

I am Detroit's Water Warrior, Monica Lewis-Patrick. I am the oldest of 3 children. And so I was very responsible, very quiet, shy, was bullied much of my elementary, middle and high school years. So very much have matured in my older years to be an advocate for what I consider the underdog, or the person that's mistreated. So I have seen myself evolve from being what I would consider a victim, to very much an advocate and an activist.

I had always wanted to live in Detroit, had an affinity for the city, I had grown up spending a lot of summers here in the city, and pretty much any time my grandfather decided he wanted to travel to the city, he would just pile up 13 grandchildren and put us in the car. And the next morning we'd be waking up in Detroit. And so I never saw myself as separate from Detroit, not only from a physical perspective, but just a deep family connection here. But coming to Detroit in 2008 and recognizing that as I began to register my children for school, that there was a serious situation in terms of the school system, they wanted to give the mayor total say so over governance of the school... and that to me just seemed, to sort of fly in the face of democracy. And so within a couple of weeks of being in the city, I was in the middle of organizing parents and mothers and grandparents to show up to city council meetings. And so out of a sort of staying together. We continue to realize that there were many austerity issues that were playing out in the city. There was a global struggle for water. Detroit was in the crosshairs of that struggle. So we began to organize, then began to say that we weren't going to wait on anyone to save us, that we were going to do everything in our power through self-determination and cooperative work to create systems that would ensure that people had some kind of water relief in this city. And that has been our mission. And everything that we've done since then, has been focused around the human right to water for all people.