



Youth Symposium

Leading The Legacy 2025

Saturday, November 22, 2025, 8:30 a.m.
Delaware State University
M. L. King Jr. Student Center,
1200 N. DuPont Highway, Dover, DE 19901
Keynote Speaker: Wali W. Rushdan, II Esq.
Real Estate Attorney &
Member of the State Board of Education



History Statement

For 134 years, Delaware State University has been providing access to high-quality, low-cost education, regardless of the color of their skin, country of origin, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. From providing a high school education to Native Americans in the first half of the 20th Century when no one else would to becoming the nation's #1 university of choice for undocumented immigrant students in the first part of the 21st Century, Delaware State University has consistently broken new ground in its efforts to become America's most diverse, contemporary Historically Black College or University (HBCU).

Nationally recognized as the #4 public HBCU by US News and World Report, the University is also ranked in the top ten for the fifth consecutive year. Delaware State University's Aviation program is the nation's #1 provider of professional pilots of color; the University is also the #1 source of Delaware's teachers, nurses, social workers, accountants, and occupational therapists of Color.

The Delaware College for Colored Students, now known as Delaware State University, was established May 15, 1891, by the Delaware General Assembly under the provisions of the Morrill Act of 1890 by which land-grant colleges for Blacks came into existence in states maintaining separate educational facilities. In 1893, the name of the institution was changed to the "State College for Colored Students," and then in 1947, it was renamed to "Delaware State College, both by legislative action. On July 1, 1993, Delaware State College turned another chapter in its history when Gov. Thomas Carper signed a name change into law, thus renaming the College to Delaware State University.

Since 1957, the University has grown in stature as a center for teaching, research, and public service. The purpose of the University has broadened in keeping with changing times. While recognizing its heritage as well as serving a diverse student population, the University is among the premier Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the country. Undergraduate studies are organized into four colleges and one school that contains a total of seventeen academic departments, which offer eight associates, forty-six bachelor's, twenty-six masters, and seven doctoral degrees.

Delaware State University is fully approved by the Delaware Department of Education and accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). Accreditations and approvals by specialized academic agencies include the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. (ACEN), the Council on Social Work Education (SWE), the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, International (AACSB), the Accrediting Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration (ACPHA), the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND), the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE), the American Chemical Society (ACS) and the American Bar Association (ABA).



A Message from Dr. Tony Allen



Welcome to Delaware State University!

For 134 years, young men of color have walked onto our campus to receive far more than an education. As one of our spiritual fathers, W. E. B. DuBois, once wrote, “Make manhood the object of the work of the schools—intelligence, broad sympathy, knowledge of the world...this is the curriculum of that Higher Education which must underlie true life.”

We are a rising tide of professional men of color, promising to sweep both America and the world into an age of equity and prosperity. To accomplish that task, young men must not only master their careers but the arts of networking, communal effort, and servant leadership. We must continually assemble to toast our successes, honor those who have achieved, and recharge ourselves for the long effort.

Delaware State University extends the open hand of friendship and solidarity to all the men who gather as part of the Ebony Tie experience, a unique opportunity to celebrate our joint endeavor as friends and colleagues.

Over more than two decades, Ebony Tie has always strengthened and exhilarated me; I am confident that it will do the same for you. Welcome!

Tony Allen, Ph.D.
President



A Message from the Chairman, Ebony Tie Affair

Dear Young Leaders,

Welcome to the 2025 Ebony Tie Affair Youth Symposium ("ETAYS"), where we gather under the bold and inspiring theme, "Leading the Legacy." Your participation here is a testament to your desire to learn, to lead, and to shape the future. The energy and promise you bring to this event remind us of all the greatness that resides within our community.

As one of the co-founders of the ETAYS, my connection with this gathering runs deep. Each year, I am moved by the passion, curiosity, and brilliance displayed by young men like yourselves. It is a privilege to witness your journeys and to play a role in creating a space where your voices are valued, your dreams are nurtured, and your legacies begin to take root.

