

# THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND



# TALENT DEVELOPMENT

ACCESS | OPPORTUNITY | AFFORDABILITY | COMPLETION



  
TALENT  
DEVELOPMENT

TENTH EDITION

# TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Opportunity & Activism

## UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

TENTH EDITION, 2025

CONTRIBUTIONS BY TD STAFF AND URI COMMUNITY



# LAND USE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*"The University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional stomping ground of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People. We honor and respect the enduring and continuing relationship between the Indigenous people and this land by teaching and learning more about their history and present-day communities, and by becoming stewards of the land we, too, inhabit."*

*The University of Rhode Island Land Acknowledgment is a statement written by members of the University community in close partnership with members of the Narragansett Tribe.*

**The Talent Development Program also recognizes the painful history of violence experienced by Black and Indigenous communities in their "stomping grounds" we now utilize at URI, including acts of dispossession, genocide and enslavement they endured.**

**As a land-grant and sea-grant institution, we must acknowledge these truths and advocate for these communities as they navigate the challenges inherited by colonialism and the continued imperialism that exists today...**



*"Whispering Giant" Sculpture By: Peter Toth*



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# TALENT DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

## GERALD R. WILLIAMS

### Foreword

*It is with a great sense of honor that we invite you to become better acquainted with the Talent Development (TD) Program at the University of Rhode Island (URI). We are proud to share the history of our program, our institutional successes, Scholar highlights, and the legacy of the TD Program.*

*Moreover, we want you to have the opportunity to take a journey with us through our moments of joy, trials, and more importantly, the activism of our Scholars and TD staff that have had a lasting impact on the infrastructure and diversity of the community at URI today.*

*At TD, we center our R.A.M.S. Values - Respect, Academic Excellence, Mental Health & Wellness, and Scholar Success. We are dedicated to a holistic approach to lift our Scholars to the height of their potential so that they are equipped to successfully navigate life at the university and beyond.*

*We hope this narrative sheds light on our 55 year journey thus far and encourages you to support and champion our future efforts at URI.*

*Welcome to TD Nation!*

*Gerald R. Williams, Director  
Better Known as, "G"*



**GERALD R. WILLIAMS**  
**TD CLASS OF '92, M.Ed '00**

# TALENT DEVELOPMENT MISSION STATEMENT

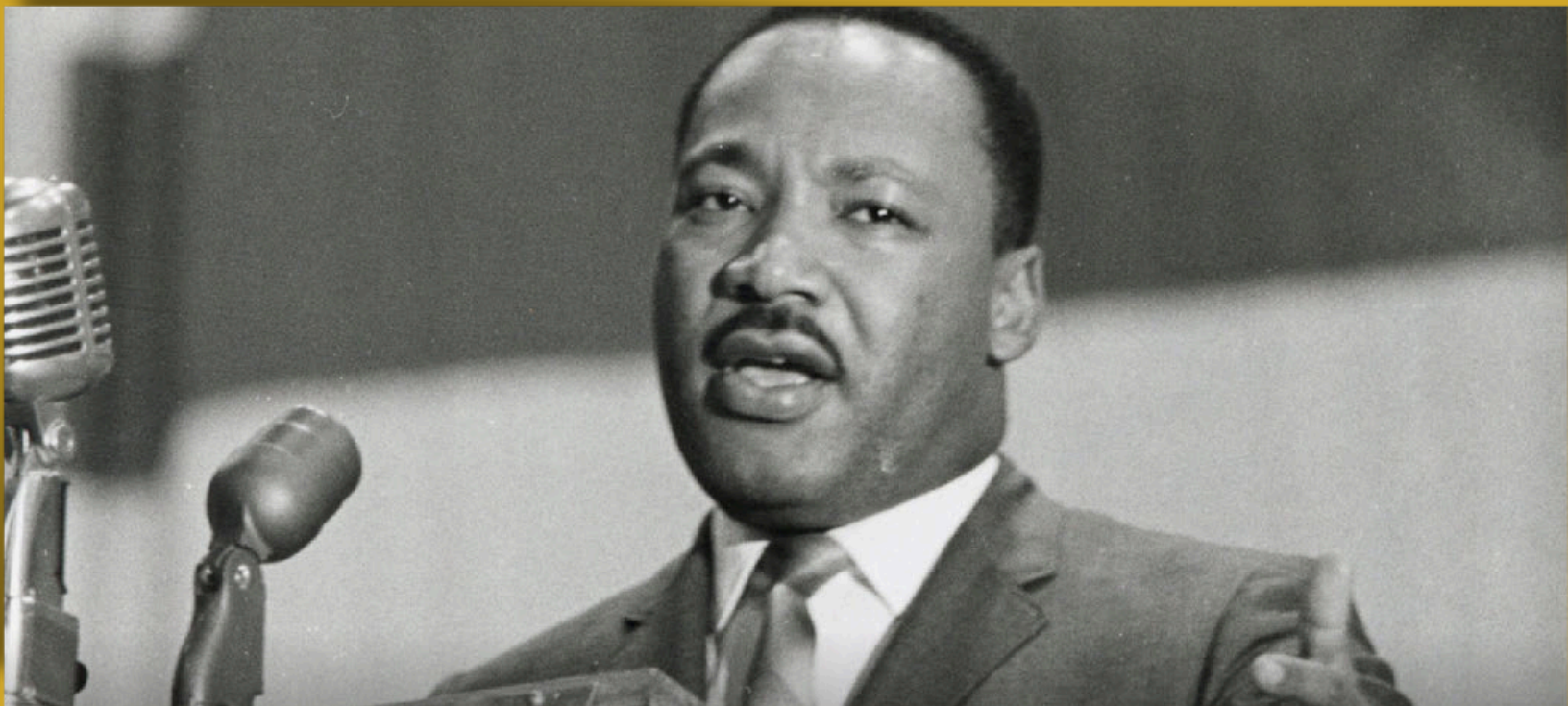
Talent Development recruits and serves high school graduates from Rhode Island with college potential, most of whom come from under-performing schools. Talent Development's core values are grounded in the University's mission of enriching students' lives through its land, sea, and urban grant traditions. This is reflected in our ongoing commitment to Respect, Academic Excellence, Mental Health & Wellness, and Scholar Success. We are invested in cultivating the intellectual, social, and cultural development of our Scholars. We inspire Scholars to discover, create, and innovate while fostering leadership and personal growth to build a foundation for persistence.



TAFT HALL



# HISTORY IN THE MAKING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND



*“The appalling silence of the good people is as serious as the vitriolic words of the bad people.”*  
- An Excerpt from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech at URI

There he stood, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., at the podium in Keaney Gymnasium in the fall of 1966. Over 5,000 members of the URI community had come to hear the young civil rights activist speak.

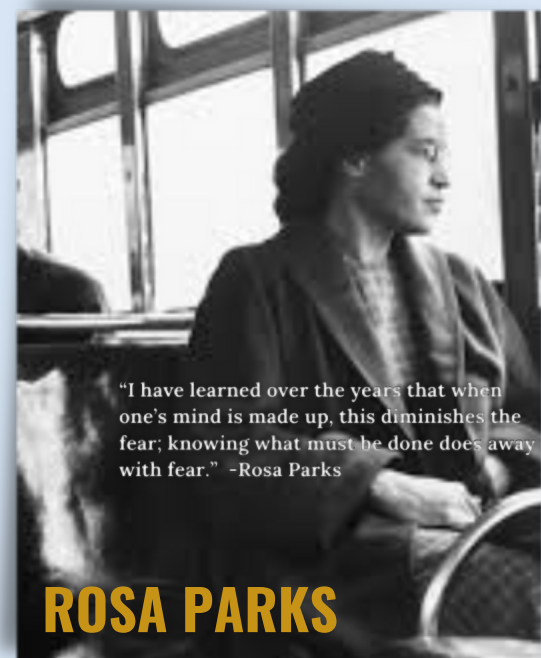
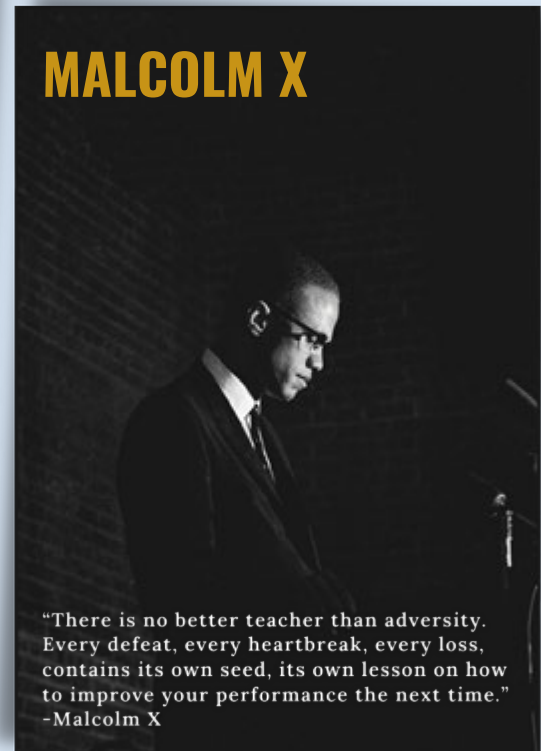
It was a moment in the history of URI that would inspire hearts and effect change. The words of Dr. King set a new tone. Students, faculty and staff alike began to mobilize to fight against injustice and inequality. There was a renewed energy and many would discover their calling to lead in the movement towards social justice and freedom.



