



Williams' Wednesday Memo

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“A Profile of Public Service – Pt. 1”

May Part 1 of this “A Profile of Public Service” Series serve as an indicator of my value to the State of Arkansas, as well as my Alma Mater, Philander Smith College, from 2015 – 2020. Part 2 will focus on my professional career and contributions since. May it be prefaced with two questions: If I could represent, advocate, and deliver in such ways prior to my professional career truly beginning – in what ways could I do so in the role of State Representative?

And – most importantly – How may I serve you?

Greetings,

My name is R. Roosevelt Williams III – and - I can't help it. I enjoy spending time learning from my surroundings. I love serving and being of value to systems, people, and environments that help to push change and advocate for better. My story is one that may be familiar to some. Broken and dysfunctional household. More ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) than can fit on one hand. The youngest of five children who used his academic skills to find his place and his way. He then graduates a respected scholar, comparable to some of the most accomplished in the State of Louisiana. And, he chooses to seek development and enrichment from an institution that he feels he can add value.

On my first day on the campus of Philander Smith College, I visited multiple offices, introduced myself as someone who was considering accepting the full-ride scholarship offer, and asked what volunteer or work-study positions were available. My Senior year in high school, I was one of the student workers in the Principal's Office and as a result, I had grown very familiar with that setting. I felt that anchoring myself in an office for at least my first semester would help me to learn the lay of the land, while creating a sense of continuity as I found myself 333 miles from home. From that first semester of serving on campus – the rocket took off.

At the end of my Freshman year, I developed a proposal that would serve as a developmental experience for students, as well as a strategic growth mechanism for the institution, providing Philanderians with trainings on dress and decorum, interview preparation, and mock interviews with HR representatives from companies around the state. It would also help to serve as a vehicle for students to secure internships and career mentors. These interviewers would then judge the students, offering critiques on the spot for how to build and develop themselves to be the best fit for their company and what resources they could provide to help them do so.

The remarks and scores from the judges would then be formatted into a report and presentation to the Institution's cabinet that I would deliver, discussing avenues for improvement, ways to further engage the business community around us, and how to further strengthen individual academic areas and learning experiences for the betterment of our students. This proposal, in conjunction with my campus and community engagement, earned me the title of 2016 White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities HBCU All-Star for Philander Smith College – being honored at the White House in October 2016, with my Mother by my side.

I interned with the Arkansas Legislative Democratic Caucus. I served on the committee to help re-invigorate the PSC Social Justice Institute. I became a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. I traveled across the country on behalf of The Black College Fund, telling my personal story and the story of my HBCU and why continued support and investment from United Methodist Congregations was imperative. I served as Student Government Association Vice-President, then President the next year. The following year, I served as a Student Success Coach with AmeriCorps City Year, completing more than the mandatory 2,700 hours of service at J.A. Fair High School – while enrolled in my college courses online and during the evening. I became a Charter Member of the 100 Black Men of America's Collegiate 100 Chapter at PSC. In May of 2020, I graduated from Philander Smith College Cum Laude with a 3.50 GPA.

The common thread amongst all of these is service. The common thread between each of these endeavors is making it happen. One of the common skills that carried me through each of these experiences was being able to be a voice for others and represent their successes, as well as concerns, both in writing and in person. The common action between all these moments is intentionally engaging the people served, as well as those with whom I could make change happen. This is who I am. This is what I have done. This is what I vow to continue to do. And, I've only gotten better.

Now - here's the ask: Visit www.williamsforarkansas.com and review the website.

Serving The Natural State,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Roosevelt Williams III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

R. Roosevelt Williams III

Candidate for State Representative, District 80