This year's theme, "Leading the Legacy," calls us to action. It is not only a challenge but also a promise—to us and to those who will follow. Legacy is built not in a single moment, but in the choices, we make every day, at every stage of life. It is about showing up, taking responsibility, and striving for excellence, regardless of our circumstances.

I urge you to engage deeply at this symposium. Embrace the present; let it sharpen your vision for the future. Think critically about the world around you, and do not be afraid to ask bold questions. Build connections with those beside you —your fellow attendees, mentors, and guests. Together, we unlock doors to opportunity and spark change that benefits us all. Remember, greatness is not a solitary pursuit; it is a collective journey.

Leadership is not reserved for tomorrow—it is forged in the decisions you make today, in the classroom, among friends, on the playing field, and within your families. Stay connected, keep reaching higher, and never doubt the impact you can have. It is your time to lead, to teach, to keep, and to build the legacy. Our future is brighter because of you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Wali W. Rushdan II". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial 'W' and a long, sweeping underline.

Wali W. Rushdan II, Esq.
2025 Ebony Tie Affair Chairman



Greetings from 2025 Ebony Tie Affair Youth Symposium Chairman & Vice Chairman

The Ebony Tie Affair (ETA) boasts a distinguished history within the City of Wilmington, DE. Established over three decades ago by a select group of accomplished Black leaders, this annual gathering encompasses professionals from diverse sectors, including medicine, law, education, business, politics, and government, who convene to network, celebrate achievements, and recognize Black Excellence.

The Ebony Tie Affair Youth Symposium (ETAYS), now in its fourteenth year, is an extension of ETA focused on empowering young men in grades 6–12. It provides opportunities for participants to engage with successful Black role models and take part in educational activities designed to foster leadership skills as they progress into influential members of their communities and beyond.

This year's theme, "Leading the Legacy," reflects our commitment to cultivating future leaders. Our keynote speaker and session facilitators will offer valuable insights and share experiences aimed at supporting attendees in their personal and professional growth. The program also encourages connections among young individuals who share similar aspirations and interests.

A highlight of this year's symposium is the Black Trivia Activity, intended to inspire participants to learn more about the contributions of Black leaders throughout history and in contemporary society.

On behalf of the ETAYS and ETA Planning Committees, we are pleased to welcome you to this esteemed event and hope that the knowledge and interactions gained will have a lasting and positive impact on your journey.

Peace and Blessings!

Carlton Lampkins, Ed.D., Chairman, ETAYS 2025
Reginald Shubert, Vice Chairman, ETAYS 2025



History of the Ebony Tie Affair Youth Symposium

The Beginning

Youth mentoring had been an essential component of the Ebony Tie Affair (“ETA”) experience, as early as the 1998 ETA, chaired by the Honorable Joshua W. Martin, III.¹ Judge Martin, like many of the pillars of the ETA, acknowledged the importance of exposing young men to the hundreds of adult “ebony men” of distinction, accomplishment, and good repute that attended the ETA. Accordingly, in all years in which an ETA was held from 1998 through 2011, young men were invited to attend the ETA to interact with ebony men in every field of human endeavor – *businessmen, government leaders, medicine, educators, lawyers, engineers, politicians, etc.* - attending the ETA.

A Vision for a Dedicated ETA Youth Event

In 2012, Cleon L. Cauley, Sr., Esq. served as chair of the ETA. Attorney Cauley had a vision to build on the ETA’s tradition of mentorship by creating a dedicated stand-alone youth event. Tarik Haskins, Esquire and Wali W. Rushdan II, Esquire were appointed to chair the youth event subcommittee and tasked with developing a plan for the scope, format, and structure of the event. Attorney Haskins and Attorney Rushdan committed to developing a program that would serve young men across the state of Delaware and formed an inaugural subcommittee including Attorney Cauley, Mr. André Duffie, Thomas Russell, Esquire, G. Stephen Williams, Dr. Adib B. Rushdan, and Mr. Saquan Stimpson.