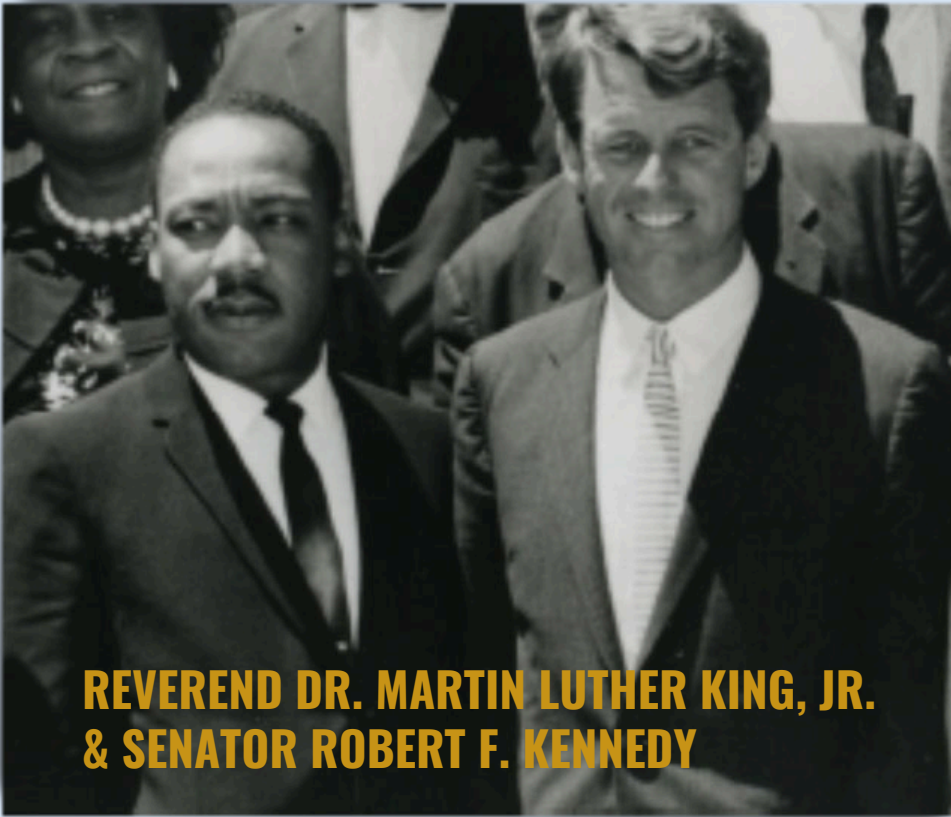
# ANTECEDENTS TO TALENT DEVELOPMENT



Talent Development is a higher education opportunity program at the University of Rhode Island. It was founded in 1968 following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The foundations of TD can be attributed to the enduring legacy of the Civil Rights Movement, a historic chapter characterized by activism and valiant struggles. Pioneering Black activists such as Dr. King, Rosa Parks, and Malcolm X paved the way, guiding us through the transformative journey from Selma to Montgomery, while imparting powerful messages like "I Have a Dream" and "I May Not Get There With You." We draw unceasing inspiration from the sacrifices made by these extraordinary figures, as well as the countless significant moments and locations that weave together the tapestry of our collective history. Their unwavering commitment to justice and opportunity remains an enduring beacon for us all.



# UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT OF TALENT DEVELOPMENT'S CREATION



**REVEREND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.  
& SENATOR ROBERT F. KENNEDY**

Just two short months before his own assassination, Senator Robert F. Kennedy delivered the eulogy at Dr. King's funeral. Dr. King and Senator Kennedy were at the forefront as leaders and supporters of the Civil Rights Movement. The bond they created with one another was just as strong as their commitment to justice and equality.

In April 1968, when Dr. King was tragically assassinated, the outcry of protest reverberated across the nation, with the inner-cities witnessing the most powerful response. These protests ranged from expressions of anger to violent acts, resulting in some cities being consumed by flames. Just a few months later, in June 1968, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, a staunch advocate for the Civil Rights movement and a critic of the Vietnam War, was also assassinated during his presidential campaign. This double blow meant that the youth of that era lost two remarkable leaders in a short span of time.

The impact of these events was also keenly felt at the University of Rhode Island, where the urgent demand for recognition and respect became undeniable.

***“All or most of the progress that has been made on campus has come, if not immediately, in the years subsequent to student protests,”***

***- Abu Bakr '73, M.S. '84, M.B.A. '88.***

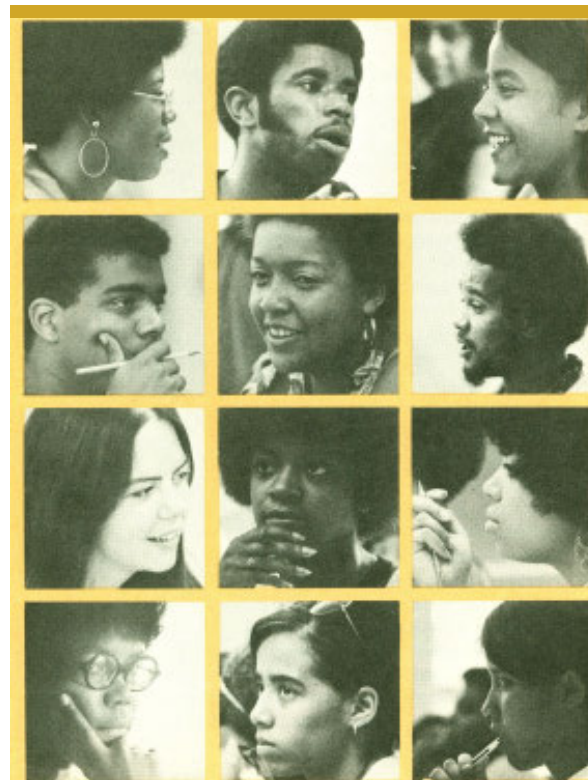
# THE FIRST TALENT DEVELOPMENT SUMMER PROGRAM

In Rhode Island, a transformative initiative called the "Program for Disadvantaged Youth" was established at URI through the collaborative efforts of the Board of Regents and then-Governor John Chafee. This program, spearheaded by Dr. Harold Langlois, welcomed 42 students, primarily from South Providence, Fox Point and Newport to the URI campus for a summer program. Notably, the student body represented diverse backgrounds, including African-American, Native American, Latino, and Caucasian, as other ethnicities had yet to populate Rhode Island significantly in 1968.

At the program's end, 13 out of the 42 students were selected to continue their education at URI that fall, the remaining students attended RIC or Rhode Island Junior College (now CCRI). Despite initial skepticism from supposed "experts" who predicted limited success for these students. Beating the odds stacked against them, 11 of these students not only graduated from URI but few even went on to earn their Ph.Ds, proving the naysayers wrong.

These pioneering students brought a fresh wave of activism and consciousness to the university community. Initially, they were required by URI to wear badges that labeled them as participants in the "Program for Disadvantaged Youth." In a powerful display of dissent, the students protested against the isolating, humiliating, and disrespectful nature of such identification, urging faculty and staff to acknowledge their individuality. As a result, the badges were eliminated, marking the beginning of the impact these students would have on the URI campus. The winds of change were imminent.

**RIGHT: A model of the badges the original 13 TD students had to wear**



## SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR TALENT DEVELOPMENT

**"Have You Considered College?"**  
reads the headline from one of  
Talent Development's first  
recruitment brochures





# AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. HAROLD LANGLOIS

## The founding Director of TD, Dr. Harold V. Langlois

When one thinks of the Talent Development Program, one often thinks of it the way it is today: the advisors, Taft Hall, the PREP and Pre-Mat Programs. Some even remember the days when Reverend Hargde and Mr. D. directed the program and walked the campus as one. But few know how the program came to be what it is today, and even fewer know about the man who made it all possible.

Dr. Harold V. Langlois is that man. Graduating from URI in 1967 and completing his masters at the University of Indiana, 24-year-old Dr. Langlois returned to URI in 1968 with an idea, a dream and ambition.

According to Dr. Langlois, the story of how TD started is a story about leadership, anxiety, risk-taking and learning.

Without any experience and a budget of only \$56,000, Dr. Langlois set out to start a six-week summer program at URI.



DR. HAROLD V. LANGLOIS

The program, originally named Programs for Disadvantaged Students, targeted individuals ages 24-25 who wanted to pursue a college education but were in some way disadvantaged and unable to attend a college or university.

*"It didn't have to do with color. It didn't have to do with what was right. It had to do with justice."*

- Dr. Harold V. Langlois

The program was undefined in what it wanted to accomplish and started as an unformed idea, Dr. Langlois said. It did not require high school transcripts and it did not have any admissions requirements. The only thing the program required was students who wanted to learn.

Fifty-three students, primarily from South Providence, Fox Point and Newport, were recruited to begin the first TD summer program in 1968.

"These were good, solid people who wanted to go to school but were very unprepared," Dr. Langlois said.

The program brought great change to URI, and the experience was new to both the university and the students.

"With change rises anxiety," Dr. Langlois said. "It is important to understand the student's anxiety about moving from inner city environments to a college campus."

To deal with the anxiety felt by the university, faculty and students, Dr. Langlois created sensitivity programs for the faculty, which included two courses, Urban Education and Building Sensitivity. The courses dealt with understanding issues of race, sex, age and socio-economic influence on culture.

"It was about understanding pluralism," Dr. Langlois said. "There was no vehicle for minorities. No minority representation in politics or higher education."

According to Dr. Langlois, 42 of the students made it through the summer

### LANGLOIS continued

program, 13 of whom attended URI in the fall. The remaining students attended RIC or Rhode Island Junior College (CCRI).

"Each student added a unique commitment of their own, not a minority commitment, but a personal commitment to do well. The students took the program and made it really work," Dr. Langlois said.

It was after the first summer that TD obtained the name it has today. According to Dr. Langlois, the name Programs for Disadvantaged Students was a terrible name for the program because the word "disadvantaged" seemed to be synonymous with minority groups and therefore portrayed a negative connotation.

Dr. Langlois said he came up with the name Special Programs for Talent Development while walking across campus one afternoon. Ultimately, the program's name was structured around the word "talent."

"I liked the idea of 'talent' and the program essentially was aimed at developing talent," Dr. Langlois said.

And so the program became SPTD.

