



The Link

December 2000

The National Organization of Professional Black Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees

2000 Executive Board

President

James Tatum
Maryland

Vice President

Geraldine Osborn
National Headquarters

Treasurer

Charles Roberts
Tennessee

Corresponding Secretary

LaSharn Belt
North Carolina

Recording Secretary

Jacqueline Roscoe
National Headquarters

Parliamentarian

Cynthia Jordan
South Carolina

Historian

Eric Banks
Indiana

2000 Regional Representatives

East

Wytonya Jackson
Pennsylvania

Midwest

Fred Reaves (Acting)
Wisconsin

National Headquarters

Denise Brooks
Washington, D.C.

Northern Plains

Leroy Stokes
Nebraska

South Central

Brenda Moore
Texas

Southeast

Eston Williams
Tennessee

West

Richard Bruce
New Mexico

Lead Story

Northern Plains Conference Motivates Members

Submitted by Fannie Richardson, Colorado

Speeches, workshops and demonstrations were among the offerings at the Northern Plains Chapter's annual training conference in Lincoln, Nebraska this summer.

A panel discussion—"How To Succeed In NRCS"—motivated conference participants. Panel members were **James Tatum**, National President, of the National Organization of Professional Black NRCS Employees; **Sherman Lewis**, retired Deputy Chief for Management, NRCS; and **William Hunt**, State Conservationist, Minnesota. All three shared memorable words of wisdom with the participants.

Know the game, know how to play the game, and make sure you are playing with the right instruments, Tatum advised. Don't become stagnated; keep up with the changes. Be open-minded. Absorb as much knowledge as possible.

Hunt said the following words can offer keys to success to our employees - Preparation, Initiative, Mentoring and Mobility, and Professionalism. Also, don't forget to master the three "Rs" Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic (reading, riting, and rithmatic), he reminded his audience. Acquiring good interpersonal skills and being a good communicator are vital assets to becoming successful, Hunt added.

Lewis reminded conference participants that THEY define success. "Success is what it is to **you**," he said. Success depends on how **you** define it. You must have self-confidence to succeed. Your first step is to set a goal because you must know where you are going. Next, you must stick to your goals. Most importantly, NEVER, NEVER, GIVE UP.

Panel members offered the following advice:

- Choose wisely
- Be innovative
- Be careful who you choose to follow
- Be fully committed
- Have a sense of urgency about reaching your goals
- Learn how to handle power
- Have integrity
- Accept change
- Always look forward
- Make a good impression since you only get one chance to make a first impression
- Continue your education or your skills will become obsolete
- Learn and adapt to the organizational culture
- Show initiative, go beyond your job, put forth the extra effort
- Be flexible, technically and personally
- Don't be afraid to take risks
- Be punctual; appreciate time, yours and that of others
- Be mobile, you'll have more opportunities if you are mobile
- Have a career plan
- Give and receive respect
- Be kind to everyone, treat everyone right; you never know whose going to be your boss
- Follow through on promises and commitments



Panel Discussion: From L to R - James Tatum, President, The Organization speaks to participants, while William Hunt, State Conservationist, Minnesota, and Sherman Lewis, Director for the Center Of Outreach Programs, Langston University, Oklahoma, looks on during a panel discussion on "How to Succeed in NRCS."

Photo courtesy of the Northern Plains chapter



Participants network during the Northern Plains Chapter's 2000 annual training conference.

Photo courtesy of the Northern Plains chapter

In his opening comments at the June conference, National Organization President Tatum reminded conference participants to obtain as much computer and technology skills as they can to keep up with today's fast-paced world. There will be a need for more advanced technology as things around us rapidly change, he added.

Dr. Marilyn J. Richardson, a psychologist with Richardson & Company in Colorado, conducted a workshop on "Are You Managing Change Or Is Change Managing You." In the classic change model, things go from the present state in which they are fairly well structured and employees are comfortable – not necessarily happy or productive, but comfortable. It then progresses through a transition state where things are less solid, into a desired state where things are again solid, but in a different shape. The length of each state depends on how hard those going through the change try to maintain the previous state and how long it takes them to find their way out of the transition. She also talked about leadership and the use of power. Dr. Richardson discussed the three "Rs" of leadership: Reality, Responsibility, and Respect.

Sherman Lewis, Director of the Center for Outreach Programs at Langston University in Oklahoma, discussed "Outreach Efforts to Under-represented and Under-served Areas and People". He stated that we should help these groups to organize and build community-based organizations that could learn to help themselves. Current USDA policies were written basically for large farmers and large agri-businesses. For effective outreach efforts, we need to develop policies tailored toward the small farmer and the small businesses.

George Richardson, the USDA Liaison, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, shared his early experiences during his more than 30 years with USDA. He said

he undertook extraordinary measures, such as crossing streams by walking across logs. This is outreach, he said, and we, as USDA employees, are all responsible for outreach, he added. He also discussed the history of the 1890 institutions and how they have progressed.

Ann Stokes and Mildred Gilliam, both educators in the Nebraska school system, conducted a

personality profile exercise entitled "True Colors." This exercise revealed various traits and how awareness of them can make individuals more effective in personal and professional capacities. The presentation was very informative and all of us learned something about ourselves; we learned how to utilize our strengths and all of our characteristics to become more diversified and well-rounded individuals.