The First Annual ETA Youth Luncheon

The work of the inaugural youth event subcommittee culminated in the “ETA Youth Luncheon,” held in the Wellness & Recreation Center on the campus of Delaware State University on November 17, 2012. The event was structured as a luncheon followed by a moderated panel discussion. The panelists for the inaugural youth event were Attorney Cauley, Councilman Darius Brown, Dr. Tony Allen, Colonel Joseph Bryant Jr., Mr. Kenneth Briscoe, Mr. Bill Allen, Bill “DJ Doc B” Ransom, and Mr. Garth Spencer.

¹ The history of the Ebony Tie Affair can be found at <https://www.ebonytieaffair.com/history/>.

The initial program was funded by generous donations from the Chester (PA) Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Wilmington (DE) Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Nu Upsilon Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., Wilmington (DE), and Local Union Lodge #21. The donations not only funded the costs of the luncheon, but also sponsored the buses needed to transport the youth attendees from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex Counties. Approximately fifty young men attended the First Annual ETA Youth Luncheon. Subcommittee member Saquan Stimpson memorialized the event with photographs and videography and worked tirelessly to produce a video summary of the occasion that was prominently featured at the 2012 ETA event on Monday, November 20, 2012.

The ETA Youth Luncheon's Evolution to a Youth Symposium

The 2013 ETA Youth Luncheon followed the same format as the inaugural event -- a mentoring luncheon at Delaware State University, while also adding a "skill building" component (networking) into the program. From 2013-2015, the program expanded in the amount of youth participants, and in 2015 reached eighty young men spanning across all three counties.

In response to the continued growth and interest in the program from youth participants and their families, as well as ebony men from the ETA network, the program was expanded into an all-day symposium format with focused breakout sessions. The symposium format not only extended the length of the program but also expanded the scope of opportunities for the youth participants to be exposed to and interact with ebony men of excellence. In the first year of the symposium format, over one hundred youth registered for the event.

The Future of the Ebony Tie Affair Youth Symposium

Now in its eleventh year, the ETA Youth Symposium is widely recognized as a marquee, perennial, "must-attend" event for young men of color around the state of Delaware. Community leaders, school officials, and families across the state look forward to registering the young men in their lives for this transformative experience.

* * * * *

ETA Youth Symposium Activities, 2013 – 2019 & 2021 - 2023

2013 Event

- **Date/Location:** Held on November 23, 2013, 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Bank of America Building on Delaware State University's Campus
- **Committee Members:** Mr. Adib Rushdan, Mr. Thomas Russell, Mr. G. Stephen Williams, Mr. Andre Duffie, Mr. Darius Brown, Mr. Vandell Hampton, Mr. Victor Santos, and Mr. Saquan Stimpson.
- **Key Developments:** Increased Sussex County youth participation and introduced "skill building component" --effective networking -- into the ETA Youth Symposium experience.
- **Speakers & Panelists:** Welcome remarks from Dr. Harry Williams (President DSU), Mr. Joshua Watson (Poet), and Mr. Roger Phillips (DSU Student Affairs). Panelists included The Honorable William Chapman, Dr. Carlton Lampkins, Mr. Wayne Walker, Mr. Gregory Lane, Mr. Kevin Evans, and Mr. U'Gundi Jacobs.

2014 Event

- **Date/Location:** Held on November 22, 2014, 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Bank of America Building on Delaware State University's Campus
- **Committee Members:** Dr. Carlton Lampkins, Mr. Victor Santos, Mr. Keenon Mann, and Mr. Frank Glover, Mr. Dupree Johnson, Mr. Verlin Alexander, Mr. Andre Duffie, and Mr. Saquan Stimpson.
- **Key Developments:** Skill building exercise - Using the internet effectively to further goals and dreams. Also, DSU campus tour component introduced.
- **Speakers & Panelists:** Panelists included Dr. Edmondo Robinson, Mr. Theopalis Gregory, Esq., Mr. Anwar Miller, Mr. Gregory "Grouchy Greg" Watkins, Mr. Theophilus Nix, Jr., Mr. Edward Doxen, and Mr. James Bonds.

