

Pursue science and tech careers, said Hampton U. conference keynoter

Posted At : March 17, 2016 11:17 AM | Posted By : Mavis Carr

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By Aaliyah Essex

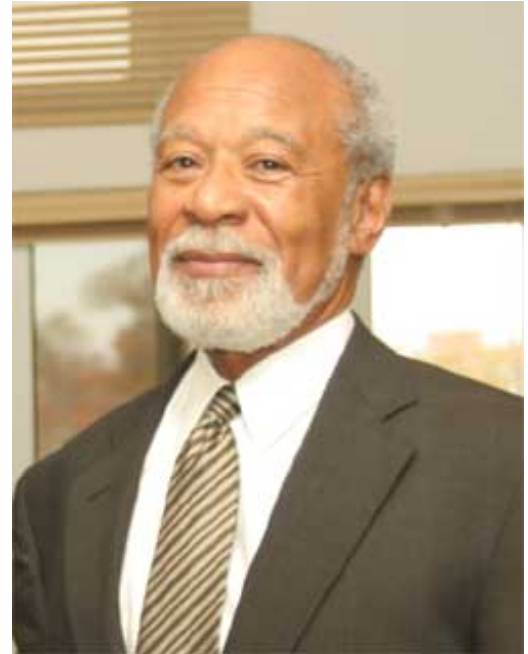
Stage lights glistened Wednesday night upon the forehead of Luther Williams as he patiently awaited his part in the program.

Prior to his keynote address, the Hampton University Terpsichorean Dance Company performed a piece titled "Push Through." The graceful dance composition accurately set the mood for the speaker as the narration read, "I am powerful. I will endure. I have the mind to do anything. I will push through. You can push through. We are pushing through. Full steam ahead, I push through."

As the performance ended and the preliminaries concluded, the Ogden Hall crowd greeted the speaker with a warm round of applause as he confidently stepped up to the podium in his black suit, accessorized with a diagonally striped tie. "Hello," he said as he spoke calmly.

After giving recognition to appropriate individuals, the former **Tuskegee University** professor and Ph.D. strategically informed the audience about the lack of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) and overall education in the African-American community. With a message revolving around education beginning with youth, Williams indirectly pleaded to the students as well as the African-American community: "We could study those in isolation and we can make implemental gains to the body of knowledge, or we could actually design logic constructs to try to solve these problems, problems that are beginning in the black family."

As the former president of Atlanta University spoke, it was clear that he wanted to point out the result of the lack of African Americans involved in STEAM programs. Dermatologist and former Hampton University student Karen Royal Love, M.D. passionately spoke about her take away from the address. "He made the point that with his honors and the things that he has done, we're kind of cast off as 'Well see it can be done.' This black person did it and everyone else is complaining that opportunities aren't there," she said. "Many times those beliefs can penalize our young people." Before the lights faded, Williams urged the students to pursue education as he explained, "In preparation for a career, one really has to ensure that there is currency towards academic preparation."



The 30-minute address set the tone for the 38th annual Conference on the Black Family, hosted by the **School of Science**. The opening speech complimented the conference's theme, "Healthy Minds and Bodies, Securing Our Future."

*The writer is a student in the **Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications**.*