

TD HONORS FORMER DIRECTOR MR. LEO F. DIMAIO, JR.

During his 31 years at TD, Mr. Leo F. DiMaio Jr. influenced the lives of thousands of students, fighting for equality and transforming the face of URI. His commitment to the program and its students was unparalleled. Even after retiring from TD in November 1999, his presence and influence remained a vital part of TD's history.

To honor his numerous accomplishments and devotion to TD and its students, a dedication ceremony was held on June 1, 2001. The Leo F. DiMaio Student Conference Room was unveiled outside Taft Hall, with over 200 people in attendance, including University President Robert L. Carothers, former R.I. governor Bruce Sundlun, Judge Frank Caprio, the Narragansett Indian Tribe delegation, and several other dignitaries.

President Carothers, deeply moved by the stories of TD and its commitment to students, described “Mr. D.” as a man who carried a large stick but did so with love. “Mr. D.” had three great loves in his life: his wife Ilene, with whom he had been married for 47 years, his work at the Adult Correctional Institutions (ACI), where he served for 13 years, and TD, which he considered his most consuming and passionate love. During the ceremony, “Mr. D.” shared stories of TD's early years at URI, when the program and its students faced significant barriers and struggled to establish themselves on a campus dominated by hite middle-class students. He recounted encounters with individuals who doubted the success of TD students, dismissing them as not "college material." “Mr. D.” defiantly told them to "go to hell."

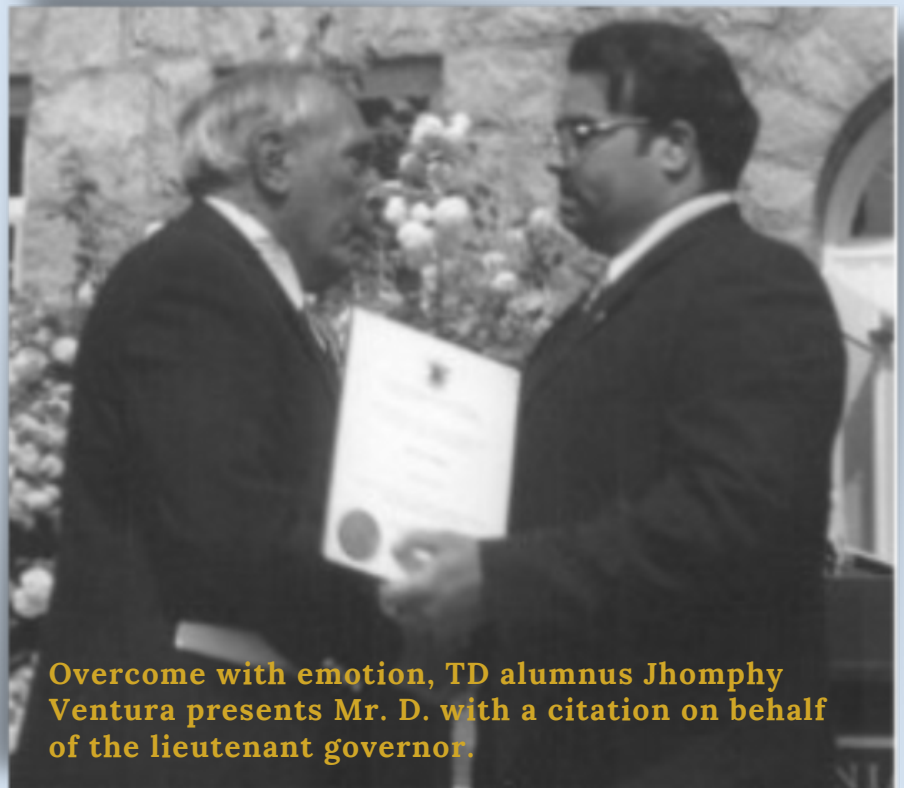
TD Staff, along with URI President Robert L. Carothers, prepare to unveil the Leo F. DiMaio dedication plaque. The plaque featuring “Mr. D.” is located in the newly named Leo F. DiMaio Conference Room.



He proudly proclaimed that 11 out of TD's original 13 members had graduated, and TD students had achieved various honors and accomplishments. These achievements defied the expectations placed upon them, proving the critics wrong. "Mr. D." credited the success of TD to its students, considering them the foundation upon which TD was built. He expressed his gratitude to the TD students, stating that they gave him life, energy, and passion, and that they were remembered every day.

Jhomphy Ventura, a TD alumnus from the class of 2000 and then an aide for Lt. Gov. Charles Fogarty, presented "Mr. D." with a citation on behalf of the lieutenant governor. Ventura, moved to tears, emphasized the special meaning the citation held for him as a TD alumni. He expressed his admiration for "Mr. D.", stating that if he could live to be half the man "Mr. D." was, he would consider it a life well-lived.

"Mr. D's." impact on TD and its students will forever be remembered and celebrated. His unwavering dedication, passion, and fight for equality left an indelible mark on URI and the lives of those he touched.



Overcome with emotion, TD alumnus Jhomphy Ventura presents Mr. D. with a citation on behalf of the lieutenant governor.