2015 Event

- **Date/Location:** Held on November 21, 2015, 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Bank of America Building on Delaware State University's Campus
- **Committee Members:** Mr. Wali W. Rushdan II, Esquire (Chair), Mr. Victor Santos, Dr. Carlton Lampkins, Mr. Dupree Johnson, and Mr. Saquan Stimpson.
- **Key Developments:** Skill building exercise - how to appropriately interact with law enforcement. Also, continued campus tour component. Busing in all three counties.
- **Speakers & Panelists:** Panelists included Mr. Charles Madden, Mr. Faheem Akil, The Honorable Jea P. Street, Dr. Lamont W. Browne, and Mr. Norman D. Griffiths.

2016 Event

- **Date/Location:** Held on November 19, 2016, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Student Center on Delaware State University's Campus
- **Committee Members:** Mr. Wali W. Rushdan II, Esquire (Co-Chair), Mr. Victor Santos (Co-Chair), Mr. Newdy Felton, Mr. Saquan Stimpson, Dr. Carlton Lampkins, Mr. Timothy Cooper, Mr. Vincent Cooper, and Mr. Dupree Johnson.
- **Key Developments:** First year of symposium format. Keynote was presented by Dr. Tony Allen.
- **Speakers & Panelists:** Three breakout sessions:
 - *Productive Protest – Respecting Law Enforcement While Striving for Justice*
 - Mr. Vincent Shipman, Jeremy Collins, Esq., and Captain Faheem Akil;
 - *Essential Character Traits for Today's African American Male*
 - Mr. Ronnell Page, Mr. Vincent Cooper, and Mr. Eugene Young;
 - *Turning Dreams into Reality- Success Principles for Aspiring Entrepreneurs*
 - Mr. Bill Allen, Mr. Jason Aviles, Mr. Michael Hill, and Mr. Blake Saunders

2017 Event

- **Date/Location:** Held on November 18, 2017, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Student Center on Delaware State University's Campus
- **Committee Members:** Mr. Victor Santos (Chair), Mr. Wali W. Rushdan II, Esquire, Dr. Carlton Lampkins, Mr. Ronnell Page, Mr. Vincent Cooper, Mr. Timothy Cooper, Mr. Earl Cooper, Mr. JJ Francis, Mr. Dupree Johnson, and Mr. Saquan Stimpson.
- **Key Developments:** Keynote – Darrell “Coach D” Andrews.
- **Speakers & Panelists:** Three breakout sessions:
 - Entrepreneurship Panel
 - *Mr. Ronnell Page, Mr. Jeffrey Benson, Mr. Queon Jackson, and Mr. Eugene Johnson;*
 - Community Building: The Art of Transforming the Spaces we Share.
 - *Mr. Vincent N. Cooper, Mr. Troy C. Oglesby Sr., Dr. Edmondo Robinson, and Dr. Jalaal Hayes*
 - Maximizing Your Potential for Success
 - *Mr. William Marshall, Mr. Gregory Whilby, Mr. Alexander Hackett, and Mr. Ron Moore.*

2018 Event

- **Date/Location:** Held on November 17, 2018, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Student Center on Delaware State University's Campus
- **Committee Members:** Mr. Wali W. Rushdan II, Esquire (Chair), Mr. Timothy Cooper, Mr. Vincent N. Cooper, Dr. Carlton Lampkins, Mr. Earl Cooper, Mr. J.J. Francis, Mr. Ronnell Page, Mr. Saquan Stimpson, Reverend Dupree Johnson, Mr. Kenneth Briscoe
- **Key Developments:** Dr. Wilma Mishoe offered welcoming remarks. Mr. William L. Allen offered the keynote titled “Our Key to Reducing Wealth Inequality.” A post event evaluation survey was administered for the first time.
- **Speakers & Panelists:**
 - So, You Want to Be an Entrepreneur?
 - *Mr. Ronnell Page, Mr. Jeffrey Benson, and Mr. Markevis Gideon*
 - Do for Self...The Entrepreneur Mentality
 - *Mr. Christian Best and Mr. Samuel D. Pratcher, Jr., III, Esquire*
 - Building Wealth: More Than Money
 - *Mr. William L. Allen, Dr. Vincent Daniels, and Mr. Queon Jackson*

