the children’s hero, because it is an answer to prayer because, after the election, I was thinking where do I go? Where do I start but you know a starting always has a beginning and I think God has secured this NGO and I can have a place to work because you know to work with women is my heartbeat, I don’t think I can ever stop doing this”, she said .

She appreciated the effort of the Destiny for Greatness Global, the new local partners which has also offered scholarship opportunities to girls to go to Israel and the United States of America to pursue studies in various disciplines.

Howard-Taylor said it was a coincidence and perhaps the work of destiny that both institutions Jewel Starfish Foundation shared similar identities, with its international partner named The Stars Foundation, as hers is called Jewel Starfish Foundation.

One of the beneficiaries speaking on behalf of her colleagues, Joetta James, said she was excited about the benefits she has been enjoying right from the time she was recruited from the 7<sup>th</sup> grade through to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade and upon graduation from high school, got admitted at the University of Liberia. She said though she was at the university, her life- long intent is to become a fashion designer.

Both Cherly Robeson Piggott, President and CEO of the Star Foundation International and Rebecca Holden, a Hollywood actress and Goodwill Ambassador said they were excited to see the level of work being carried out by VP Taylor and

expressed their desire to work further in enhancing the work of the Jewel Starfish Foundation by sourcing funds and other form of support.

At the end of the program, the delegation was taken on a guided tour of the facilities where they were amazed about the products from the fashion design school, with a promise to expose the products to the external market for revenue generation for the center.

Bishop Robert SM Bimba who is partnering with the guests prayed for prosperity to come the way of the center while looking forward to collaborating with the Vice President to push ahead her dreams.

Meanwhile on Thursday, December 7, 2023, Vice President Jewel Howard Taylor received yet another international award for her many contributions to girl education in Liberia. The award as one of the 2023 Heroes of Humanity of the world was presented by the Stars Foundation International based in the United States of America.

This Award is based on the 23 plus years of work with the Jewel StarFish Foundation that has provided leadership, mentorship and scholarships for girls across Liberia.

In her acceptance remarks, VP Taylor who is also the Chief Executive Officer of the Jewel Starfish Foundation joyously “accepted the international award on behalf of the thousands of girls who have benefited from the Jewel StarFish Foundation.”

“Thank Yahweh for the honor as I end my service to my Nation as its first female Vice President; a testament to Liberians and the World that my service was impactful. I remain truly grateful”, she said.

Mrs. Cheryl Robeson Piggott, the President and CEO of the STARS FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL USA, presented the award on behalf of her organization. For her

part. Mrs. Piggott also used the occasion to thank and appreciate Madam Taylor for her tireless contributions to women's education in Liberia, Africa and the world at large.

The Jewel Starfish Foundation is a nonprofit organization owned and run by Liberia's first female Vice President, Dr. Jewel Howard-Taylor. Since its inception, the Jewel Starfish Foundation has provided scholarships for over 50,000 girls across the country. Currently, the organization has over 5,000 young women from all the 15 subdivisions of Liberia that are benefiting from said Foundation.

The organization first started with academics, but while the need for vocation increases in Liberia, the Foundation thought it wise to add a comprehensive Vocational program to its activities. On September 22nd of this year, the Foundation graduated over 230 girls as its first batch from the Vocational program.

The offices of the Jewel Starfish Foundation are located adjacent to the Old French embassy on Tubman Boulevard and in the compound of the YWCA, at the Intersection of the National Identification Registry Head Office.