EQUITY COALITION/EQUITY COUNCIL (2007)

In the summer of 2007, the members of the URI "President's Council on the Status of Women" recognized the need and importance of expanding their group. Dr. Lynne Derbyshire, Grace Frenzel, Karol Leuzarder, Dr. Barbara Silver, and Dr. Sylvia Spears took the initiative and organized a meeting in November of the same year, followed by a campus-wide Equity Forum. With the support of President Carothers, the Equity Coalition was established and later officially recognized as the URI Equity Council. The primary purpose of the Equity Council was to provide advice to the President on matters related to race, class, gender, orientation, and disability. It became a space where students, faculty, and staff could come together to address shared concerns.

One critical issue that garnered significant attention within the Equity Council was the longstanding debate about the creation of a URI Vice President for Diversity. The goal was to ensure that leadership and support for diversity were established at the highest level of the university's hierarchy. Recommendations for such a position had been made in two separate studies conducted by Van Leesten Associates: one in the 1980s in response to the Convocation, and another in the early 1990s in response to the BSLG. Over the years, numerous faculty, staff, and students had advocated for the establishment of this position.

The co-chairs of the Equity Council, initially Grace Frenzel and Dr. Jerry Schaffran, followed by Dr. Patricia Morokoff and Dr. Schaffran, then Dr. Morokoff and TD Director Gerald "G" Williams, and later Dr. Derbyshire and Michelle Fontes, played a significant role in leading URI towards the creation of the Senior Associate Vice President for Community, Equity, and Diversity. Their efforts were supported by then URI President Dr. David Dooley, whose endorsement and advocacy were instrumental in appointing Naomi Thompson, JD, as URI's first permanent Senior Associate Vice President for Community, Equity, and Diversity in 2012. In 2020, Dr. Mary Grace Almandrez was named the Associate Vice President for Community, Equity and Diversity. Upon her departure, URI appointed Dr. Sean Rogers as Vice President for Community, Equity and Diversity, who has since transitioned to serve as the Dean of the College of Business at URI, and TD Scholar Michelle Fontes as Assistant Vice President of Community, Equity and Diversity.

While the Equity Council no longer exists, the legacy of its outcomes continues to hold a to be felt on the URI campus, as the ongoing struggle that began in 1968 progresses toward the realization of Dr. King's dream.

HARDGE-FORLEO GRANT

In 2008, at the TD 40th Anniversary Celebration, Sharon and Frank Forleo were honored by having their names added to Reverend Hardge's on the Talent Development Scholarship.

CONTEMPORARY ACTIVISM: “STOP THE HATE” & “I-AM-U URI”

At 11 a.m. on November 18, 2009, the chimes of Davis Hall on the URI Quadrangle resounded with a heightened intensity. Instead of a mere indication of time passing, the bells rang out until complete silence enveloped the surroundings, drawing together more than 1,500 URI students, faculty, and staff for a shared purpose: putting an end to hate. This gathering marked the largest protest the URI campus had witnessed since 1970.

Side-by-side, and even hand-in-hand, many individuals stood in silent opposition against the prevalence of hate crimes on the URI campus. Racial slurs, depictions of Nazi symbols, and anti-LGBTQ rhetoric had become all too familiar in the lives of URI students. Leading the way in initiating the silent protest was Christina Knoll, who utilized social media as a contemporary tool for organizing. Shortly thereafter, officers from Uhuru Sasa, leaders from URI-NAACP, and TD students joined forces to advance this cause. Among the core members of the "Stop the Hate" movement were Darlene Fulp, Tyrene Jones, Richlieu “Rich” Norris, and Douglas Tondreau, who played crucial roles in organizing peaceful resistance within the URI community.



Despite facing racial slurs and opposition from fellow students who demanded the cancellation of the event, Christina Knoll and her colleagues exhibited unwavering courage to persevere. The success of "Stop the Hate" culminated in an exceptional student conference in early 2010. With broad participation from student leaders across the campus, the movement evolved into "I-AM-U URI." This group formulated an agenda for change at URI, which they presented to the newly appointed URI President, David Dooley, and the Equity Council in the spring of 2010. Key issues addressed included the treatment of LGBTQ students, leading to a spotlight on LGBTQ concerns and the demand for a new LGBTQ Center. In the fall of 2010, LGBTQ students and their allies occupied a section of the URI Library, further amplifying these issues.

**NAACP MEMBERS, DOUGLAS TONDREAU, (LEFT)
DARLENA FULP (RIGHT)
& CHRISTINA KNOLL (MIDDLE)**



Before the protest, free t-shirts were given to the URI community reading, "Stop The Hate"

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD (UGR)

Founded in 2003 by TD Scholars Babatunde Jenyo, Rex Porte and Oluwaseyi "Shaye" Omoniyi, the Underground Railroad (UGR) was an extraordinary student service organization. Named after the network of guides who helped escaping enslaved people move north to freedom before and during the American Civil War, the URG took a lead role among men of color on campus in fostering academic excellence and creating community. Like the original, UGR worked almost totally behind the scenes and in secret. UGR never came "above-ground" or ever accepted any public role. They truly existed to guide and to serve.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN STUDENT GROUPS & LEADERSHIP

While the traditional student leadership groups such as ASA, LASA, and Uhuru Sasa thrive, newer organizations like "Powerful, Independent, Notoriously Knowledgeable" (P.I.N.K.) and "Brothers On a New Direction" (B.O.N.D.), among others, are also deeply rooted in the history of the TD movements and events. The formation of P.I.N.K. Women in 2006 by undergraduates Margarida DaGraca, Deanna Kelly, Natalya Rocha, Michelle Rosa, and Samantha Vaughan was a response to the search for a safe and inclusive space within the URI community. These five founders recognized a lack of support for multicultural women at URI and sought to fill that void by establishing P.I.N.K. Their primary objective is to educate URI and the surrounding community about the specific issues faced by multicultural and ethnic female groups. P.I.N.K. places a strong emphasis on empowering women, fostering progress in multicultural family life, and organizing diverse events that align with their mission. Through their efforts, they have built a network of support for all multicultural women, aiming to serve as genuine role models and help younger generations envision a brighter future.