2019 Event

- **Date/Location:** Held November 23, 2019, 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Student Center on Delaware State University's Campus
- **Committee Members:** Carlton Lampkins, Ed.D., (Chair), Ronnell E. Page (Vice Chair); Armard R. Bellamy, Chair ETA, Jeffrey T. Benson Jr., Earl A. Cooper, Timothy J. Cooper, Wali W. Rushdan II, Esquire
- **Key Development:** Dr. Tony Allen, Provost, DSU offered welcoming remarks.
- **Speakers:**
 - A Circle with Our Brothers – Dr. Abdul-Malik Muhammad & Keynote Speaker
 - Mind Over Matter: How Strong Are You? – Mr. William Waters Jr
 - What is Equity? – Mr. David Lassiter & Mr. Ronnell Page

2021 Event

- **Date/Location:** Held on November 20, 2021. 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Student Center on the Delaware State University's Campus
- **Committee Members:** Carlton Lampkins, Ed.D., Chairman; Mr. Kevan Turman, Chairman of the ETA; Mr. Armard Bellamy, Mr. Jeffrey T. Benson, Mr. Timothy J. Cooper, Mr. Anthony M. McCollum, Mr. Ronnell E. Page, Darryl Parsons, Esq., Mr. Saquan Stimpson
- **Key Developments:** Dr. Tony Allen, President, DSU offered welcoming remarks.
- **Speakers:**
 - Dorrell Green, Supt., Red Clay Consolidated School District, Keynote Speaker
 - Open Mic: Being Black in Modern America – Armard Bellamy & Darryl Parsons
 - Showing and Handling Feelings – Wade G. Jones
 - Your Financial Journey – Darrin Wilson

2022 Event

- **Date/Location:** Held on November 19, 2022. 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Student Center on the Delaware State University's Campus
- **Committee Members:** Carlton Lampkins, Ed.D., Chairman; Mr. Timothy J. Cooper, Vice Chairman; Dr. Aaron Bass, Chairman, ETA; Mr. Jeffrey T. Benson Jr., Mr. Terrence Delane; Mr. David Hawkins, Mr. Clifton Hayes, Mr. Anthony M. McCollum, Mr. Reginald Shubert, Mr. Jordan Spencer, Mr. Eric Stancell, and Mr. Kenyon Wilson
- **Key Developments:** Dr. Tony Allen, President, DSU offered welcoming remarks and Mr. Wali Rushdan, founder of the ETAYS gave 10th Anniversary greetings and was presented a plaque for his vision for the ETAYS.
- **Speakers:**
 - G. Stephen Williams, Keynote Speaker
 - A History of Hustle: The Journey of Entrepreneurship – Stan Matthews and Wesley Smith, Facilitators with Reginald Shubert as the moderator
 - Managing Your Money – Cerron Cade
 - My Lived Experience is My Expertise – Logan Herring

2023 Event

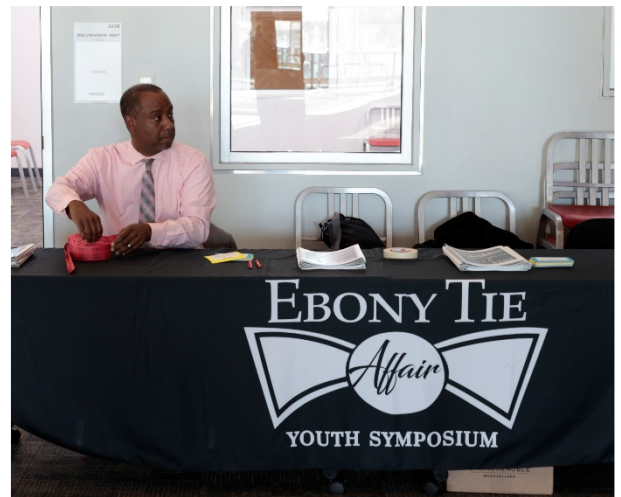
- **Date/Location:** Held on November 18, 2023, 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Student Center on the Delaware State University's Campus
- **Committee Members:** Carlton Lampkins, Ed.D., Chairman; Mr. Reginald Shubert, Vice Chairman; Mr. Corie Priest, Chairman, ETA; Mr. Jeffrey T. Benson Jr., Mr. Timothy J. Cooper, Mr. Terrence Delane; Mr. David Hawkins, Mr. Anthony M. McCollum, Mr. Jordan Spencer, Mr. Eric Stancell, and Mr. Kenyon Wilson
- **Speakers:**
 - John Cook, Keynote Speaker
 - C-Suite & Statesmen: Pathway to Power – Brandon Brice & Jordan Spencer, Facilitators
 - Excuse Me Miss: Social Etiquette & Social Media – MeeShach Stennett, Sr., Facilitator
 - Processing Your Emotions -Wade G. Jones, Facilitator

