

# I am the I in HII.

## Margaret Williams

Manager, EEO and Diversity

As a child, Margaret Williams wanted to follow in her father's footsteps. His career in the Air Force meant their family lived in far-away places. Spending parts of her childhood growing up on military bases, she watched families create indelible bonds. And children formed friendships, regardless of their respective backgrounds.



It wasn't until sixth grade, when Margaret and her family moved from Turkey to Ohio, that she realized she would be treated differently. Margaret's father is African American and had met her mother, a white woman born in India, while he was stationed in England.

Margaret and her family landed in Ohio in 1971. It was a time when schools in some states openly resisted integrating student populations, and legal battles over busing were still being waged across the country, some 17 years after the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* ruling.

It's also a period when Margaret began to develop her perspectives on diversity and inclusion. "I'm passionate about making sure everyone has a voice and that they are included," she said.

**"They didn't want him to marry my mother. They court-martialled him and took his rank — and he still married my mother."**

▶ Margaret's story continues, watch the video at [www.hii-homeport.com/divein/iamthei.stm](http://www.hii-homeport.com/divein/iamthei.stm)

Margaret eventually enlisted in the Air Force and began her career as a medical technician in an Illinois hospital. After four years, she shifted career paths and became a training manager in the field of aircraft maintenance. Many times, it wasn't unusual for her to be the only woman in the room, and her input too often fell on deaf ears.



Those trials taught her how to make sure her voice was heard by her peers. A series of promotions led her to become a senior enlisted officer, and she retired from the Air Force after 24 years as an E8, senior master sergeant. "It was a great career, and it treated me well. But there are challenges when you are young, black and female," she said.

Margaret has been at Newport News Shipbuilding, and now HII, for 17 years. She began as HII's manager of EEO and Diversity in January. She's using the role to help her counterparts in each of HII's divisions to show people they matter.

While there's still work to be done, Margaret sees progress being made. "I like helping people find their voice. Like HII President and CEO Mike Petters says, we'll know we have arrived when the least empowered employees feel they have a voice and can speak up to create positive change."



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What's your diversity snapshot? Share your story with your own D&I poster. Contact Teresa Chubb at [Teresa.Chubb@hii-co.com](mailto:Teresa.Chubb@hii-co.com) for details.