The once - unformed idea of starting a college program for minority and disadvantaged individuals was beginning to expand and take form.

The second year of the program the number of students doubled, and 50 entered URI in the fall.

During this time, URI experienced a bad budget crunch and was planning to cut TD funding.

According to Dr. Langlois, the URI Faculty Senate stepped forward in defense of TD and stated, "Even if we do not get our raises, we want the Talent Development Program to go untouched."

As a result of the faculty's efforts, Talent Development was able to continue. With university and federal funds, the program received a budget of \$150,000.

With the program reaching new heights, Dr. Langlois brought in the services of Leo F. DiMaio and Reverend Arthur L. Hargde.

The connection between Dr. Langlois and Mr. D. dates back to their childhood when the two played basketball at the Providence Community Center.

Having worked at the ACI with Dr. Langlois' father, Dr. Langlois believed that Mr. D. had the "kind of spirit, ethic and dedication to get something done and that his skill sets would be better used for pursuing positive gains."

Looking for someone who could take the program to the next level, Dr. Langlois introduced Reverend Hargde who was not only well known politically, but also had a

strong hold on the Providence community and according to Dr. Langlois, could "represent the program in a meaningful way."

"A 24-year-old white male going into black communities was not effective," Dr. Langlois said.

And so goes the story of Talent Development.

"We learned from going and what we learned we implemented," Dr. Langlois said. "TD came about as a need to produce something that needed to get done. It didn't have to do with color, it didn't have to do with what was right, it had to do with justice. It was a responsibility to represent the unrepresented." **TD**

### TD News

#### Talent Development Newsletter

Special Programs for Talent Development  
University of Rhode Island  
19 Taft Hall  
9 Lippitt Road  
Kingston, RI 02881  
Phone - (401) 874-2901  
Fax - (401) 874-5605

Gerald R. Williams - Director  
Frank L. Forleo - Assistant Director for TD Admissions  
Sharon R. Forleo - Assistant Director for Educational Programming  
Edward P. Givens - Assistant Director for Campus Life  
Joanna N. Ravello - Academic Advisor  
Roberta C. Durrington - Academic Advisor  
Edward S. Shear - Academic Advisor  
Carla N. Benoist - Office Manager  
Melissa A. Petrocelli - Newsletter Editor

TD NEWS is published by Special Programs for Talent Development, a program established at the University of Rhode Island in 1968 for disadvantaged students and students of color. TD NEWS is published during the fall and spring semesters and is intended to inform and update Talent Development students and alumni on news and progress related to the program.

# ARRIVAL OF REVEREND ARTHUR L. HARDGE & MR. LEO F. DIMAIO, JR.

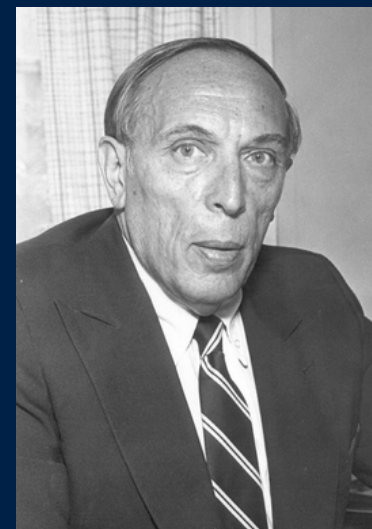
The summer of 1969 brought together the legendary team that created *Special Programs for Talent Development*, the Reverend Arthur L. Hardge and Mr. Leo F. DiMaio, Jr. Reverend Hardge, a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. (a historically Black organization rooted in scholarship, perseverance and upliftment) was a Freedom Rider and an esteemed colleague of Dr. King, who had a profound connection to the Civil Rights movement. In Rhode Island, he stood as the foremost leader of his time, becoming the first African-American to be appointed to a state-wide, cabinet-level position. To honor his legacy, a statue was erected in front of the URI Multicultural Student Services Center. Serving as the founding Director of TD, Reverend Hardge dedicated himself to this role until 1980.

Alongside Reverend Hardge, Mr. DiMaio played a pivotal role as the founding Assistant Director of TD. Later, he assumed the position of director from 1980 to 1998. Both men were indispensable, representing the very essence of TD's establishment. Without Reverend Hardge, Mr. DiMaio, and the pioneering students who embraced TD, this remarkable program would not exist today. Their contributions were truly *sine qua non*, in other words, absolutely essential, and the vital components without which TD could not have come to fruition.

In addition to the visionary leadership of Reverend Hardge and Mr. DiMaio, it is essential to recognize the significant contributions of Laura DiSano, the student services coordinator, and the late John Wills, the recruiter and field coordinator. These individuals served as key early core staff members of TD, playing an instrumental role in shaping the program's foundation.



**REVEREND  
ARTHUR L. HARDGE**



**MR. LEO F. DIMAIO, JR.**

**The bond that existed between Reverend Arthur Hardge and Mr. Leo DiMaio was unbreakable. When receiving his Lifetime Achievement Award at URI's 10th Annual Diversity Awards Banquet, DiMaio stated,**  
***"No one could tear us asunder. We were brothers. We are brothers."***

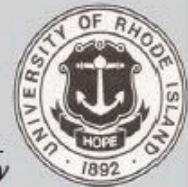


# AN OVERVIEW OF THE LIFE OF REVEREND ARTHUR L. HARDGE

Talent Development Student / Alumni Newsletter



## TD NEWS



Special Commemorative Edition - BSLG Celebrates its 10 year Anniversary

Fall 2002

Vol. 2

No. 1

### Rev. Hardge - the struggle for justice



REV. ARTHUR L. HARDGE

The Reverend Arthur L. Hardge, a noted civil rights leader, was born in Indianapolis, Indiana on April 8, 1927. He was a son of the late Rev. Elias and Clara Edith (Smith) Hardge.

In 1929, the Hardge family moved to Jersey City, New Jersey where Rev. Hardge received his elementary and secondary education. Later, Rev. Hardge earned a bachelor of arts degree from Morgan State.

Rev. Hardge was baptized at 10 years of age as a member of the Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church in Jersey City. At age 17, he answered God's call to the Christian ministry. He was ordained shortly thereafter.

Rev. Hardge's journey, which connected his life to countless other lives, began with service in Zion churches he pastored in the states of New York, Oklahoma, Connecticut and Rhode Island.

In the early 1960's, Rev. Hardge's faith, courage, activism and leadership took him

into the forefront of the civil rights struggle.

An early colleague of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Rev. Hardge was in the vanguard of change. He took part in the Freedom Rides for civil rights in the Deep South. He was arrested for civil disobedience several times, along with other religious leaders, including Dr. King.

Rev. Hardge was especially active in efforts to integrate the Tallahassee Municipal Airport. As a result of his arrest and conviction in the Tallahassee Freedom Ride, Rev. Hardge was sentenced to 60 days on a Florida chain gang. Fortunately, a judge reversed the sentence after 10 days and Rev. Hardge went free.

In later years, Rev. Hardge recounted that the Freedom Rides were a time when faith overcame fear. The philosophy of faith over fear endured for Rev. Hardge throughout his storied life.

In 1968, Rev. Hardge accepted the call to the pastorate of Hood Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church in Rhode Island. Under his leadership, Hood Memorial expanded its congregation and built a new church structure.

Rev. Hardge served as the first Chairman of the RI Chapter, Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Through his leadership, he is considered to be the father of the RI Fair Housing Law.

Applying the principles of non-violent civil disobedience, Rev. Hardge led a successful movement to focus the attention of the General Assembly and the Executive Branch on passing this historic measure.

He also served as the executive secretary of the RI Commission Against Discrimination from 1965-1968.

In 1968, Reverend Hardge became the first African American gubernatorial cabinet appointment when former Gov. John H. Chafee named him as the Director of the RI Department of Community Affairs.

Rev. Hardge's commitment to Civil Rights and justice led to his appointment as Special Assistant to the President and Director of Special Programs for Talent Development at the University of Rhode Island.

At URI Rev. Hardge was the first African American administrator, first among voices advancing justice through education.

In the wake of Dr. King's assassination, Rev. Hardge assumed leadership of SPTD, a recruitment and retention program for students of color and disadvantaged persons. With his valued friend and colleague Leo DiMaio, Rev. Hardge fostered growth in SPTD from an initial seed of 13 students to the most successful

see HARDGE, page 2

#### Inside TD News

• BSLG - celebrates its  
10th year anniversary

• Learn how to get  
scholarships online.



page 2 TD NEWS Fall 2002

**HARGE continued**

program of its kind in the country, with over 1100 graduates and a current enrollment of 700 students.

Besides his involvement at URI, Rev. Hardge was also a founding member of Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) of RI. He became Chairman of OIC in 1967 and guided OIC from a storefront existence in South Providence to a multi-faceted job-training and human resource center that provided services to thousands of people of color and other disadvantaged persons.

Under his chairmanship, a \$6 million, 80,000 square foot complex in South Providence was planned and completed. He also served as a member of the Executive Committee for the National OIC under the leadership of Rev. Leon Sullivan, OIC Founder.

Throughout his life, Rev. Hardge was a prayerful man. His faith guided him toward the path of the struggle for justice. Rev. Hardge's work in the last years of his life (SPTD and OIC) are twin testaments to his commitment to opening doors for others.

He was a man of faith and a man who understood the need for education and jobs. With all his strength, even as his strength was failing, he held open the door of opportunity. He taught us that even great individual strength could fail, that every individual struggle reaches an end, but he left us an open door and a path to follow.

Rev. Hardge was a giant who walked among us and moved on. We still, in this historic moment, feel his presence and his leadership. Rev. Hardge's achievements, his understanding of relationships, his great love of life, his powerful sense of humor, his intelligence and eloquence, are all there before us on the road, marking the way home to a more just world.

Even after his death in 1983, the life and work of Rev. Hardge is still honored by the University.

In 1984, TD established a financial aid award in his memory. The Arthur L. Hardge Grant provides TD students with

\$4,600 each year.