2024 Event

- **Date/Location:** Held on November 23, 2023, 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Student Center on the Delaware State University's Campus
- **Committee Members:** Carlton Lampkins, Ed.D., Chairman; Mr. Reginald Shubert, Vice

Chairman; Mr. Corie Priest, Chairman, ETA; Mr. Jeffrey T. Benson Jr., Mr. Timothy J. Cooper, Mr. Terrence Delane; Mr. David Hawkins, Mr. Anthony M. McCollum, Mr. Jordan Spencer, Mr. Eric Stancell, Mr. Shemik Thompson, and Mr. Kenyon Wilson

- **Key Development:** Leroy Tice, Esquire, DSU Board President offered greetings & remarks.
- **Speakers:**
 - Corie Priest, Keynote Speaker
 - Literary Leaders – David Hawkins & Jordan Spencer, Facilitators
 - Conflict Resolution – Jeffrey Benson & Shemik Thompson
 - Social Media – Jonte Simmons, Facilitator





13th Annual Ebony Tie Affair Youth Symposium
November 22, 2025

“Leading the Legacy!”

PROGRAM

9:00 a.m. – 9:40 a.m. Registration & Refreshments

9:45 a.m. – 9:55 a.m. Welcome & Introductions

Dr. Tony Allen, President, DSU
Carlton Lampkins, Ed.D., Chairman

10:00 a.m. – 10:40 a.m. Keynote and Q & A

Mr. Wali W. Rushdan II, Esq.
Real Estate Attorney and Member of State Board of
Education

10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Session 1A

11:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m. Session 2B

12:50 p.m. – 1:50 p.m. LUNCH

1:55 p.m. – 2:55 p.m. Session 3C

3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Wrap Up and Closing

Sessions and Presenters

A Bite of Reality – Personnel, Dover Federal Credit Union, Facilitators

Will the Real You Please Stand Up? – Pastor Leroy Watson, Facilitator

W.I.N. the Room – Djibril Barry and Brandon Poplar, Facilitators

Keynote Speaker



Wali W. Rushdan II, Esq. – Real Estate Attorney & Member of Delaware Board of Education

Wali W. Rushdan, II, Esq. is a real estate litigation and real estate transactional Partner in Barnes & Thornburg LLP's Wilmington, Delaware office. Wali's practice concentrates on land use matters, commercial real estate transactions, and real estate litigation matters for national and local companies.

In addition to managing his obligations as a lawyer at an Am Law 100 law firm, Wali dedicates his time to mentoring young men and aspiring lawyers from diverse backgrounds. Wali also maintains a presence in a variety of public service works geared towards improving social, educational, and vocational opportunities for disadvantaged communities.

Wali's other community activities include:

- Vice-Chair, Delaware Judicial Nominating Commission
- Co-Chair, New Castle County Executive Marcus Henry Transition Committee
- Past Board Member and Past Vice President, Delaware State Board of Education
- Board Member, Todmorden Foundation
- Leadership Council, Council of Advisors, Christiana Care Health System
- Co-Founder & Former Chair of the Ebony Tie Affair Youth Symposium
- Current Treasurer and Past President of the Delaware Barristers Association
- Committee Member and Immediate Past Director of "Guide Right" for the Wilmington Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi ("KAΨ") Fraternity, Inc.

