

PRESS RELEASE

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Dr. Yvonne Fournier Biography



Dr. Yvonne Fournier has been a pharmacist, public health administrator, demographer and entrepreneur. She has followed her own roadmap in becoming arguably one of the most prolific of educators and child advocates in America today.

And, she is a controversial opponent of the current education system in America.

Born in New York City, Dr. Fournier's family moved back to its native Puerto Rico when she was a young teenager. After graduating from the University of Puerto Rico with a bachelor's degree in pharmacy, Dr. Fournier filled prescriptions and reflected constantly on her love for learning. A desire to find the right track for her life sent her back to the university for a master's degree in public health with a major focus in demography.

As she surveyed, collected, and analyzed demographic statistics, she felt a lack of fulfillment she could not overcome. Fournier returned to the university once again and began working on her doctorate, this time in education philosophy.

Fournier's Childhood and Early Teens

Fournier rambled the upper west side of Manhattan, scouring the public library, which became her first love. Always thirsting for knowledge, Fournier used books and her imagination to transport her to remote places around the globe. The library quickly became her playground.

Various teachers in the New York City public school system also fed her desire for learning. She credits the city's public school and library systems as a foundation for her success as an educator. Specifically, she credits the Washington Heights elementary school she attended. There, she was allowed to develop creatively at a very young age and was encouraged to think critically and to apply her knowledge so that she could create new knowledge.

Thankfully for her, a few teachers in the New York City school system were bucking the industrial era teaching format the country had adopted post WWII, even though the country was already moving toward a knowledge-based world with the advent of the golden age of television.

This concept – that America is still following a post WWII industrial education model today – is what has Dr. Fournier at odds with the current educational system in America.

Fournier's Call For Change

Fournier returned to the states with her husband, who had come to Memphis on a Developmental Pediatrics Fellowship at the University of Tennessee Boling Center for Developmental Disabilities.

She enrolled at the University of Memphis to complete her doctorate in education philosophy then began teaching only to immediately recognize that the United States was falling behind other countries in effectively educating children.

In 1979, she began assessing children, seeing the same problems in both public and private school students, noting that the issues were not stemming from a lack of money for education but were due to an outdated education model.

Fournier began emphasizing in speeches and consultations she made around the country that the post WWII industrial model of education must change, no matter what it took.

She vowed not to give in or give up on her message that the United States must change the educational model to a knowledge-based model if America is to continue to compete in a global economy, a message she still delivers today.

To Dr. Fournier, education is about more than memorizing facts, passing tests and receiving grades (the industrial era learning model she opposes). It's about understanding *how* students learn.

She believes the industrial era education model must change as well as the labeling of students as "learning disabled," "unmotivated" or "careless" just because they can't or don't want to follow a broken system.

Dr. Fournier's success can also be attributed to her ability to assess what is right with children while continuing to point out what is wrong with the system. She developed her own assessment techniques, which pinpoint strengths and unlock overlooked nuances in children and adolescents that often lead to misdiagnosis of pathology and learning disabilities.

Fournier Today

One-on-one, Dr. Fournier serves as a child's advocate and is known for her uncanny ability to see and understand the child's side of the problem. Tables at her company are filled with stacks and stacks of testimonial letters. They are from grateful parents and serve as a declaration of her ability and success.

Dr. Fournier has been a Scripps Howard News Service Columnist for 20 years. She is the creator and author of Scripps Howard's Hassle-Free Homework® column which is distributed to more than 300 newspapers around the country. Hassle-Free Homework® offers evaluation and guidance to specific questions from parents who write to her desperate for help.

Numerous features and articles have been written over the years about Dr. Fournier. Her Strategizer® Series has helped thousands of children develop three skills: organizing, planning, and decision-making. These skills foster a child's independent, lifelong learning ability, resulting in a competitive, resourceful adult in the workplace.

For 29 years, she has headed Fournier Learning Strategies (FLS). Dr. Fournier has assembled a group of like-minded educational counselors and administrators at Fournier Learning Strategies, the leading educational counseling service in Memphis. Founded in 1979 by Dr. Fournier, FLS has counseled and assessed thousands of students in its near 30 years of operation.

Fournier Learning Strategies offers daytime educational programs for homeschoolers from K-12 as well as customized after-school courses at its east Memphis headquarters in the Ridgeway Loop. In addition, FLS has summer courses as well as customized summer programs.

A key to the success of Fournier Learning Strategies, whether through Dr. Fournier's assessments or in her customized educational programs, is the individualized learning that equips the student with the thinking processes that schools and parents assume children already possess.

It is often said of Dr. Fournier that she has the heart to see past the labels-- to see each child and each parent as a gift. Evidence of this decorates her office in the form of thoughtful mementos given to her by grateful families.

Fournier's Private Life

Dr. Fournier and her husband retired Developmental Pediatrician Manuel Soto-Viera, live with Sophie, their dog. Their son, Civil Engineer Manolo Soto-Fournier, is a product of his mother's style of education. He most recently worked through a National Science Foundation grant and Washington University in St. Louis as an undergraduate research assistant at the University of Tokyo on earthquake mitigation structural health monitoring techniques. He is set to enter medical school at The University of Tennessee this fall.

Fournier's Background and Resume*Higher Education*

- 1968 - University of Puerto Rico, Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy, College of Pharmacy
- 1971 - University of Puerto Rico, Master of Science in Public Health, School of Public Health
- 1978 - Memphis State University, Doctorate in Education

Teaching and Research

- University of Memphis: *Fogelman College of Business and Economics & College of Education*
- Rhodes College - Department of Education
- University of Puerto Rico - Medical Sciences Campus
- University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill - Center of Social Investigations

Professional and Civic Boards

- Woman's Foundation, Founding Board of Directors
- Literacy Council, Board of Directors
- Free the Children- Board of Directors
- Leadership Memphis - Class of 1991
- YMCA of Greater Memphis - Past President, Board of Directors, Executive Committee
- University of Tennessee - Executive Advisory Board
- Christian Brothers University, Board of Trustees Executive Committee
- Immaculate Conception High School, Board of Directors
- Porter Leath Children's Center - Past President, Board of Directors, Treasurer
- Parenting Center of Memphis, Board of Directors and President, Program Committee
- Catholic Charities - Board of Directors
- Shelby County Interfaith - Developed Citizen Empowerment Curriculum Mayor's Advisory Council for Citizens with Disabilities
- Ira Lipman (Children's School) - Founding Member, Parents Association
- Campus Public School - Parents Association, Secretary
- St. Patrick's Church Parish Council
- Phi Delta Kappa - Fraternity in Education
- Public Health Association of Puerto Rico
- Kappa Phi Sorority (Pharmacist Honor Society)
- College of Pharmacists of Puerto Rico

Work Partnerships

- Wrote the first Bridges program for Memphis Bridge Builders
- Regional Medical Center at Memphis
- Tennessee Valley Authority
- Amateur Athletic Union
- Fayette County Board of Education, Fayette County, TN - Consultant
- Senatobia (Mississippi) School System
- Cumberland Hardwoods of Sparta, TN
- Youth Service, USA, Inc.
- Brookline (Massachusetts) School System
- Wrote and developed Fournier Learning Systems for Education Corporation of America