B.O.N.D., founded in 2007 by undergraduate members Karley Carto, Andrew Corria, Alexander Jibuike, Jeremy Kollie, and graduate student Kevin Martins, recognizes the importance of unity among men of color. B.O.N.D. commits to guiding adolescent men of color towards personal growth and equipping them with the tools for academic success. They lead by example and utilize mentorship to empower young men, instilling the knowledge that they hold the key to their own futures and can achieve success. B.O.N.D. advisor Robert "Bobby" Britto-Oliveira, continues to make a positive impact at URI, paying it forward towards an empowering and promising future.

Both P.I.N.K. and B.O.N.D. are guided by the principle of service, actively giving back to the URI community and their respective home communities. These organizations, alongside many others, carry the torch passed down to them by trailblazers such as the African-American Society, the BSLG, the BUA, and other individuals and groups, who made sacrifices to create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive URI.



ROBERT BRITTO-OLIVEIRA
 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
 MULTICULTURAL STUDENT SERVICES CENTER
 TD CLASS OF '06, M.S.'11



**SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS
 & THE MULTICULTURAL STUDENT SERVICES CENTER (MSSC)**

TD SUPPORT FROM VICE PRESIDENT THOMAS R. DOUGAN

Dr. Thomas R. Dougan, served as Vice President of Student Affairs for three decades before retiring from URI. A special event was held on December 16, 2015, at the Memorial Union's Rainville Ballroom to pay tribute to his contributions. The purpose of the event was to honor Dr. Dougan's exceptional work and recognize the lasting impact he has had on the URI community.

Renowned for his unwavering dedication to student welfare, Dr. Dougan commanded respect from both the Academic and Student Affairs sectors. A steadfast supporter and close ally of the TD Program, he played an instrumental role in its success. His impact, tireless efforts and invaluable services will long be felt at URI. He will forever be cherished as an esteemed member of the TD Nation Family.



VICE PRESIDENT THOMAS R. DOUGAN

"Talent Development grew out of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. So in essence Talent Development is a product of the Civil Rights struggle. Talent Development is a program that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would point to and be extremely proud!!" - Dr. Thomas R. Dougan



SCAN THE QR CODE TO READ AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. DOUGAN IN THE SPRING/SUMMER 2005 EDITION OF THE "TD STUDENT & ALUMNI NEWSLETTER."

COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM REVIEW

In the fall of 2016, the University of Rhode Island initiated an extensive evaluation of the Talent Development Program. This evaluation included a thorough self-study conducted by TD staff, followed by an assessment carried out by an external review team. As a result, a set of recommendations was put forth to enhance the program. To address the team's findings within specified timelines, the TD Program devised an action plan and assigned staff members with specific responsibilities.

The self-study, external review report and action plan can be found at:
<http://web.uri.edu/student-affairs/assessment-planning>.

ROUSSEAU TREE OF LIFE MEMORIAL

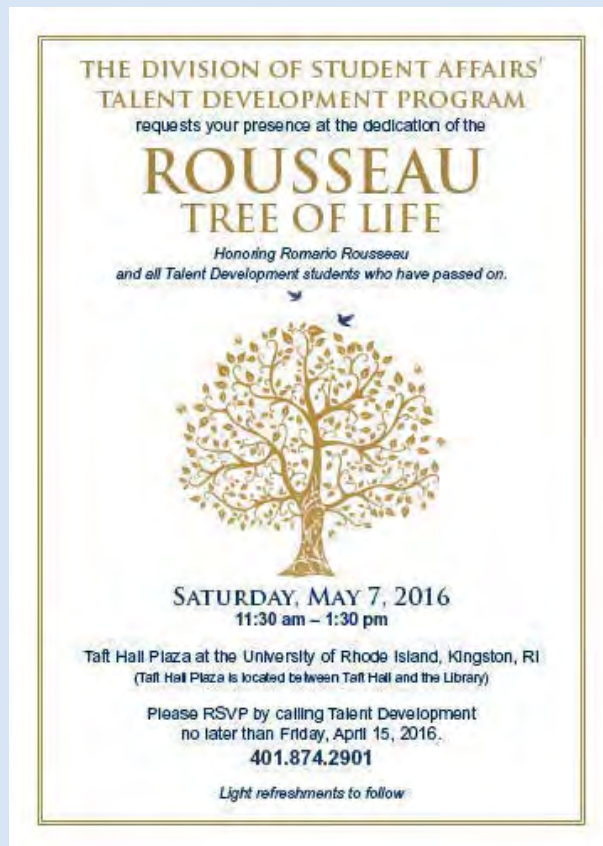
TD organized the Rousseau Tree of Life Memorial on Saturday, May 7, 2016, to honor the TD Scholars who passed away while pursuing higher education. The memorial paid tribute to Fernando Cano, Jose Figueroa, Breanna Foster, Khoi Pham, Romario Rousseau, Fandia Shloul, and Sierra Stanton, with four of them having family representation at the event. The Master of Ceremonies was Robert "Bobby" Britto-Oliveira. Dr. Thomas Dougan, the former Vice President of Student Affairs, supported the event during his tenure, and Dr. David Dooley, then President of URI, along with Dr. Mary Jo Gonzales, the interim Vice President of Student Affairs, continued that commitment after Dr. Dougan's retirement.

