

## **Dr. Rita D. Strickland**

Dr. Rita D. Strickland is the former Chair of the Nursing Department at New York Institute of Technology. Her educational background is extensive - a graduate of Kings County School of Nursing, two baccalaureate degrees from Ithaca and Medgar Evers Colleges, two masters' degrees from Hunter College and Columbia University and a doctorate degree from Teacher's College, Columbia University. She has been a nurse educator for more than twenty years and has lectured nationally on a variety of topics such as, cardiovascular illnesses, diabetes, health care disparities, and numerous other subjects. In addition, she is a certified healing touch practitioner and instructor providing therapy and education to a large cadre of individuals. She has received several awards for her accomplishments in the professional community and has served on a variety of national boards devoted to the enhancement of health care in African American communities. In 1998, she was diagnosed with heart disease and was forced to retire. As a result of her cardiovascular condition, she was required to have a heart transplant. Shortly thereafter, she developed breast cancer which resulted in surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy. She did not allow her health challenges to deter her from her passion for teaching. She developed a one-hour PowerPoint presentation entitled, "A Matter of Heart" that focuses on heart disease and her healing journey as a heart transplant recipient. In addition, she developed a breast cancer support group in 2009 called, The Sistahs Supporting Sistahs Breast Cancer Support Group. This group continues to meet at least six times a year and provides education, resources, spiritual empowerment and emotional support to women diagnosed with breast cancer. She also serves as the servant leader for the cancer support ministry at St. Paul Community Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York. Dr. Strickland is a dynamic, energetic and spiritually-guided individual who delivers presentations that are inspirational and uplifting. She is guided by her inner belief that her calling lies in her ability to encourage others to seek their highest good.