



**Blenda Wilson**  
**Consultant**

A nationally known speaker on higher education policy issues, Wilson served as the first president and chief executive officer of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation from 1999 to 2006. The foundation, established in 1998, is New England's largest public charity dedicated to improving academic achievement for underserved communities. During Wilson's seven-year tenure, the foundation distributed more than \$80 million in grants to educational institutions and non-profit organizations to improve access to college. She is also a former chair of the American Association of Higher Education and was the first woman to chair the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, where she served on the board of directors from 2003 to 2006. She also served as a director for UnionBanCal Corporation from 1993 to 1999.

During Wilson's tenure as president of California State University, Northridge (1992–1999), she enacted a strategic plan to better serve the populations of the San Fernando Valley, and led the university's recovery from the 1994 Northridge earthquake. In 1988 Dr. Wilson became chancellor of the University of Michigan, Dearborn – she was first woman to head a four-year higher education institution in the state – and was widely recognized for her outreach to Dearborn's Arab-American community and Detroit's African-American community. From 1984 to 1988, Dr. Wilson was executive director of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, where she served as an officer in the governor's cabinet advocating for more efficiently organizing higher education in the state in a plan that became law in 1985. Dr. Wilson began her career in higher education at Rutgers University in New Jersey in 1969 and served for ten years as senior associate dean at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (1972-1982).

Wilson was the first vice president for effective sector management at Independent Sector (1982–1984), a nonpartisan coalition of approximately 600 organizations that leads, strengthens, and mobilizes the charitable community.

She has received honorary doctorate degrees from more than 25 colleges and universities, including Cedar Crest College, Rutgers, the University of Massachusetts, Brandeis University and Boston College. Wilson currently serves on the boards of trustees of Boston College and Union Theological Seminary, the board of directors of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, the board of directors of Higher Education Resource Services, and the boards of Boston After School and Beyond, Boston College and Federated Dorchester Neighborhood Houses. She is a director of Medco Health Solutions.

Wilson earned a bachelor's degree in English and secondary education at Cedar Crest College, a master's in education at Seton Hall University, and a Ph.D. in higher education administration at Boston College.