



**WorldYWCA**

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***Casey Harden; A strategist. A feminist. A doer. A shaper.  
But more than anything, a natural-born movement leader.***

Casey Harden joined the YWCA movement as a young woman and is a testament to the YWCA's mission to create space for young women to be the leaders that they are, and in doing so, define and contribute to gender equity. Casey started working within the YWCA movement 20 years ago, but her family history of fighting for social justice reaches back to her maternal great-grandmother, an ardent suffragist who helped found a YWCA in her small town outside Chicago, driven by her belief in the right of prenatal care for all. As a young girl, her father raised her in philosophy and practice as a feminist and anti-racist.

Reading the Washington Post and hearing her parents and wider family debating current events and personal principles, Casey was an advocate for change before she reached adulthood. She started a recycling program in her school before most people knew what the word meant, was the captain of her flag football team, and found herself in leadership positions in most aspects of her life. She attended the progressive Evergreen State College outside Seattle, three thousand miles away from home and there started a reproductive health outreach program by students, for students.

Her passion for women's health and awareness led her to a nearby YWCA where she was hired to revive a breast and cervical health outreach and psycho-social program and to build a STEM program for pre-teen girls. Her experience with that city and surrounding rural community allowed her to understand contrasting populations and learn the importance and ethical obligation to listen to and work in service to the community directly involved in any issue.

At that YWCA, she found a supervisor that opened every door for Casey so that Casey could choose which door to walk through as a leader. With that experience, Casey lived the promise of YWCA.

Casey was soon promoted to director of crisis intervention services, serving on the leadership team for the organization, becoming its face to various public agencies and partner consortiums. She transitioned to the YWCA in her hometown and assumed responsibility for the operations and external affairs, and then as managing director was involved in all of the mission and operational work of the non-profit business.

From there Casey was hired to the YWCA Greater Baltimore, part of a progressive journey into both organizational and humanitarian efforts and taking up the cause of addressing generational poverty and systemic racism. Working as the CEO there she recovered the business, even during the global recession of 2008.



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Casey then served as executive director of the YWCA Mid-Atlantic region, providing leadership to 40+ YWCAs in 9 states of the USA. In that role, she championed the transformation of the YWCA USA back to a centralized organisation. The two years of concentrated work also included her pitching the elimination of her position, but she never hesitated putting what was best for the movement ahead of what was best for her.

She joined YWCA USA executive team in 2013 to recentralize and revitalize the membership of over 200 autonomous associations in thousands of locations, then as an interim CEO. She was part of a team that nurtured a new governance structure, developed a high functioning national office, rebuilt external relationships, established a network-wide capacity building system and created a bold and effective public policy and advocacy presence across the country. In this role, she also led the development and implementation of a movement wide mission impact framework for collective YWCA impact in the USA.

Compelled by the World YWCA goal for 100 million young women to transform power structures, and the business challenges and opportunities, Casey joined the World YWCA as the Deputy General Secretary in 2018.

Her experience in visioning, strategy, administration, and implementation are rooted deep in the voices of girls, women, and communities across the globe. Being a young woman leader, she understands the realities and challenges of young women`s leadership and the imperative to pursue concrete action that result in actual impact and transformation of power structures for gender equity.

Appointed as the 15<sup>th</sup> General Secretary, Casey believes that young women leaders can lead us to achieve the global goal of leaving no one behind. Casey knows that realizing gender equity requires courage, persistence, creativity, and determination. She knows that girls, young women, and women– as individuals or working together across generations or identities -- are powerful beyond measure. As World YWCA General Secretary, the following belief guides her work: by way of formal and informal leadership, girls and women have, do, and will continue to transform power structures.