In recognition of his professional and civic commitments, Wali has been honored with numerous awards including:

- 2023 "Delaware Today Top Lawyer" in Land Use & Zoning
- 2023 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Champion of Social Justice & Equality Honoree (Rutgers Law School Black Law Students Association)
- 2021 National Bar Association "40 Under 40" Honoree
- 2021 Delaware Business Times "40 Under 40" Honoree
- Delaware Technical & Community College's 2020 Black History Wall of Fame Honoree
- Delaware State Bar Associations' Multicultural Judges & Lawyers' Section 2020 Leadership Awardee
- Delaware State Bar Association's 2019 Christopher W. White Distinguished Access to Justice, Service to Children Awardee

Wali is a proud graduate of Delaware Technical & Community College, University of Delaware, and Rutgers Law School, where he was a Marshall Brennan Constitutional Law Fellow. In his spare time, he enjoys mentoring, exercising, reading, and spending time with his beautiful wife Yolanda, son Noah, and daughters Laila and Aliyah.



Session Descriptions

A Bite of Reality

The Bite of Reality program is an interactive, app-based simulation that helps young learners understand real-world financial responsibilities. Guided through a day-in-the-life scenario, students take on the roles of working adults, complete with occupations, incomes, partners, children, and potential debt. Designed to be both engaging and educational, the simulation is hosted by **Dover Federal Credit Union**, providing students with valuable insights into financial decision-making.

Will The Real You Please Stand Up?

This will focus on a call to discover and embrace one's identity and purpose. Figuring out who you are by being true to yourself by learning to let go of past failures and obstacles.

W. I. N. the Room

W - Who you know (and who knows you)

I - Intentional Interactions

N - Never Miss a Moment

Purpose- Young Black boys often receive surface level exposure to soft skills like networking, yet these same skills are what shape access, opportunity, and influence. Our session, "WIN the Room," is designed to shift the narrative from passive participation to intentional presence by equipping them with tools they can immediately use and remember for life. This is not a lecture. It is a fully immersive experience where these young men will engage, reflect, compete, connect, and walk away empowered to own their presence in any room.

Core message- Decisions and choices shape who you become. From where they sit to how they introduce themselves, every move matters. This session gives them the framework, practice, and confidence to navigate relationships with purpose.



Experienced personnel from the Dover Federal Credit Union will serve as the facilitators for the highly interactive session, A Bite of Reality program.



D'jibril Barry
Senior, Law Studies Major, Delaware State University

D'jibril Barry is a Law Studies major at Delaware State University with a 3.76 GPA and a strong focus on public service, leadership, and legal advocacy. He has interned with the U.S. Attorney's Office and a federal judge, gaining hands on experience in legal research, case preparation, and courtroom procedure. During his senior year he will work with Roberts Legal Group focusing on trademark and patent law. D'jibril also serves as President of the Delaware State University collegiate chapter of NOBLE (National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives), where he leads initiatives to connect students with legal professionals and career opportunities. His immediate career goal is to become a corporate attorney, using his expertise to help businesses navigate complex legal challenges. In the long term he aspires to serve as a U.S. District Judge continuing his commitment to justice and public service. Known for his discipline, community involvement, and drive, D'jibril is dedicated to using the law to create meaningful change.



