



Celebrating The Life & Legacy
of
Dr. Ulysses S. Washington, Jr.
July 16, 1920 – October 25, 2018

Born in 1920 in Dillwyn, a small, central Virginia town in Buckingham County, Dr. Ulysses Samuel Washington, Jr. developed an early appreciation for education. Most of his childhood centered on school - whether in a four-room schoolhouse during the week or in a church building on Sunday mornings. He credited the mentoring and modeling he received from an agricultural teacher for piquing his interest in pursuing agricultural education. When “Wash,” as he was affectionately called, was not walking five miles to and from school each day, he was helping his father on the family farm and sawmill. After graduating from Carter C. Woodson High School, Dr. Washington attended St. Paul’s Normal and Industrial College in Lawrenceville, VA and later received his bachelor’s degree in agricultural education from Virginia State College (now University) in Petersburg, VA in 1942. He fulfilled his World War II military obligation with the United States Navy from 1944-1946 as a landing craft motor machinist until he was honorably discharged. Dr. Washington later attended Penn State University and Rutgers University where he earned his master’s degree in 1949. Dr. Washington came to Delaware State University (then Delaware State College) in September 1949 and began a career that would span 43 illustrious years. It was there that he met and married Ruth Helen Washington, and was blessed with the births of their two children, Diane and “Ukee.”

During his tenure at Delaware State, Dr. Washington not only held the position of associate professor but also served as assistant football coach and acting head football coach. He became the chairman of the Department of Agriculture and Related Sciences, director of Cooperative Extension, and was the vice chairman of the Association of 1890 Research Directors. Dr. Washington also served as chairman of the Council of Athletics at Delaware State, was a member of the 1890 Colleges and Universities, and was president of the Council of the Mid-Eastern Athletics Conference. For four decades, he served as the Chief Marshall of Delaware State’s commencement exercises. An honorary doctorate was bestowed upon him from Delaware State University in 1981.

Widely esteemed as an educator and researcher, Dr. Washington served as a member of the Delaware Vocational Association, the Board of Directors of the Agricultural Museum, and the Board of Directors of the Delaware Conservation Education Association. Nationally, Dr. Washington served as a founding member of the Association of 1890 Research Directors and the

Association of Extension Administrators. He was also a member of the Northeast Experiment Station Directors, and ECOP Sub-Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Related Industries. Dr. Washington was widely respected and his work as an educator brought many awards, honors and accolades his way. His tenacious efforts in the field of agriculture, not only for Delaware State, but also on behalf of the entire 1890 land-grant community, are commendable. Perhaps the greatest contribution that Dr. Washington made during his tenure, occurred in 1972 when the federal government decided to include the 1890 land-grant universities in the funding stream of the United States Department of Agriculture. Previously, program funds to the 1890 land-grant universities had to “pass through” the 1862 land-grant universities in the respective states.

Dr. Washington led the dialogue and debate that resulted in sustained funding for the 1890 land-grant system:

The U.S. Washington, Jr. Financial Discrimination Act: An act passed by the Congress of the United States to prevent the suffering of U.S. Washington, Jr. Research Director for Delaware State College, whose institution and its agricultural research program were threatened with being excluded from financial support of research by formula funding provisions in the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977. Subsequently, his leadership efforts assisted all 1890 land-grant institutions.

That same year, the department’s name was changed to the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Dr. Washington became the first chairperson of the new department and the director of Cooperative Extension, a position he held until his retirement in 1991. Even after his retirement, the impact of his career continued. In 1993 the Ulysses S. Washington, Jr. Cooperative Extension Center was dedicated in his honor; in 2001, he was honorary inductee into the Delaware State University Alumni Hall of Fame; in 2003, he received the Pioneer’s Award as one of the first administrators of the 1890 land-grant universities to charter Cooperative Extension; in 2009, he was inducted into the George Washington Carver Public Service Hall of Fame; and in 2018, the Science Laboratory of the Early College High School at Delaware State University was named in his honor.

Under Dr. Washington’s effective leadership, facilities for the department were vastly improved with the addition of an off-campus research farm. At his retirement, there were 12 research projects, an Extension program in all three Delaware counties and a staff, which had grown from five to 35.

Dr. Washington was also very active in the community. He was a devoted member of Whatcoat United Methodist Church in Dover, DE. He could be seen sitting in the last pew in the back of the church almost every Sunday, looking forward to the choir singing his most favorite hymn, “I’m Blessed.” Dr. Washington was a charter member of Zeta Zho Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., where he was recognized as a platinum life member for his 70 years of “Manly Deeds, Scholarship and Love for All Mankind.”

Finally, a video produced by Delaware State University to honor Dr. Washington as a Living Legend of the 1890 Land-Grant University System as part of the national celebration of the Second Morrill Act 125th Anniversary, will be shown at 19th ARD Biennial Research Symposium in April 2019 at the Hyatt Regency Riverside, Jacksonville, FL.