On Sept. 12, 2000, URI dedicated a memorial statue in the Reverend's name. The statute, designed by Arnold Prince, father of Joshua Prince '91, is located in front of the Multicultural Center and stands approximately 9 feet tall.

The memorial statue was dedicated with this statement written by URI President Robert L. Carothers:

"This memorial honors the life and work of the Reverend Arthur L. Hardge, born in 1927, a man who led by serving his brothers and sisters until his death in 1983, he was a child of many cultures: Africa, Europe and those first Americans who lived on this land.

The great grandson of a man who had his fingers lopped off for teaching and preaching, Arthur Hardge had a passion for learning that could not be easily quelled. Rev. Hardge was a minister from the age of seventeen. He was a leader of the Civil

Rights Movement, jailed in Florida for refusing to leave a restaurant reserved for whites and later becoming the first black man in Rhode Island to head a state agency, creating jobs and hope for those who had little of either.

Building on a program established by Harold Langlois and assisted by Leo DiMaio, Reverend Hardge later founded the Special Programs for Talent Development at the University of Rhode Island, in which 'the Rev' and 'Mr. D' changed the lives of thousands of young men and women.

From those whom others gave no chance to succeed, Rev. Hardge built a new generation of doctors and lawyers, teachers and nurses, leaders of business and government, music and theater - the pride of this University. It was, he liked to say, 'always a pleasure.' TD

Article written by *Frank L. Forleo*

**TD News**

**The Talent Development  
Student/Alumni Newsletter**

Special Programs for Talent Development  
University of Rhode Island  
19 Taft Hall  
9 Lippitt Road  
Kingston, RI 02881  
Phone - (401) 874-2901  
Fax - (401) 874-5605

Gerald R. Williams - Director  
Sharon R. Forleo - Associate Director  
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Roberta C. Durrington - Academic Advisor  
Edward S. Shear - Academic Advisor  
Domingo E. Morel - Interim Academic Advisor  
Carla N. Benoist - Office Manager  
Marc D. Hardge - Interim Computer Lab Coordinator  
Melissa Petrocelli Macedo - Newsletter Editor

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# THE EARLY STRUGGLE FOR TALENT DEVELOPMENT'S SURVIVAL

In 1971, the University of Rhode Island proposed a budget that aimed to eliminate the Talent Development Program, despite its initial success. This action sparked the proactive response of the student organization known as Uhuru Sasa, also recognized as the Afro-American Society (AAS). They carried out an exceptionally bold act of civil disobedience by chaining the door and occupying the URI Administrative Building. Through their resolute protest, predominantly led by TD students from Uhuru Sasa/AAS, they brought the URI administration to a dramatic standstill.

During the occupation, the students articulated a list of demands that encompassed the restoration of TD's budget, an augmentation in the representation of Black faculty and staff, and the establishment of a Black Studies Program. Eventually, the state police, fully clad in riot gear, were summoned to evict the students, effectively concluding the takeover. However, one immensely significant request was fulfilled—TD's funding was reinstated.

The experience of Uhuru Sasa/AAS served as a paradigm for future endeavors and activism. Notable students who spearheaded the takeover and the movement included Daniel Price, Jr., Thomas Braxton, Thomas Ellison, Louis Francis, Walter Morgan, Nelson Lopes, Dave Petty, Nancy Perry, David Petty, James Pina, Rebecca Rocha, Carolyn Senna, the late James Snead, Valerie Southern, Cora Watkins, and Tom Varella. These students worked closely with supportive faculty and staff advisors, such as Reverend Hardge, Mr. DiMaio, and Judge Alton Wiley, to effectively communicate their plea for change.

Daniel Price, Jr., one of the leaders, offers insight into the Takeover experience, which is described below. Since 1971, Uhuru Sasa, which translates to "Freedom Now" in Swahili, has remained an influential and active presence on the URI campus.



**STUDENT TAKEOVER OF THE CARLOTTI BUILDING**



**PROVIDENCE JOURNAL HEADLINE READS, "LAWMEN WADE INTO THRONG OF STUDENTS; CLEAR URI BUILDING"**



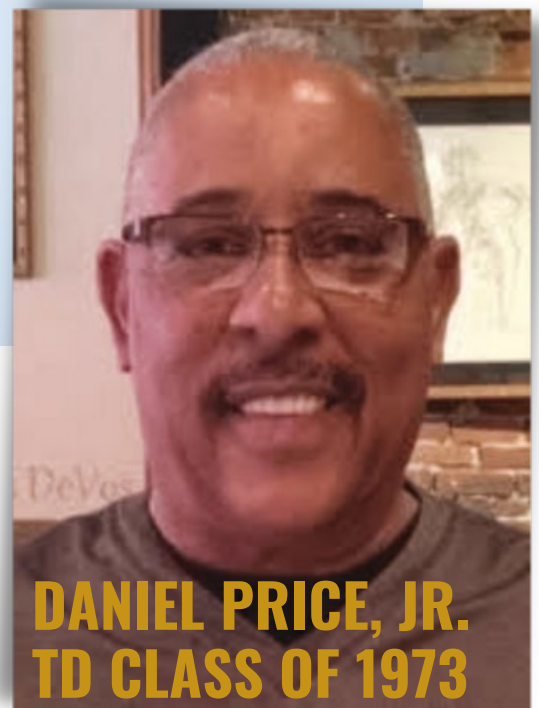
### Excerpts from Primary Source: Daniel Price, Jr. One of the Uhuru Sasa/Takeover Leaders

“One final but very significant point that needs to be included in any discussion of the events that took place at the Administration Building is what Mr. D did when the State Police in full riot gear smashed down the door to the registrar’s office that we were barricaded behind. I remember it well because it was terrifying. We were all lying on the floor with our arms interlocked and just when the police hit the door with a battering ram (or whatever they used), a photographer’s flash bulb went through the door—very scary. The first person to enter the room was Mr. D, scurrying over the file cabinets and desks we had used for the barricade, shouting to the State Police Captain by name— “Don’t lay a hand on any one of my students in this room!!” As a result, not one of us was struck by the police that poured into the room wielding those long batons. It was total chaos but the TD students came out of it totally unscathed. Unlike the white students who supported our cause and were surrounded the outside of the building in a show of solidarity. Several of them got beaten up pretty badly.

My point in writing this is twofold. One—it is important that the facts surrounding this significant event in TD’s history are accurate, and two, with the recent passing of Mr. D. we need to be sure that his legacy reflects just how much he loved and protected his students from the very beginning. He was a unique individual who had a positive impact on so many TD students, and his contributions should never be forgotten.”

Daniel Price Jr. '73 passed away just weeks after reflecting on the takeover of the administrative building.

Price was a proud member of the first graduating Talent Development class at the University of Rhode Island.





## THE '70S: SLOW AND INCREMENTAL GROWTH

Despite maintaining a commendable graduation and retention rate, TD faced difficulties in expanding its reach. Rhode Island witnessed an influx of Latin Americans and Southeast Asians, yet URI appeared reluctant to embrace the notion of a larger and, consequently, more costly TD Program. Nevertheless, as the decade drew to a close, TD made a groundbreaking decision by accepting seventy students, a seemingly modest figure by today's standards, but a monumental achievement at that time. This expansion opened doors to a significantly larger pool of students, extending educational opportunities far beyond what had been previously possible. Once again, TD found itself at the forefront of catalyzing change.



### *Baker: Racist attitudes of 70s still causing anger, frustration*

By JOANN MULLER  
Opinion Columnist

In 1971, a group of angry URI students entered the Administration building and staged a sit-in to protest the administration's racist attitudes and policies and a lack of minority representation on campus. Looking back on that event 12 years later, Abu Baker, URI's executive director, says not much has changed. "The University is playing out a script someone else wrote years ago. There are 100 Black people here and that won't change for diversity. If that wasn't true, then the environment would have changed a long time ago."

Baker, who was a student at URI in the late 1960s and a

leader in demonstrations during that era, says that nothing has changed since then. "It's rare that there are no demonstrations of outright racism on campus," Baker said, but "what you get here is institutional racism." "The University is not acting in a favorable way toward minorities," he said, and URI leaders should be developing programs to get more minority students and faculty here, particularly during this time of economic hardship. "You do what you need to do to get them here. If that takes a commitment of money, then okay. But if you're not going to do it, say it."

Baker said if the University makes a commitment to increase minority representation, the University will always be a success, even though there is a focus on being there is being under special circumstances," he said, adding many faculty members are retiring, quitting or leaving URI for other reasons.

The URI Commission on Racial Problems held last January addressed many of the same issues and revealed many of the same sentiments that were present during the early 70s, Baker said. "But the commission will mean absolutely nothing unless the University takes effective steps to increase minority representation on campus and eliminate institutional racism," he said. "No, I don't mean nothing — it's a commitment."

## UNIVERSITY YEAR FOR ACTION (UYA)



**DR. NOREEN COACHMAN**

During the Nixon administration, just before the end of the Vietnam War, Reverend Hardge and Mr. DiMaio wrote a successful federal grant in 1975 to fund University Year for Action (UYA). UYA formalized internships in the community providing TD students and others with a means to "give back." The late Dr. Noreen Coachman was the first UYA director. Alexa Grant served as the UYA field coordinator and assistant director. UYA was the first opportunity for URI students to spend an entire semester earning full academic credit at an internship. Many of the early internships were located in urban areas and gave special meaning to the experience for activist TD students. When the federal grant expired, URI wisely adopted funding of UYA and it became the seed for current **Center for Career and Experiential Education (CCEE)** at URI, a source of significant educational and service opportunities for URI students. By creating UYA, TD was again a catalyst for change!