Brandon Poplar
Senior, Law Studies Major, Delaware State University

Brandon J. Poplar is a senior at Delaware State University, where he majors in Law Studies with a concentration in Finance. Brandon serves as the university's first-ever Chief Justice of the Student Government Association and is a Braven Hornet Ambassador, advocating for workforce readiness, equity, and student leadership. Brandon's professional experience includes internships and fellowships with Vanguard, Rocket Mortgage, Coca-Cola, Hewlett Packard, Bloomberg, and the State of Delaware. He is a Research Fellow with EVHybrid Noire, where he co-authored published policy research comparing U.S. and Chinese electric vehicle infrastructure following a study abroad in Yangzhou, China. He was also selected as a Summer Institute for Emerging Managers and Leaders (SIEMML) Fellow, earning full tuition to any UC graduate business school. He is also an MLT Ascend Scholar, a Sponsors for Educational Opportunity (SEO) Career Fellow, and a Bloomberg HBCU Trading Fellow who ranked in the top 25 nationally. After graduation, Brandon plans to pursue a career in corporate banking and financial services before earning a PhD in Economics. His long-term goal is to influence higher education and economic policy, specifically to improve financial literacy, youth development, and the economic mobility of cities like Wilmington, DE and Flint, MI. Deeply inspired by Delaware State University President Dr. Tony Allen, Brandon's ultimate ambition is to become an HBCU president and build pathways for the next generation, especially young Black men, to succeed in college and beyond.



Pastor Leroy Watson
Educator, Mentor, and Ministry Leader

Pastor Leroy Watson was born on August 3, 1971, in Wilmington, Delaware. He was raised in the Northeast part of Wilmington (Riverside Housing Projects). He didn't let his surroundings determine who he would be in life but instead took the straight and narrow road to become someone that his family can look up to. He worked hard to avoid becoming another statistic of his surroundings and graduated from William Penn High School in 1990. During his teen years, Leroy kept steady employment with the Kingwood Community Center as well as playing high school football and basketball.

Pastor Leroy B. Watson is a dedicated educator, mentor, and ministry leader committed to uplifting youth, strengthening families, and serving his community with excellence. He currently works as a paraprofessional with the Red Clay Consolidated School District, supporting children with disabilities at the Meadowood Program. With a passion for helping students reach their full potential, he brings patience, understanding, and a heart for service into the classroom each day.

In addition to his work in education, Pastor Watson serves as the Assistant Pastor of Tabernacle Shalom Worship Center in Claymont, Delaware, under the leadership of Bishop Apostle Teresa B. Hicks. He oversees several ministries including the Children and Young Adult Ministry and the Men's Ministry "Kings Court," where he mentors emerging leaders and fosters spiritual growth across generations.

Pastor Watson is also committed to youth development through athletics. As an Assistant Coach at Dickinson High School, he coaches Girls Field Hockey, Basketball, and Softball. It's his mission to help student-athletes build confidence, discipline, and teamwork both on and off the field.

He holds an associate's degree in criminal justice from Crown College, a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Herzing University, and a master's degree in public administration from Strayer University. He's currently pursuing his Doctoral degree in Public Administration.

Pastor Watson has been married to his wife Janine Watson for 35 years. Together, they have three children—Nashi Watson, Byshi Watson, and Jaelynn Watson Rodgers—and five beloved grandchildren: Khalil (9), Jace (5), Aria (2), Serenity (2), and Tristian (1).

With a life grounded in faith, family, and service Pastor Leroy B. Watson continues to impact lives and inspire those around him through every role he carries.



Youth Symposium Committee



Carlton Lampkins, Ed.D.
Chairman, ETAYS 2025



Reginald Shubert
Vice Chairman, ETAYS 2025



Wali W. Rushdan, II
Chairman, ETA 2025



Djibril Barry



Dr. Jeffrey T. Benson Jr.



Timothy J. Cooper



David Hawkins



Anthony M. McColum



Corie Priest

(Not Pictured)

Lynn E. Roberts



Jordan Spencer



Shemik Thompson



Thanks to Our Sponsors!



Dr. Tony Allen, President

**Ms. Aleasha R. Dorsett, Grants Director, Office of Govt. & Community Relations
Mr. James Lunnermon, II, Asst. Vice President, Student Engagement**

**Mr. Wali W. Rushdan II, Esq., Chairman, Ebony Tie Affair 2025, and the Planning Committee
Mr. Terrance Bowman, Treasurer, Ebony Tie Affair Planning Committee
NOBLE (National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives)**

**Our keynote speaker, Atty. Rushdan II, all the session facilitators & the ETAYS 2025
Planning Committee**



NOTES & THOUGHTS