

# JESSE T. WILLIAMS, SR. & VERNETTA B. WILLIAMS:

## A LEGACY OF LOVE, SERVICE, AND GIVING

For Jesse T. Williams, Sr. and Vernetta B. Williams, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore was more than the place where they earned their degrees—it was where a lifelong love story and legacy of service began.

The couple met on the UMES campus in 1959 and built a marriage rooted in shared values, leadership, and a commitment to helping others. Their connection to the University remained strong throughout their lives, inspiring decades of support for students and the UMES community.



A 1962 graduate in Social Work, Mr. Williams became one of UMES' most influential alumni leaders, serving as the first Chairman of the UMES Board of Visitors from 1997 to 2014 and later earning the title of Chairman Emeritus. In recognition of his extraordinary service, he received an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree in 1998. His dedication to student success continues through the Jesse T. Williams Homecoming Hawk Award, established in 2009 to recognize outstanding UMES students who excel both academically and athletically while demonstrating leadership and commitment to the University.

Mrs. Williams, a 1963 graduate in Business Administration, was actively involved in campus life and has remained a dedicated supporter of the University. Together, they established several scholarship funds that continue to create opportunities for UMES students, including the Jesse T. & Vernetta B. Williams, Sr. Scholarship, the Jesse T. Williams, Sr. Family Endowed Scholarship Fund, and the Delmarva Power Jesse T. Williams Scholarship Fund.

Although Mr. Williams passed in 2021, his legacy lives on through the countless students, student-athletes, and academic programs impacted by his generosity and leadership. Mrs. Williams continues to carry forward the vision they built together, ensuring their shared commitment to education and opportunity remains strong. Their story is one of love, service, and unwavering dedication to UMES, a legacy that will continue to inspire future generations of Hawks for years to come.