The memorial would not have been possible without the assistance of various individuals and departments. John Sears and the Housing and Residential Life staff

purchased the tree and plaque, Steve Mello and the Dining Services staff provided lunch, Sheleen Clarke and the Landscape and Grounds department planted the tree and mounted the plaque, Gina Simonelli from the URI Foundation handled the paperwork, and Sara Potter and Jacqueline Moreino from TD also supported the effort.

After the welcome and acknowledgements, President Dooley delivered a heartfelt speech about the significance of the loss of the TD Scholars, setting the stage for the first musical performance by TD Scholar Bethly Cruz, who sang Bette Midler's "Wind Beneath My Wings."

Following the song, individuals who had close relationships with the departed Scholars shared their reflections. Luis Javier Cano represented his cousin Fernando Cano, Edward Givens spoke on behalf of his advisee Breanna Foster, Stacey Brown represented her brother Romario Rousseau, and Carol "Kippa" Stedman spoke for her niece Sierra Stanton. Each speaker highlighted the qualities of the Scholars and the impact they had on their own lives and others'.



At the end of the remembrances, representatives from the families received a plaque from the TD Program. The plaques read, "TD Nation Remembers [name of loved one]" and were presented by members of the student organizations the departed Scholars belonged to while at URI. The late Earl Smith, Assistant Dean of Arts and Sciences, presented the gift to Fernando Cano's family on behalf of Phi Kappa Psi. Kristy Berdugo, President of URI's dance group eXposure, presented the plaque to Breanna Foster's family. Kevin Martins, a founding member of B.O.N.D., presented the plaque to the Rousseau family. Gerald Williams, Director of Talent Development and Advisor to the Native American Student Organization (NASO), presented the plaque to the Stanton family.

To conclude the ceremony, Jeffrey Jones, a B.O.N.D. Brother, sang the hymn "I Need Thee," and Robert "Bobby" Britto-Oliveira delivered closing remarks, directing guests to the tree and plaque outside of Taft Hall. The tree, an arbor vitae meaning "Tree of Life" in Latin, symbolized the enduring presence of the departed Scholars within the university community, especially within the TD Nation family. The plaque in front of the tree bore the inscription, "ROUSSEAU TREE OF LIFE DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF THE DEPARTED TALENT DEVELOPMENT SCHOLARS IN PURSUIT OF HIGHER EDUCATION." Gathered around lunch, guests engaged in conversation and captured memories through photos taken by the Rousseau Tree of Life.



THE HARBORONE FOUNDATION HELPS TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES & FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO SCHOLARS

The HarborOne Foundation in Rhode Island has a mission to uplift and provide support to individuals and communities suffering from economic depression and one of the programs they support TD. The funds provided by the foundation directly assist students who are facing difficulties in obtaining necessary resources such as books, hardware, and software, especially in the current environment.

The program is particularly important because not everyone has the financial means to pursue higher education. It has helped many Scholars become better individuals and approach challenges with a positive attitude. The TD Program offers opportunities to first-generation college students, who may not have had the chance to attend university otherwise. The impact of the program extends beyond individuals and also positively affects their families and the broader community. HarborOne Bank is proud to collaborate with the community and be a part of the TD Program at URI. The donation from HarborOne directly assist Scholars who face difficulties in obtaining resources such as technology. The HarborOne Foundation has committed \$50,000 for five years. As a community bank representing various communities in Rhode Island, HarborOne Bank takes pride in supporting educational opportunities and helping students complete their college education.

"HarborOne Bank is very proud to be a sponsor, supporter, but most importantly, a friend to the University of Rhode Island's Talent Development Program." - Phillip Kydd, Vice Chairman, HarborOne Foundation

"The Talent Development Program gives students and their families and loved ones a sense of hope that obtaining a college degree is possible...it's really about supporting an individual scholar and really understanding them holistically"
- Kristina Moyet, Associate Director of Academic Programming and Assessment, TD



SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH A VIDEO ABOUT THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN HARBORONE BANK AND THE TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT THEY OFFER OUR SCHOLARS!



FINANCIAL LITERACY WEBINARS

HarborOne Bank, as a partner of the Talent Development Program, contributes its expertise in financial education. They have conducted virtual financial education webinars for over 300 TD Scholars, teaching them about budgeting, saving money, accruing interest, spending with intention, and understanding student loans and debt. The Scholars have found these webinars beneficial in developing their financial knowledge and making informed decisions about their finances.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT ACHIEVEMENT HOUSE (TDAH)

Since the fall of 2021, TD initiated its first living-learning community (LLC) at URI called the Talent Development Achievement House (TDAH). TD Scholars with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher are eligible to live in the TDAH. All programming is specifically catered to the interests and needs of our TD Scholar residents. The values of the House are the same as TD Values: Respect, Academic Excellence, Mental Health & Wellness, and Scholar Success (R.A.M.S.), with a focus on social justice and leadership.