## FRANK & SHARON FORLEO

Frank Forleo, a graduate of the Class of 1974, dedicated his career to URI as Assistant Director for TD. He served the program from 1975, initially as a tutor/instructor and later as an advisor, until his retirement in 2016. Sharon Forleo, who graduated in '72 and earned her M.A. in '94, also contributed to the leadership of TD as Associate Director. Recognizing their remarkable commitment, the Forleos were honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2019 URI Diversity and Inclusive Excellence Awards, acknowledging their 40 plus years of service.

Then URI President David M. Dooley expressed his admiration for their unwavering devotion, stating, "The impact you have made throughout your extensive tenure at the University of Rhode Island, particularly among students who have faced marginalization, neglect, underappreciation, and disrespect, is truly extraordinary."

*"It would be a great benefit to the students today to understand how we have arrived where we are —at what young people call 'the moment.'"*

*—Frank Forleo '74*

*"I'm so fortunate because what I do and what I believe are the same. Not everyone can say that about their job. Talent Development is such a unique program. Look at the longevity of it. Similar programs that began at the same time are all gone because the intent and funding have all dried up. TD just keeps getting stronger."*

*—Sharon Forleo '72, '94*



Husband and wife duo, Frank and Sharon Forleo, served the TD Program for over 40 years and on November 10, 2016, they began their retirement. Their work and legacy will forever live on, not only in TD and URI, but in the lives of all of those they advised, mentored and nurtured over the years.

## THE '80S: CONTINUED GROWTH IN TALENT DEVELOPMENT

In the summer of 1980, Reverend Hardge retired, making way for Mr. DiMaio to assume the role of his successor. URI introduced academic advising for student-athletes, and the responsibility for this important service was given to TD. In the mid-1980s, Edward Givens took on the role of academic advisor for student-athletes. He later transitioned to become the Assistant Director for Campus Life within TD, a position he holds to this day. Susan Weitzner joined TD as the office manager in 1981 and served with distinction until 1998.

During this period, the dedicated core staff at TD faced challenging circumstances while striving to solidify and build upon the progress made by the program. The early 1980s were marked by severe budgetary issues across the entire campus, which compelled TD to accept the existing conditions as a means of survival. Priorities shifted, and the era of the Civil Rights movement seemed to have come to a close.

Nevertheless, TD managed to achieve a point of equilibrium and demonstrated sustainability, albeit at a gradual pace. The program slowly but steadily progressed, reaching an annual admission rate of 90-100 students per year.



**A PHOTO FROM A 1980S  
TD BROCHURE**



# AN INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD GIVENS

## A REFLECTION FROM THE 1980S TO 2023

**Q: You joined TD in the 80s during a period marked as one of "continued growth". What you believe are the main areas of "continued growth" of the TD Program from then until now?**

A: One of the main areas of growth is the size of the program and its staff. When I was an undergrad there were five people on staff and approximately 250 students in the program. My class had 75 students. When I became employed we thought accepting a class of 200 was huge. We were staffed by a clerk stenographer, the director and three advisors. Our staff has grown to the point where we have had 11 people on staff. We now accept 600 Scholars. TD Scholars are represented in every degree granting college. TD staff have earned post graduate degrees, MA, MS, PhD, certifications and micro-credentials. More of our Scholars are attending grad school, med school and law school. Our Scholars are now taking advantage of study abroad opportunities and internships. The Hardge/Forleo Grant continues to assist Scholars with financing their education and continues to increase with tuition increases. Our partnerships and collaborations are all over campus and throughout the state.

**Q: What have been some of the most meaningful or special moments in TD's history?**

A: Every graduation since 1968 has been special. Every time a Scholar has left the university and returns to earn his/her degree is special. Every time a scholar returns to campus as faculty, professional staff, or graduate student is special. The history of TD and how it has bettered URI is special. Accepting 600 Scholars every year and seeing the proud smiling faces of Scholars and families during PREP and Move In of the Summer Success Program is special. TD in itself is special there is no other program like it.

**Q: What are you most proud of about your work in the TD Program?**

A: I'm proud to say that I am the first TD/URI graduate to be employed by TD. I'm proud to say that I have almost 40 years of service to TD and URI. My work in TD has provided me opportunity and taught me life lessons.

**Q: What are your hopes for the future of the Talent Development Program?**

A: I hope that TD will be in existence and continue to assist Scholars for another 50 plus years. I hope that TD will be the national model for other institutions of higher education, maybe even become a K-12 model.

**Q: What message/challenge do you have/task for TD Alumni?**

A: I would ask TD Alumni to be mentors to Scholars, provide internship and job opportunities where possible, develop Scholarship opportunities for Scholars in need, be visible on campus and express opinions and ideas to increase and support DEI efforts on campus. Assist in branding, marketing, celebrating the successes of TD Alumni worldwide.



### TO THE CURRENT TD SCHOLARS...

"It is important for Scholars to understand that when it pertains to diversity, multiculturalism, access and opportunity for students of color, that TD has had a hand in it. TD has been a catalyst for change on campus since TD was founded. TD has and continues to change the optics on campus. The work is not done. Scholars need to continue to be successful. They need to participate in changing the climate on campus and accept URI Kingston campus as theirs.

No legacy is as rich as honesty. Legacy isn't what you did for yourself but what you have left behind for others. Who would have ever imagined how TD would turn out 55 years later? I would advise Scholars to leave a positive impact and ask themselves what large or small things have they done to leave their mark. Legacies are etched in the minds of those that come after you and the stories that they will share."

**-Ed Givens**

**Assistant Director for Campus Life**

# THE PASSING OF REV. ARTHUR L. HARDGE (NOVEMBER 1983)

Reverend Hardge departed from this world at the young age of 56, leaving behind a void that was felt deeply by all who knew him. He was a towering figure who walked alongside us, guiding, inspiring, and profoundly impacting our lives. The memory of Reverend Hardge shall forever endure, his essence forever intertwined with ours.

We earnestly encourage every TD student to pay a visit to the magnificent Reverend Hardge statue, standing proudly in front of the URI Multicultural Student Services Center (MSSC). There, they can find profound and uplifting words that illuminate the tremendous impact one individual can have on the lives of many. In recognition of his remarkable contributions, the TD Scholarship, now known as the Hardge Grant, has been named in honor of Reverend Hardge.



**ON SEPTEMBER 12, 2000 A STATUE HONORING REV WAS MADE AVAILABLE OUTSIDE OF THE UNIVERSITY'S MULTICULTURAL CENTER. HIS LEGACY LIVES ON IN EACH AND EVERY MEMBER OF THE TALENT DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY. NEARLY 17 YEARS AFTER HIS UNTIMELY DEATH, HIS PLAQUE AND STATUE WERE UNVEILED.**

# THE URI CONVOCATION ON PLURALISM (1983)

As the enrollment of students from diverse backgrounds and disadvantaged students increased at TD, there was a growing demand for greater opportunities and a more inclusive range of academic offerings. The "URI Convocation on Pluralism" in 1983 was originally intended by outgoing President Frank Newman as a farewell event highlighting URI's progress. However, the Convocation took an unexpected turn, transforming into a platform for critique and protest. Prominent student leaders at the time, including Robert Bailey, John Christian Hopkins, Kevin Hall, and notably Steve Washington, along with members of Uhuru Sasa and the Native American Student Association, voiced strong demands for increased acceptance of students from diverse backgrounds to foster greater diversity at URI. Another important demand was for a curriculum that reflected a broader perspective. They called for the inclusion of topics such as genocide, slavery, colonialism, and sexism, approached from a non-White, non-Eurocentric standpoint. The students received guidance from supportive faculty and staff throughout this undertaking. Despite his retirement from TD, Reverend Hardge remained active, as did Mr. DiMaio. However, the primary roles in advising the protesting students were assumed by Mr. Abu Bakr and Mr. John Ramos, the Director of Multicultural Student Services at URI.

## CREATION OF THE COLLEGE READINESS PROGRAM

One of the noteworthy accomplishments under Mr. DiMaio's leadership in Talent Development was the creation of the College Readiness Program (CRP) in 1984. As an expansion of Talent Development's recruitment initiatives, CRP was introduced by Mr. DiMaio to provide specialized courses and comprehensive academic support services to prospective TD students at URI's Providence campus, ultimately guiding them towards admission into TD. The College Readiness Program served as a gateway for numerous exceptional students, who not only gained entry into TD but also went on to forge outstanding careers.



# THE '90S: PRESIDENT ROBERT CAROTHERS, DR. JOHN MCCRAY & THE BLACK STUDENT LEADERSHIP GROUP (BSLG)

President Robert Carothers assumed the role of URI's tenth President in 1991, bringing with him not only remarkable academic qualifications but also a background as a Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam activist. President Carothers' dedication to meaningful progress became evident early on through the establishment of the Joint Academic Steering Committee (JASC) and the University Staff Steering Committee (USSC). These two groups were formed to ensure that all voices on campus were heard and considered during times of contemplated change.

President Carothers challenged the University's hierarchy to go beyond the status quo and embrace the curricular and pedagogical transformations introduced by a new and more diverse wave of students. Amidst this transformation, TD occupied a central position, while issues of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and social class emerged within the framework of "Total Quality Management." President Carothers issued a twofold mandate: to eradicate fear from the URI environment and strive for continuous improvement.

However, the forces of resistance opposed these changes, and students of color, like the proverbial canary in the coalmine, were the first to experience the brunt of this reactionary backlash.



Dr. John McCray's significant contributions deserve special acknowledgment in TD history. Serving as the Vice President of Student Affairs during the Black Student Leadership Group (BSLG) era, Dr. McCray played a pivotal role. It was his presence in the Malcolm X Reading Room on November 10, 1992 that served as a profound inspiration for the BSLG movement. With his wisdom and foresight, he became instrumental in their triumph.

Dr. McCray's exceptional comprehension and his own active engagement in activism were paramount in fostering an environment conducive to change. His dedication and efforts were critical in the realization of their goals.

