



THE INSIDER: A LOOK AT WCCCD



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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:



I am pleased to share with you the first edition of The Insider: An

Inside Look at WCCCD's Northwest Campus. The Insider gives you a firsthand look at the people, events and resources at WCCCD's Northwest Campus. I hope you enjoy this newsletter. I welcome your comments and suggestions for stories.

Sincerely,
Dr. Debraha Watson,
President
Northwest Campus

DID YOU KNOW...

As a WCCCD student you will increase your lifetime income by \$5.70 for every \$1.00 invested in your education.

"It's Smart Business to Invest in WCCCD!"

MICHAEL GRIGGS FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER: THE POWER OF A MENTOR



In the late eighties, my cousin Beatrice Dinkins worked as a counselor at Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD); per her advice, I decided to attend. At that time in my life, fresh out of Chadsey High School, you could say that I was in college simply because the adults in my life told me that's where I should be. I was not serious about college and early on it showed through my mediocrity and apathy toward academic success. I was one of many students at the Downtown campus wasting time by hanging in the hallway, leaning against the railing and looking into the atrium (out of high school, but mentality still there in many ways).

Next semester, the same routine... like so many other young black males who shared the railing with me, we simply traded our hanging out at the local liquor store to the college atrium. However, halfway through my second semester, my father, full of life and healthy in all respects, was killed in a car accident along with three of his best friends whom he'd known for years. I was ill-prepared at the time to deal with this traumatic event.

Here I was at the crossroads, a man whose guiding force was no longer there to conveniently use as a safety net. Trying to regroup at a young age, losing the greatest influence in my life, I went through a series of emotions – a bipolar-like episode of ups and downs while trying to deal with the loss of my father. So, I left school for awhile and gathered myself. I returned to college and took a psychology class that I hoped would help me to adjust. My teacher during that time was Dr. June Ridley, who would later become a lifelong friend.

One day, like so many days before, I was hanging, yet again, taking school

continued on back

for a joke and my future as well, but this day would be different. This day, out the blue, this older, salt and peppered haired black man from my father's generation tapped me on my shoulder and said, "I see a brighter future for you than this." The shock of being called out in front of my regular atrium addicts by a stranger caught me off-guard. He,

"I see a brighter future for you than this."

Said Professor James Wilson

then, told me that I needed to take his class, that there were some things that he wanted to share with me. He told me his name was Professor James Wilson and that he taught photography. My mindset at the time was like, "I have this atrium thing going on and what I saw here was better than a photography

class," but he talked me into it. Over time this stranger became a father figure to me. In his class, he had pictures from various countries including pictures from all over Africa, accompanied by the history and tradition. I was blown away, not at first, because, like so many of us, I cared very little for our past. I was more interested in our oppressor's history, a backwardness that would soon change. I was so engaged with Professor Wilson in community activities and helping folks that I had forgotten all about the rail and never looked back. Professor Wilson took an even greater interest in me, one that would eventually change my life forever. He asked, no, he told my mother, that he needed to take me to Africa, specifically Egypt. He said there were some things that I needed to see and to learn. My mother was taken aback by the sheer notion of her son being taken to the other side of the world by some strangers, especially coming off of the heels of losing her

husband of over thirty years.

They pleaded with her until she finally gave in. This was the second teacher to come to our home in a short period of time. It had my mother wondering what kind of teachers are these! I didn't know at the time that Professor Wilson was close friends with various renowned Black scholars in America, many of whom accompanied us to Egypt during our trip. In a short timeframe, I went from running in and out of projects in Detroit to running in and out of Pyramids along the Nile. After which, I began to spread the truths that I had learned to anyone who would listen, hoping it would have the same effect on others as it had on me. Now, I tap folks on the shoulder, because I know what personal attention from a teacher can do. ■

Mr. Griggs is currently teaching at WCCCD's Northwest Campus in the African American Studies and History Department. He is also a published author.

SPECIAL EVENTS



3rd Annual Global Women's Conference

March 26, 2011 • 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Northwest Campus Welcome Center

Featuring special guest:

Andrea Isom,
Assignment Reporter, Fox 2

Robin Thompson,
Money Coach, WXYZ Channel 7

This free event is open to the public and will feature workshops on health, education, parenting and more.

Spring Book Festival

April 9, 2011

11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Northwest Campus Welcome Center

WCCCD is committed to education and the community it serves. Please join us for our Spring Book Festival for a day of workshops, book signings, reading discussion and more. This event is free and open to the public designed to promote literacy and highlight some of Detroit writers.

Project Healthy Living & Allied Health Job Fair

May 4, 2011 • 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Northwest Campus

This free event is open to the public and offers attendees the opportunities to receive health screenings, vision screenings and workshops on healthy lifestyle choices and improvement. Blood work services will also be available at a nominal fee. There will however be no treatment or diagnosis offered on-site.

Spring Pinning Ceremony

May 6, 2011

Western Campus

As the largest urban community college in Michigan, WCCCD is proud to produce some of Michigan's top healthcare professionals. Each semester those graduating from the Allied Health Program receive a professional pin in their area of discipline. This event is by invitation only.

Dental Hygiene Student Members of the American Dental Hygienists' Association Conference

October 28, 2011

Western Campus

Hosted by a different college each year, the SADHA Conference gives dental students in Michigan the opportunity to learn about new processes, express curriculum concerns and meet with vendors. Registration for this event is required.