TDAH is the only LLC that centers the core values of fostering a community of students regardless of major and career aspirations.



Scan the QR Code below to learn more about TDAH



BLACK EXCELLENCE & ACHIEVEMENT FOR MALES (BEAM)

The purpose and mission of BEAM is to improve/increase persistence, retention, and completion for Black males and other males of color at URI. The goal is to create community and safe spaces to validate, confirm, encourage and mentor these young men through their college experience. Programming opportunities have been developed to achieve these goals while also creating a rite of passage program that will see young men go from mentees to mentors as BEAM becomes a self-sustaining program and pipeline to Black males with aspirations to attain a college degree. This is important because, in higher education, Black men are among the lowest achieving demographic, and at URI, are tied for the lowest with Native/Indigenous males. Given the traditional tropes and stereotypes that are associated with "uneducated" Black men, it is incumbent on Black men to contribute equitably to a change in the narrative. The success of BEAM can place URI on the leading edge in New England for changing that narrative.



COREY FERNANDEZ
TD ACADEMIC ADVISOR
CLASS OF '08, M.S. '18

"Now is the time to demand EVERYTHING we are owed! Demand your respect; Demand your humanity and DEMAND your space to exist with equity and justice EVERYWHERE you go. Do not apologize for showing up as yourself. Our ancestors died on this foreign soil to build this country and this country- EVERY INCH OF IT- owes us a debt and you shouldn't accept a penny or inch less than what you are owed. Our people paid the cost and it is now our time to collect on that debt. We achieve these things by being unified; by forgiving each other; by loving each other through our mistakes; and consistently coming back to the table to get to work!"

To the current TD Scholars - *"Find your tribe! Find Black males here who have been in your shoes and can mentor you through your growing pains. It is not a matter of IF you will have struggles, but WHEN. And when you have those struggles, having a tribe of people who understand your unique experience is vital and could be the difference between you succeeding or not. Never underestimate the power of asking for help. We got your back!"*

- Always in Solidarity. Corey Fernandez

TD DIRECTOR IS AWARDED THE GARY S. SASSE DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

Gerald R. Williams was awarded the Gary S. Sasse Distinguished Public Service Award at the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council's 79th Annual Meeting on October 24, 2022. This award is given annually to recognize individuals who have made exceptional contributions to state government but may not have received widespread recognition. URI President Marc Parlange provided a video testimonial during the Annual Meeting to express gratitude for Mr. Williams' dedicated public service and congratulate him on receiving this prestigious award.

Gerald R. Williams has served as the Director of the TD Program at URI since 2000. Williams is the program's third and longest-serving director, and he has played a significant role in its growth and success. Under Williams' leadership, the TD Program has undergone several notable improvements. These include expanding the program to the Providence campus, doubling the number of Scholars admitted annually, and creating career pathways in various high-demand fields. His dedication and efforts have contributed to the program's positive impact on the lives of many Rhode Island students.

Before his appointment as Director, Williams worked for the Educational Talent Search Program at the Community College of Rhode Island and served as an academic advisor for TD. His prior experience and commitment to educational support have shaped his ability to lead and enhance the TD Program. Gerald R. Williams was a TD Scholar himself when he entered URI. He holds a B.A. in Communications and an M.A. in Education. In addition to his academic achievements, Williams excelled as a student-athlete, playing football for both Bishop Hendricken High School and URI. His athletic accomplishments led to his induction into the Athletic Hall of Fame.

Williams resides in Providence with his wife, two daughters, and two granddaughters. His years of dedicated public service, commitment to educational opportunities, and transformative work within the TD Program have earned him the Gary S. Sasse Distinguished Public Service Award and the recognition he deserves.



SCAN THE QR CODES TO VIEW PRESIDENT PARLANGE'S VIDEO TESTIMONIAL & RHODY TODAY'S FEATURE ARTICLE ABOUT TD DIRECTOR GERALD R. WILLIAMS



2022-2023 MARKED A HISTORIC YEAR!

URI CEREMONY HONORS LEGACY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

*Commemorating 1966 speech in
Keaney Gymnasium*

BLACK STUDENT LEADERSHIP GROUP (BSLG) ALUMNI COMMEMORATE

30th Anniversary of Taft Hall Takeover

REMOVAL OF TRUNCATED MALCOLM X QUOTE FROM URI LIBRARY

A 30 Year Wait for Justice...