# SPRING 1992

## FORMATION OF THE BLACK STUDENT LEADERSHIP GROUP (BSLG)

During the spring of 1992, a series of events unfolded involving the URI Police Department (URI PD) and their treatment of all students of color, not just specific to those in TD. These events reached a culmination point with the "Casey/Gonsalves" incident. In this incident, a URI police officer orchestrated the release of a widely circulated photograph showing two handcuffed men of color being taken to an arraignment, which was published in the URI newspaper, *The Good Five Cent Cigar*. It was revealed that URI PD had actually contacted the newspaper to arrange this photo opportunity. This deliberate act of stereotyping became the final trigger for action.

In response, Uhuru Sasa and TD students united in protest, with individuals like Malcolm Anderson, Neil Hazard, and Karoline Oliveira emerging as leaders. This collective effort laid the foundation for the formation of the BSLG. Recognizing the need for external guidance, URI enlisted the support of a national consultant to address issues within the campus police force. However, the resolution did not meet the satisfaction of the students.

During the subsequent summer of 1992, the BSLG convened to develop a comprehensive plan aimed at fostering positive change, not only within URI PD but also across the entire campus.



**"A commitment has been made from the top...How long do we have to wait for these changes?"**

**-Malcolm Anderson**



## SPRING 1992 CONTINUED... “TD DAY” AT THE RHODE ISLAND STATEHOUSE



*Students, staff, and alumni of the Talent Development Program gather at the State House for "TD Day"*

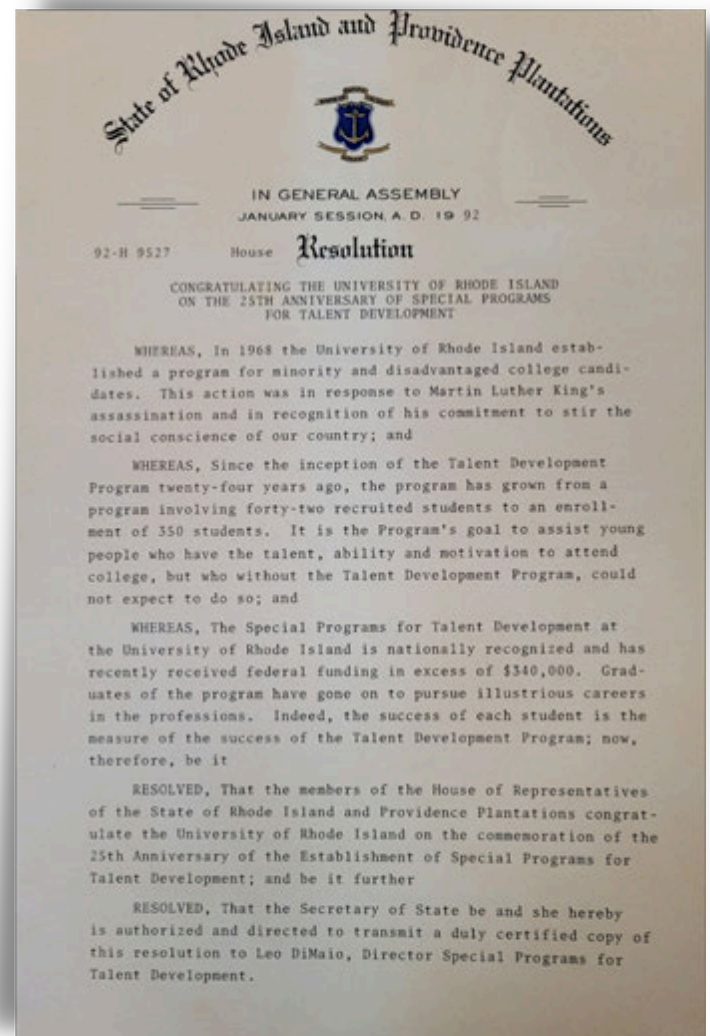
On April 15, 1992, a significant event took place at the Rhode Island Statehouse known as “TD Day”. The occasion was officially designated as “TD Day” by then-Governor Bruce Sundlun and the Legislature. It aimed to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of both past and present TD students who had made a profound impact on URI. These exceptional individuals had not only excelled academically but had also been actively involved in initiatives that reshaped the university's landscape, challenging preconceived notions of success.

The House and Senate provided a platform for four current TD students and alumni to address the gathering, sharing their personal experiences. Among them were Regina Clement, John Hopkins, Jerry Munoz, and Robert Russell, who delivered inspiring speeches that resonated with everyone present. The speeches delivered by these individuals left a lasting impression. Notably, John Hopkins, a TD alum, uttered a particularly memorable line: "I have a dream for today, and because of TD, I have a dream for tomorrow." It is worth mentioning that John Hopkins would later achieve success as an accomplished author and an award-winning Native American journalist.

Regina Clement pursued a career in the field of social work, becoming a valued clinician. Jerry Munoz, on the other hand, established himself as a senior financial manager, while Robert Russell embarked on his entrepreneurial journey, owning a successful steel company. These four individuals were shining examples of the extraordinary accomplishments of TD Scholars, whose achievements were rightly celebrated on “TD Day”.

In addition to the student speakers, esteemed figures such as new URI President Robert Carothers, Mr. DiMaio, and Narragansett Tribal Medicine Man, Lloyd Wilcox also addressed the gathering, adding their wisdom and perspectives to the event. The TD family, comprised of Scholars, alumni, and other supporters, came together to revel in the festivities and cherish the remarkable milestones reached by TD Scholars. It was a day of recognition, inspiration, and unity, highlighting the transformative power of education and the potential for greatness within every individual associated with TD.

“TD Day” showcased the incredible accomplishments of the TD Program, demonstrating the profound impact it had on students' lives. The success stories of Regina Clement, John Hopkins, Jerry Munoz, and Robert Russell were emblematic of the countless achievements by TD Scholars, all of whom were celebrated and honored on this momentous occasion.





# FALL 1992

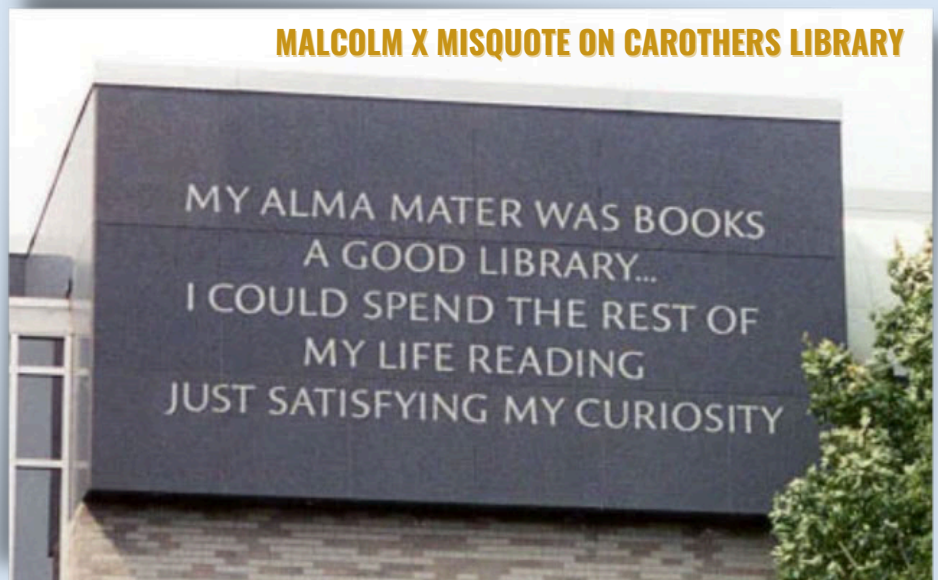
## DRIVING CHANGE: BSLG'S FOURTEEN DEMANDS

Upon careful observation, evaluation, and critique of URI, the BSLG discovered that little progress had been made for people of color and other marginalized communities since the 1970s. The number of admissions for TD remained stagnant at one hundred per year. Neglected by URI, the old Uhuru Sasa House was found to be in a deplorable state and despite the persistent demand for change, the lack of diverse and inclusive programs and courses, which had sparked student protests in 1971 and 1983, still persisted. Contrary to promises made, Afro-American Studies (AAF) was still not offered as a major.

Following a conference at URI's Alton Jones campus, the BSLG returned to Kingston and discovered a misquote Malcolm X's autobiography inscribed on the URI Library. The BSLG strongly believed that the truncated quote intentionally misrepresented Malcolm X's passage that reads:

*"I told the Englishman that my alma mater was books, a good library.  
Every time I catch a plane, I have with me a book that I want to read —  
and that's a lot of books these days.  
If I weren't out here every day battling the white man,  
I could spend the rest of my life reading, just satisfying my curiosity —  
because you can hardly mention anything I'm not curious about."*

This incident ignited a protest, leading the BSLG to peacefully occupy Taft Hall on November 10, 1992. In a symbolic act, they renamed Taft Hall as "Malcolm X Hall" and issued a set of FOURTEEN DEMANDS. This historic action gained significant attention from local, regional, and national media outlets.



# BSLG'S FOURTEEN DEMANDS...CONTINUED

In response to the BSLG's FOURTEEN DEMANDS, President Carothers engaged in a highly charged televised meeting with the group on November 12, 1992. Subsequently, he penned a notable "Thanksgiving Day Message" to the BSLG, outlining a plan for implementing the requested changes. Judge Frank Caprio, a member of the Board of Governors, expedited the resolution of the Uhuru Sasa House issue by referring to it as a "dump" in an interview with a Providence Journal reporter.

His comments and the subsequent media attention resulted in the establishment of the temporary Multicultural Center (MCC) at 14 Upper College Road, followed by the construction of a new MCC at the heart of the campus. Edward Givens, serving as the Interim Director, led the initial phase of this process. The BSLG achieved several notable successes, including a review of curriculum diversification, the creation of an AAF major, revitalization of the URI Affirmative Action office, and the establishment of the Malcolm X Reading Room in Taft Hall.