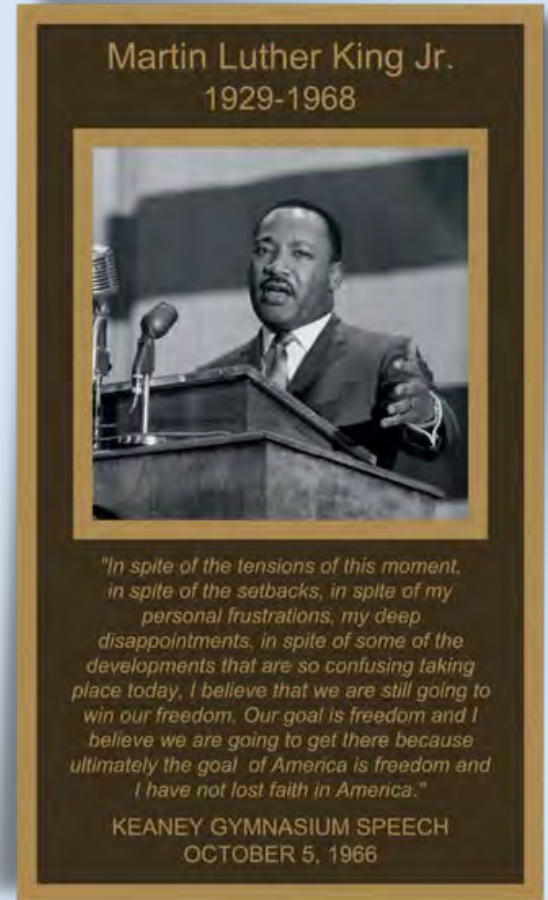
URI HONORS THE LEGACY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. COMMEMORATION OF 1966 SPEECH IN KEANEY

The dedication of a plaque at URI's Keanev Gymnasium commemorated a historic speech given by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on October 5, 1966. The speech, delivered to a capacity crowd of 5,000 people, highlighted the progress made in racial and economic justice while acknowledging the work that still needed to be done. The event was attended by more than 100 members of the campus community, including URI President Marc Parlange, Director of Athletics Thorv Bjorn, and former Vice President of Community, Equity and Diversity Dr. Sean Edmund Rogers.

President Parlange emphasized the significance of Dr. King's words, noting that at the age of 37, he had already achieved more for the civil rights movement than had been accomplished in previous decades. The event aimed to honor Dr. King's legacy and reaffirm the university's commitment to diversity and inclusivity.

URI's TD program, initiated after Dr. King's assassination in 1968, was acknowledged as part of his lasting legacy, providing opportunities for over 4,500 alumni from Rhode Island who are students of color or come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The dedication ceremony concluded with a reminder from Dr. Rogers that Dr. King, though beloved today, faced criticism and resistance during his lifetime. Rogers called for a commitment to the right course of action, even when faced with adversity, as personal injustice is often the price paid for pursuing public justice.



The plaque, measuring 14 inches by 24 inches, features a photo of Dr. King during his speech and includes words he delivered at Keanev Gymnasium

Scan the QR Code to watch a **video from URI Athletics** recounting the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and see a **full transcript of his speech** in Keanev on Oct. 5, 1966



Scan the QR Code to read the article from **Rhody Today** recounting the unveiling of the plaque commemorating Dr. King's Oct. 5, 1966, speech in Keanev Gymnasium



BSLG COMMEMORATES 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF TAFT HALL TAKEOVER



Members of the Black Student Leadership Group pose after a commemorative dinner and speaking program. Seated at center is Malcolm Anderson; second row from left are: Ana Barraza; Dr. Karoline Oliveira, Emilia Fernandes and Marilia Fernandes; back row: Dionne Hyman, Tony Sanders, Lanre Ajakaiye, Michelle Fontes, Arthur Berry, Marc Hardge; Charles "Chuck" Watson and Antonio Goncalves

It was 30 years ago that a peaceful protest was sparked by a truncated Malcolm X quote engraved on the Robert L. Carothers Library and Learning Commons, as well as various injustices experienced by BSLG members and their supporters at the university.

During the commemoration event, plaques were presented to the families of two late BSLG members, Toney DaMoura and Earl N. Smith III, who had passed away earlier that year. The plaques honored their commitment and selfless sacrifice to the BSLG and carried an inscription commemorating the 30-year anniversary of the group.

The audience at the event also had the opportunity to view a documentary film about the BSLG takeover by TD Scholar Cristóbal D. Bustos. The documentary included historic news footage, newspaper clips, and recent interviews with individuals involved in the protest.

Scan the QR Code to watch the full documentary recounting the takeover of Taft Hall, *The BSLG - A Voice Was Heard!* by TD Scholar Cristóbal D. Bustos



Additionally, several current students, including Bintou Keita, Markeem Rodrigues, Stedman Gyamfi-Darkwah, Kiara Duarte, Jordan Severino, Shamar Morgan, Lourdes Monteiro, and Brandon Grace, participated in the event. They read the original 14 demands made by the BSLG during the takeover. These demands were the result of extensive study, fasting, and discussions among the BSLG members and had led to positive outcomes, although there is recognition that the work is ongoing.

One of the former BSLG spokesmen, Anderson, emphasized the importance of self-accountability and encouraged students to hold themselves accountable in their academic pursuits. He highlighted the potential impact their efforts could have, such as earning scholarships or improving their family's circumstances. Anderson also spoke about the challenges faced by their ancestors and urged students to persevere in the face of adversity.

The event's master of ceremonies, Robert “Bobby” Britto-Oliveira, expressed that the purpose of the event was to commemorate the BSLG takeover, hold the university accountable for its actions since then, and empower current students to continue the fight for a better URI. Other speakers, such as Sara Monteiro, emphasized the importance of service and the sacrifices made by the BSLG members in their pursuit of justice.

The 30th Anniversary commemoration of the takeover of Taft Hall aimed to honor the legacy of the BSLG, educate current students about their struggle, and inspire them to continue the fight for racial justice and equality at URI.