## URI minority group gets answers

### Carothers tackles list of demands by students

By GERALD M. CARBONE  
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

**SOUTH KINGSTOWN —** They squared off like two boxers in a ring bathed in the hard glare of spotlights, surrounded by the stares of a tense, partisan crowd.

But the two men sharing the spotlight inside the University of Rhode Island's Taft Hall yesterday were

Demands, responses.  
Page A-14.

there to exchange words, not punches, and they both professed to be fighting for the same goal: eliminating racism at URI.

At one end of the table sat President Robert L. Carothers, his head bowed while he read a seven-page response to a series of demands made Tuesday by the Black Students Leadership Group.

At the other end sat the leader of the black students' group, Malcolm Anderson, who stared at Carothers and weighed each word with skepticism.

Carothers said that URI will soon meet many of the students' demands and will agree to address other concerns, but he rejected two proposals as unrealistic.

Carothers began his talk in a conciliatory tone, a marked contrast to the negotiating tack taken by former URI President Werner Baum when black students alleged campus racism in 1971.

"Malcolm, I am proud of the leadership you and your colleagues have shown in advancing the agenda to eliminate racism and bigotry in this nation, this state and on the campuses of the University of Rhode Island," Carothers said, just 48 hours after 200 students had staged a 12-hour sit-in at Taft Hall. "There is no issue more critical to our future as a people."

Carothers addressed in detail  
Turn to DEMANDS, Page A-14

'Malcolm, I am proud of the leadership you and your colleagues have shown in advancing the agenda to eliminate racism and bigotry in this nation, this state, and on the campuses of the University of Rhode Island.'

ROBERT L. CAROTHERS  
URI President



Journal-Bulletin/WILLIAM K. DABY

**FACE TO FACE:** URI President Robert Carothers, above, meets with students yesterday to discuss a list of 14 demands. Malcolm Anderson, below, leader of the student group that staged a sit-in Tuesday, vowed to keep a dialogue open with Carothers.



'A commitment has to be made from the top. ... How long do we have to wait for these changes? ... You seem to me like you're sincere about what you're saying. I don't know. Only time will tell.'

MALCOLM ANDERSON  
Student leader



It is important to clarify that the BSLG protest did not result in complete victory. Some members of BSLG expressed dissatisfaction, claiming that nothing had changed. However, others recognized a wave of positive changes. While the desired comprehensive transformation of the entire campus may not have been achieved, it cannot be denied that the actions of BSLG awakened a consciousness that had long been absent at URI.

The BSLG movement gained support from various student groups such as TD, Uhuru Sasa, the Native American Leadership Group (NALG), the Cape Verdean Student Association (CVSA), and a significant number of student-athletes. These groups, along with the core staff of TD, played a crucial role in leading this courageous and impactful effort. BSLG produced many future leaders, including Lanre Ajakiye, Malcolm Anderson, Thomas Campbell, the late Antonio DaMoura, Michelle Fontes, Abdul Fox, Adrienne Gibbs, Marc Hardge, Myrtle Holder, Kim Hooks, Kyle Ivey-Jones, Sye Johnson (founder of NALG), Karoline Oliveira, Joanna Ravello, Lucy Rios, Earl Smith, Charles Watson, and Laitan Yussuff, among others. The TD core staff members Frank Forleo, Sharon Forleo, and Edward Givens served as advisors to the BSLG during this historic period.

President Carothers played a significant role in this era by choosing the path of peace, non-violence, and Civil Rights, inspired by Dr. King, despite the volatile environment of protests and demands for change. President Carothers' words and actions made an impact, and as a testament to his commitment, he allocated funds for the admission of 150 TD students in the spring of 1993, which led to a significant growth of TD overnight. The late Earl Smith, one of the articulate and passionate members of BSLG, joined the TD core staff in early 1993 and emerged as a community leader. Once again, TD's voice was heard loud and clear!

*“Being in that building, for me, I felt so empowered that no matter what happened, even if I was kicked out of school, I was standing up for what I believed in.”*

*— Dr. Karoline Oliveira '94, M.S. '03*

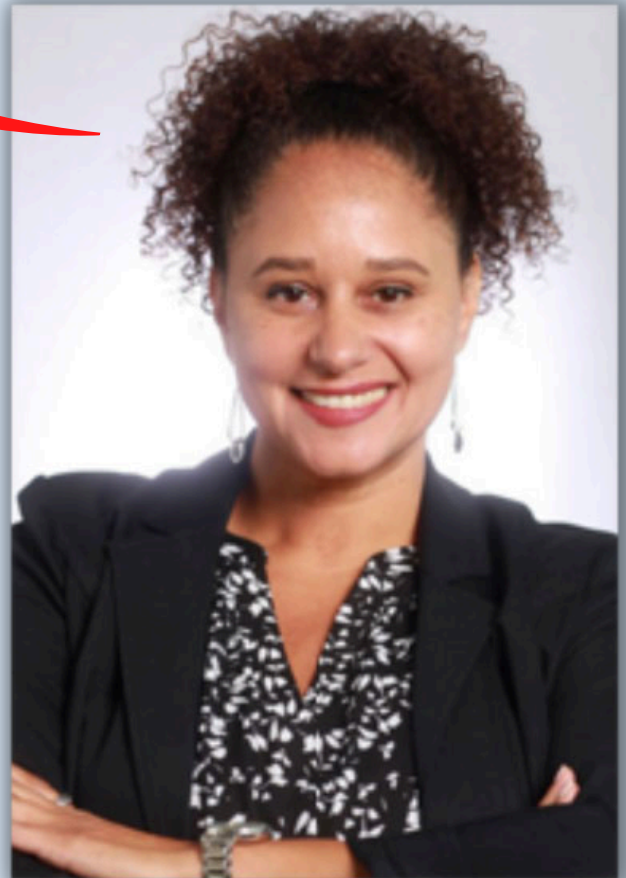
# INTERVIEW WITH BSLG MEMBER MICHELLE FONTES



Through peaceful demonstration, on November 10, 1992, members of the Black Student Leadership Group and their supporters mobilize to protest the university's misquote of Malcolm X on the URI Library.

"From my perspective, it was discouraging to know that students from diverse backgrounds were treated differently than other students at URI. It was clear that without TD, we would be lost in the predominantly White institution (PWI) shuffle. When we had our protest in Taft Hall, I remember feeling like I was part of something greater than myself. I was proud to be a part of a group of student leaders and TD staff that were fighting for justice and to demand that we were taken seriously. We wanted to be sure that the administration at URI not only heard our voices, but would move quickly to action. It was amazing to see my classmates/friends step out and have voice in the way they did. I also really liked having a place to go at all times if I needed to vent, get help or just hang out with other students that were just like me."

**To the current TD Scholars** - "Do not waste time and money to be here if you are not ready to apply yourself. TD is a vehicle of support and advocacy but as a scholar, you have the responsibility to do your part and represent such an important and vital program in education." - Michelle Fontes



**MICHELE FONTES, TD CLASS OF '96, M.S. '11**  
**ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT**  
**COMMUNITY, EQUITY AND DIVERSITY**

# FALL 1993

## THE LATINO INITIATIVE & THE ASIAN AWARENESS ASSOCIATION

Latin student enrollment in TD experienced continuous growth starting from the 1960s. During this time, the Latin American Student Association (LASA) emerged as an exceptionally engaged organization. Prominent TD students, including Victor Capellan, Melba Depena, Vital Figueroa, Norman Ospina, and many others, played influential roles in advocating for the advancement of Latino issues. Their efforts yielded significant results throughout this era. In addition to the Asian Student Association (ASA), a dedicated group of Asian students led by Tony David formed the Asian Awareness Association (AAA). They actively embraced a civil rights stance that aligned seamlessly with the Latino Initiative's objectives. Working in tandem, both groups expanded the scope of the BSLG by effectively conveying shared concerns to the administration of URI and the Board of Governors. Their approach was marked by clarity, respectfulness, and unwavering persistence.

## ADVANCING THE MISSION OF THE BSLG



**VICTOR F. CAPELLAN, TD CLASS OF '92**  
**SENIOR ADVISOR, RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
**FOUNDER/CHARTER MEMBER OF LA UNIDAD LATINA AT URI,**  
**LAMBDA Upsilon LAMBDA FRATERNITY, INCORPORATED**

*"The goal was to build something for future generation of URI students. As Latino student leaders, we had seen the number of Latino students growing and we wanted to create a better experience for them. We also knew that we had to take a stance to support BSLG and their demands which would make URI a better place for all students. We had the attention of the administration and we needed to help build on an agenda that could be more inclusive and more equitable. Part of this work helped shape my values, my career choices and fuel my passion for the work I do."*

**To the current TD Scholars** - "Being a TD Scholar gave me the opportunity to demonstrate that I could make it. I was given the support and push I needed to be successful. You are part of a movement that is bigger than any one individual, you are part of a proud history of struggles and successes...so show pride in TD Nation...we are part of a large family that keeps growing each year. You can build on the dream and take it to a whole new level. As "Mr. D." would always say **'You are TD Baby!'**"

- Victor F. Capellan



# THE LEGACY OF THE LATINO INITIATIVE

## *Excerpt from interview with TD Scholar Victor Capellan:*

"In November of 1991, there were a group of us that came together and had a conference called *Latinos Shaping Our Future* and we started looking at what are the needs of the Latino students on campus, students of color on campus. How do we view ourselves in the larger part of it? And a lot of it came because we began to connect with students at Brown University, who had been organizing and doing a lot of the work a little bit ahead of us...and so we were able to connect through the effort of bringing a Latino fraternity to campus. I was the founder of La Unidad Latina and I pledged Lambda Upsilon Lambda Fraternity, Incorporated at Brown in the fall of 1990 and brought the fraternity to URI as a charter starter. Then there was a similar effort about a year later by a group of women who started the Latina sorority, *Senoritas Latinas Unidas/Sigma Lambda Upsilon Sorority, Incorporated*, and what we started to see was a lot of the stuff that the Brown students were doing and asking for...and we got to meet students from across the country, many of them from New York who had started sort of this 'Latino fight'.