Scan the QR Code to read the article from *Rhody Today* about the 30th Anniversary Taft Hall Takeover featuring members of the BSLG and their message to current students.



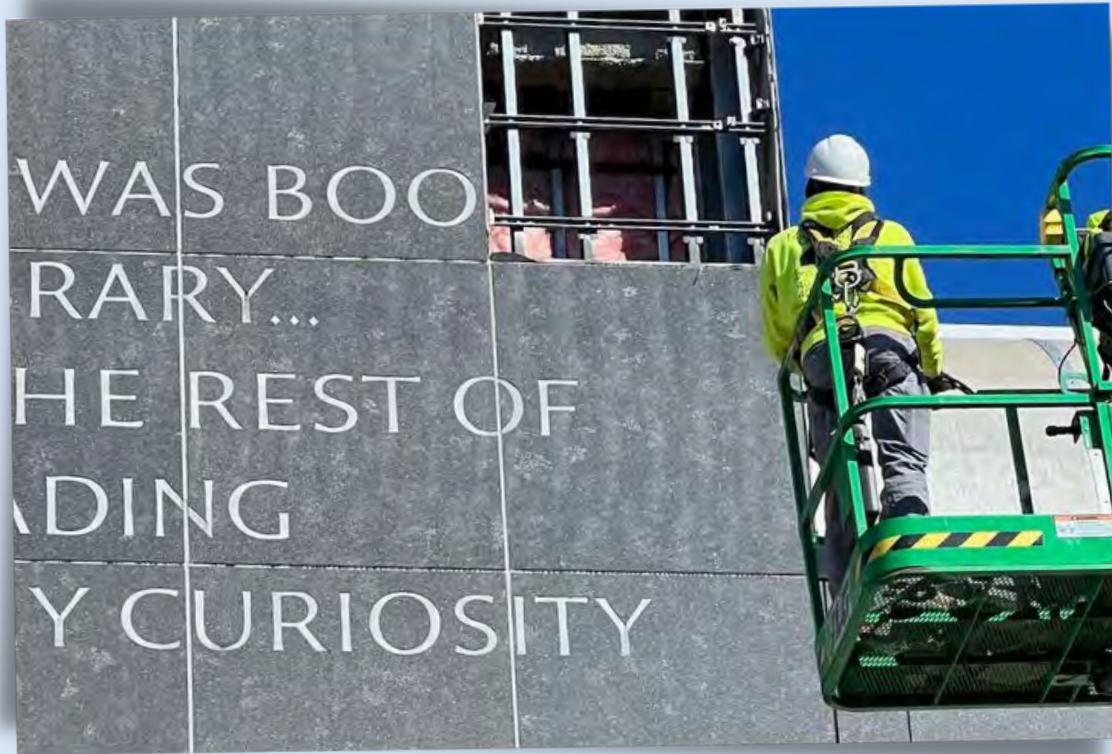
Scan the QR Code to read the article from *Rhody Today* about TD Scholar Cristóbal Bustos' film capturing URI history



Scan the QR Code to view the featured segment on *Generation Rising on PBS*. Host Dr. Kiara Butler sits down with Malcolm Anderson, Lanre Ajakaiye, and Cristóbal Bustos as they reflect on their experiences at URI and the tensions that led to the student takeover of Taft Hall in 1992.



REMOVAL OF TRUNCATED MALCOLM X QUOTE FROM URI LIBRARY



In early March, the URI community saw a construction barricade surrounding library on campus, leaving many wondering what was happening...that barricade marked the commencement of efforts to eliminate a truncated quote that has adorned the granite façade of the Robert L. Carothers Library and Learning Commons at URI. Originally installed in 1992 as a tribute to Malcom X, the quote has sparked discontent among numerous students, particularly the leaders of the BSLG. They argued that the shortened version distorted the comprehensive essence of the civil rights leader's message. URI President Marc Parlange, who assumed office in 2021, acknowledged the initiative's origins three decades ago when a group of URI students demonstrated the courage to confront prevailing injustices. During a reunion in November, President Parlange pledged to have the quote removed, expressing gratitude towards the past and present generations of student leaders. Their unwavering advocacy continues to inspire the ongoing efforts towards cultivating an all-embracing and equitable community at URI.

Students, faculty, staff, and BSLG alumni gathered on April 27, 2023 to mark the completion of a decades-long attempt to right a grave wrong: removal of the offensive inscription. Ana Barraza, Director of the Women's Center and BSLG representative involved in the 1992 building takeover, expressed the determination of the BSLG to hold the University accountable. Barraza acknowledged the University's fault and the harm caused to alumni, while also recognizing the good faith action to remove the misquote. Markeem Rodriguez, President of B.O.N.D., called the day special and encouraged others to be the change they wish to see on campus. URI President Marc Parlange emphasized the significance of the removal to promote unity and support. Dr. Sean Edmund Rogers, former Vice President for Community, Equity, and Diversity (now Dean of the URI College of Business), offered words to describe the strained existence of Black and Brown people on campus, both thirty years ago and today, and challenged others to consider the bravery the BSLG to stand in the face of adversity and commended their unwavering voices. Michelle Fontes, Assistant Vice President for Community, Equity, and Diversity, organized the event and expressed pride in the past activism of the BSLG and the administration's commitment to accepting their demands...