We met with a number of students from Chicago and students from around the country, where as our group of students at URI were all TD students from Providence and we just knew each other and our little world when we got to connect with these students at Brown who were talking about things that we were like, yeah, that's what we need to do, too! Then we had a couple of grad students, actually from the College Student Personnel Program [CSP] who were from California and brought a lot of the "Chicano Movement" kind of thinking to us and we were like, wait a minute, there is so much happening here...how do we connect all of this? And so we had this conference in the fall of 1991, *Latinos Shaping Our Future*. We brought together students on campus with students from Brown, CCRI, RIC, and leaders from the Latino community in Providence. The Latin American Student Association [LASA] became the official host of this group.

We were able to take advantage of what we were learning from our peers and began to shape our agenda. The BSLG was also very active and during the takeover of Taft Hall, we knew that this was a seminal moment where we all needed to take a stand and support. We took a backstage approach, if you will, since they were leading the movement and we needed to be able to support and amplify by also making demands and pushing for the demands that the BSLG proposed to be implemented!

The *Latino Initiative* was our agenda, our list of demands...which was directly tied to the BSLG's demands...and we were united!"



## TD SCHOLAR DAMITA DAVIS FOUNDS THE DR. ROSE BUTLER BROWNE LEADERSHIP & MENTORING PROGRAM FOR WOMEN OF COLOR AT URI

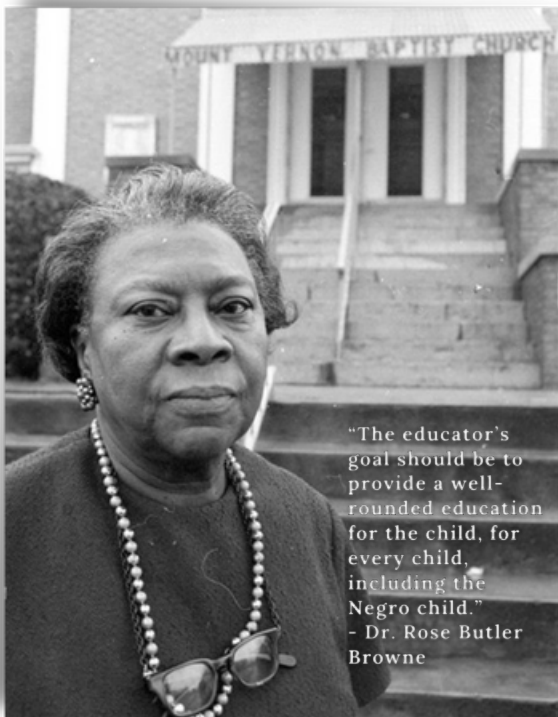


Dr. Rose Butler Browne was born in Boston, MA on March 19, 1897, the daughter of John R. Butler, a brick mason and Hannah F. McClenney, who worked at a laundry. Her maternal great-grandmother, Charlotte Ann Elizabeth Lindsey, was a daughter of a Native American Chief, who married a southern slave, worked six years to buy his freedom and later migrated to a Boston ghetto to improve the life of their children. In her autobiography, *Love My Children*, Browne attributed most of her success to the influence of her great-grandmother, called the "High Priestess", by her family.

Dr. Rose Butler Browne, an author, educator and civil rights leader was the first Black woman to graduate from Rhode Island State College (now the University of Rhode Island) and the first Black woman to receive a doctorate in education from Harvard University. She was the chair of the Department of Education at North Carolina College for Negroes in Durham, later NCCU. She was responsible for overseeing the addition of a three-story education building; led the college to accreditation with the National Council of the Accreditation of Teacher Education; and established the state's first education doctorate program. Dr. Rose Butler Browne was a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, the first Black sorority founded on the campus of Howard University in 1908. Dr. Rose Butler Browne served as the Mid-Atlantic Director of Alpha Kappa Alpha and oversaw the charters of new chapters throughout the region.

Dr. Rose Butler Brown, a pioneer in education, died in Providence, Rhode Island on December 1, 1986.

A leadership class and mentoring program offered through the Center for Leadership Development at the University of Rhode Island is named in her honor...thanks to TD Scholar, Damita Davis.



## INTERVIEW WITH TD SCHOLAR DAMITA DAVIS



**DAMITA DAVIS, TD CLASS OF '97**

In the 1995-96 academic year, TD Scholar, Melba Depina, did an internship with the Women's Center, giving her the space and voice to air her concerns about the significant attrition rate among first-year Latina women at URI. Intrigued by this trend and driven to uncover its cause and seek solutions, Melba worked together with the Director of the Women's Center and fellow Latina students to establish De Mujer A Mujer (Spanish for Woman to Woman), an organization aimed at offering support to first-year Latina women attending URI.

### **Excerpt from interview with TD Scholar Damita Davis:**

"As with anything that hasn't been institutionalized, De Mujer A Mujer kind of faded as Melba graduated and moved on to postgraduate work. I was an undergrad around that time, but really didn't involve myself in that particular program because I'm not Latina and was navigating my Blackness at a

predominantly White institution and trying to figure out what that meant for me. Fast forward, I went on to earn my Master's in the College Student Personnel Program [CSP] and I had to do a course assignment where I had to develop a group and I'm like, well, I like to be doing practical things so let me see if I can reconfigure what Melba started and expand it to all women of color and see what that would look like. Another graduate student in CSP that came from New York was also doing some similar work and so I picked up where she and Melba left off to see if I could make this happen. So, as a class assignment, I designed the Leadership and Mentor Program for Women of Color at URI.

Then Fran Cohen, the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students told me about Dr. Rose Butler Brown, the first Black woman to graduate from URI and I took her autobiography from the library (hopefully it's still there) and I pulled a lot of information from it when I started to do my Practicum to learn about who she was and what she did...and thought to myself, well, let me see if I can make this happen. So I further developed the program and I intentionally partnered with the Center (my practicum was with the Center for Student Leadership Development and the Women's Center- where I worked as an undergrad and was very close with Carolyn Sovet, the director at the time) and I asked Christine Wilson, who was the head of the Center at the time, can we do this partnership and she said, 'sure, let's see what we can do.' So I spent part of my time developing the program in the Women's Center and part of it in the Center for Student Leadership Development and named it for Dr. Rose Butler Browne.

At the time, I was a summer counselor for TD and asked if I could recruit the first participants from that incoming summer class...of course they said yes, and really the first two groupings of women that came through the newly developed Dr. Rose Butler Browne Leadership & Mentor Program for Women of Color, both mentors and participants, were mostly women in the Talent Development Program!"





## TO THE CURRENT TD SCHOLARS...

*"It's a great honor being a TD Alum, to be a living testimony to the hard work and sacrifices people made to start to TD, to provide access to higher education for those on the margins. I never took that for granted. Current TD Scholars should not either. Being part of TD is not a given, it's a privilege."*

*Take full advantage of the opportunity that you have been given. You have a great team of people pulling for you and pushing you towards greatness. You'll only get out of it what you put into it. Do your part. Take your academics seriously and don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. My personal philosophy: "Enhance the university for those who come after you."*

### **Q: Reflect on your experience as a TD Scholar:**

*A: Being part of TD was a great experience for me. The support and belief in me was there from day one. As a student I didn't quite understand what a gift that was. To have a group of people who believed that I earned my spot and URI and succeed academically was a tremendous gift. The love, support and guidance TD gave me, greatly shaped the higher education professional I became. I am forever grateful for the opportunity I was given as a TD Scholar.*

### **Q: Please tell us about what lead you to want to seek change in the retention of women of color at URI and the formation of De Mujer A Mujer, which later expanded to include the Dr. Rose Butler Browne Mentoring Program? What was the climate like at the time?**

*A: The retention of women of color at URI was important to me, one, because I am a woman of color. I knew our experiences at a PWI was and is vastly different from majority students. We needed an additional support system that was for us, about us and by us. While creating the Rose Butler Browne program began as a class assignment in graduate school; it became apparent that making the program a reality would be crucial to the success of undergraduate women of color at URI. I also wanted to write a new narrative about women of color in college, who we actually are and that degree attainment is possible.*

Scan the QR Code to learn more about the Dr. Rose Butler Browne Leadership and Mentoring Program, including the HDF 291 course and the Annual Women of Color Conference!



# FALL 1998

## THE RETIREMENT OF MR. DIMAIO & ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DIVERSITY TASK FORCE



**Mr. DiMaio captivating the audience while standing alongside members of the first class of TD Scholars.**

**Thirty years after they entered their “TD Summer” they returned to honor the program and the doors that it opened up for them.**

During the fall of 1998, Mr. DiMaio concluded his tenure as the director of TD, leading to the appointment of Frank Forleo as the Interim Director. Simultaneously, TD's core staff actively participated in URI's Diversity Task Force (DTF), a campus-wide initiative aimed at addressing issues pertaining to race, class, gender, orientation, and disability. Under the guidance and support of President Carothers, the DTF made significant strides in transforming the overall environment at URI, seeking to eliminate inequality and oppression experienced by members of the community.

Although progress was evident, an approaching storm loomed on the horizon as historical events unfolded on the URI campus. Once again, TD Scholars and staff emerged as change agents, as the pace of transformation proved insufficient.

## DIMAIO SCHOLARSHIP: A MAJOR NEW PROGRAM

The DiMaio Scholarship emerged through the implementation of the Department of Justice Mediated Agreement, which was endorsed by the BUA, President Carothers, and Dr. Carabello in May 1999. It aimed to honor the contributions of Leo DiMaio, the esteemed founding TD Assistant Director and longtime director. This scholarship serves as a crucial financial resource for all students of color and underprivileged students at URI. Throughout the years, numerous students have reaped the benefits of the DiMaio Scholarship, enabling them to pursue their education at URI when they might have otherwise faced significant barriers. The initiative for this transformative and enduring change was spearheaded by Brothers United for Action (BUA).