MESSAGE TO TD SCHOLARS: While this was a significant win for student activists, past and present, you are encouraged to stay vigilant and to never forget how long it took to right this wrong. Stand firm and never again let 30 years pass for justice!



Pictured, Left to Right:
Dr. Sean Edmund Rogers, Dean of the College of Business
Ana Barraza, Director of the Women's Center and TD Alumna
Michelle Fontes, Assistant Vice President of Community, Equity & Diversity and TD Alumna
Markeem Rodriguez, TD Alumnus
Dr. Karoline Oliviera, TD Alumna
Charles "Chuck" Watson, Assistant Dean of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion for the College of Engineering and TD Alumnus

Scan the QR Code to read the article from *Rhody Today*, 'It's about doing what's right.' Campus event marks removal of truncated Malcolm X quote from URI library



Scan the QR Code to read the article from *Rhody Today*, URI removes truncated quote from campus library exterior





THE LEGACY OF TD NATION - A MESSAGE TO CURRENT SCHOLARS...

The history of the Talent Development Program is a continuum and you are now a part of that legacy...so how do you envision serving in the lifetime honor of being a TD Scholar? First, know that you were not “given” anything...you earned your place at the University of Rhode Island, where systemic and institutional oppression that prevents access to marginalized communities is acknowledged, alleviated and supported.

Scholars-led movements in TD’s history and the Scholar activism happening today, are an indication that the work is not over and much remains to be done. We live in a society that tells us that nothing is guaranteed and that history has a funny way of repeating itself...so always be ready to advocate for yourself and your community, knowing that you stand on the shoulders of Scholars who came and advocated before you to ensure your place.

The future of TD is in your hands...it has always been. You have the support of the TD staff, who are committed to going to bat for you at every turn. The history of the TD Program gives us clarity and insight to our steps forward. TD Scholars and staff have relentlessly struggled and made sacrifices to preserve and expand opportunities. Within our institution, we have fostered an atmosphere that promotes academic excellence and fuels activism, propelling meaningful change. We owe a profound debt to the change-agents who preceded us, the past students and staff who blazed the trail. Our destiny hinges on our ability to wield this invaluable gift with prudence and astuteness.

Reflect on the pioneers who defiantly rejected the "Program for Disadvantaged Youth" emblem, or the individuals who, in 1971, risked their education, jobs, and even lives to safeguard TD's future. Consider the courage displayed by the BSLG, the BUA, and all others who dared to rise and effect positive transformation. Furthermore, let us not forget the countless TD graduates who, for 55 years, defied the skeptics, triumphed across diverse fields and proved them wrong. That is who we are as a program and as a people...now the time is yours to pen the next chapters of our history – **TD NATION!**

PAST TALENT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

The "I AM TD" Video Series

is designed to profile students within TD Nation giving them the opportunity to share their own individual story of their experiences in the URI community via a 1-2 minute video. Theoretically, every student who feels that they have something to share is given the opportunity to have a moment in the spotlight. The videos are available for screening via the TD website, and also on the New TD Student Media broadcast through the URI TV Network.

The L.E.A.D Conference

(LEAD. ACHIEVE. EXPLORE. DEVELOP.) hosted by the TD Program, is an all-day conference for incoming first-year students among the TD community who have an interest in exploring leadership development. Topics include self-leadership, social responsibility, campus engagement, and career development.

Meet the Colleges

provides incoming students with the opportunity to meet the Deans and in some cases, faculty from the various college and academic departments here at URI. The event is designed like a career fair in that, students are free to walk around and explore as many Colleges as they wish. They are also encouraged to take as much literature as needed to develop a full understanding of the University's academic offerings.

Raise the Bar

is an opportunity for students to engage in a fun and rigorous rock climbing activity at URI's North Woods Challenge Course. This leadership event encourages student leaders to apply themes of collaboration, communication, strategy, and trust. Students are able to relate these themes to everyday real life leadership challenges to better understand the power of group dynamics and improve their personal effectiveness as leaders.

TD Summit

During TD Summit prospective URI students from local high schools visit the University and have the opportunity to accompany a current URI student to class, participate in recreational activities and bond with current students who serve as Real Models or mentors.

Career Seminar

is a two hour seminar designed to encourage career exploration and major selection. Students are given valuable information on campus-wide office and services available to them (i.e. the Center for Career & Experiential Education, the Office of International Education, etc.) as well as practical guidance on a variety of topics such as: "How to speak to your professor when you have a concern?"

TD Student Advisory Council (TDSAC)

The collaboration of TD students engaging in contemporary social issues led to the development of Talent Development Student Advisory Council. By working together, students are able to assist TD in its mission and help give back to the community. TDSAC's agenda and mission create a platform for students' voices to be heard. This student led group emphasizes the importance of individuality. By establishing a strong sense of belongingness, TDSAC perpetuates the familial structure that bonds everybody together.

TD Student Media

is a student driven initiative designed to give students with an interest in either Film Studies Communication Studies, Journalism, Sports Media, also Arts and Entertainment, a chance to get practical hands on experience in the field. TD Student Media deals with ALL aspects of TV Production both in and out of the studio, including programming, actual TV Production, news correspondence, filming, film editing, public relations, and News anchoring. All activity is done with the intention of broadcasting over the TD Student Media channel that is within the URI TV Network solely for the purposes of TD Student Media.