Other topics included a demonstration on the Customer Service Toolkit by Michael Kucera of the Nebraska State Office. He demonstrated how to construct and fill out a Contract Support Document form, and also how to construct and fill out a Conservation Plan form using the ArcView software. His presentation spurred many questions. ■

Hunt Shares His Triumphs, Tribulations with Northern Plains Chapter Members

Submitted by Fannie Richardson, Colorado



William "Bill" Hunt

Editor's Note: Bill Hunt's professional and personal experiences shed insight on what it took for him to achieve his goals. His story demonstrates that his persistence and hard work have allowed him to persevere.

During his keynote address at the Northern Plains Chapter's regional training conference, William Hunt, State Conservationist, Minnesota, shared

personal anecdotes about his personal and professional life.

When he first began his career with the former Soil Conservation Service in Nevada in 1965, there were few African-Americans with the agency. It took much courage and perseverance for Bill to achieve his goals over the years.

Hunt faced many obstacles in his academic and professional life, but he overcame them. He used the challenges he faced to create opportunities.

While in college, he took various jobs to help pay his way through Langston University in Oklahoma. He paid his way through school with scholarships, loans and odd jobs. With one such job, he picked up garbage, cooked it and fed it to the pigs. Hunt took many jobs that the other students did not want. When the other students went home on vacation or for the holidays, he remained at school and did their jobs to earn extra money.

There were times when Hunt did not know from week to week whether he would remain in school. Married during his first semester in college, he supported a wife and child while in school. Since he did not have much money, he borrowed books for his studies from other students. The owner of the bookstore saw his dedication and determination, and extended credit to him until he could pay for his books by working various jobs. In addition, Langston had a policy that stipulated that if a student maintained an "A" average, he or she could get tuition paid for the next semester.

Though he worked a full-time job and carried a full course load (16 to 18 hours), he received this honor twice. Hunt graduated with a 3.6 cumulative grade point average within three years instead of the standard four years. He was valedictorian of his college graduating class.

He attended the University of Arizona, where he received his Master's of Science in Agricultural Economics in a year. After he graduated, Hunt accepted a position with the former SCS in Nevada. The first year was difficult, he and his family did not have a car for six months and did not have a telephone for the entire year.

Mr. Hunt provided for his family, they did not go hungry, not even for one day. During this first year, his mother was killed in an automobile accident. He was able to borrow the money to go home to Oklahoma for her funeral.

During his early days in Nevada, there were no other African-Americans employed by SCS at that time. He had no

mentors. There was no one to teach or train him. He taught himself his new job by reading the Economics Guide and using the project files that his predecessors had created.

He later became the first African-American employee from the agency to attend Harvard University to obtain a Masters degree in Public Administration.

During the late 1960s, he met James Tatum, the first African-American employee other than himself that he knew. They met at a training session in Portland, Oregon in 1969. They became friends and have remained friends ever since.

Mr. Tatum became one of his first mentors. Some of his other current and past mentors are: Norm Berg, Sherman Lewis, Richard Duncan, Pearl Reed, Charles Whitmore, Charles Adams, and Dwight Holman. He informed the group that it is advisable to have several mentors because you never know when a change is gonna come!

Hunt's former positions include an Economist in Reno, Nevada; an Assistant Economist at the former Northeast Technical Center at Upper Darby, Pennsylvania; a Management Analyst at National Headquarters, an Assistant State Conservationist in Ohio, and a Deputy State Conservationist in Pennsylvania.

Hunt encouraged the group to "HOLD ON" even when the going gets tough. He is a living testament that perseverance pays. If you want something badly enough, you can obtain it through hard work, dedication, and determination. You must be committed to your chosen profession. Spend the extra time, go that extra mile.

Continue to believe in yourselves. Mr. Hunt also stated that commitment is demonstrated through action, not explanations or excuses.

Think of others; think how your successes or failures will affect others. When you accomplish something, share your success with others. Let others benefit from what you have learned. Give something back; don't just take and never give anything back. After you have reached the "top" of the ladder, reach down and extend a hand to help someone else to succeed, to excel. If all you do is look out for yourself then you have wasted some space on this earth. Surround yourself with successful people, avoid losers.

Remember that hard work, dedication, and initiative are skills that are just as necessary for success today as they were years ago.

The President's Message



If it takes passion and devotion to build a great organization, we definitely have those attributes in the National Organization of Professional Black Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees. Such passion and devotion were easily evident at the wind-blown Northern Plains' 5th Annual Regional Training Conference, held in Lincoln, Nebraska. The same can be said about the Southeast's 3rd Annual Regional Training Conference held in the somewhat Bluegrass State of Kentucky and the South Central's 2nd Annual Regional Training Conference held in the Cajun country of Louisiana. Members came from far and near to participate in these training conferences. These members' willingness to attend these conferences demonstrates commitment and devotion to improving their skills so that they can better serve NRCS customers. We also applaud those regions that are planning their annual training conferences this year.

Our members are our strength. I and other members of the Executive Board are committed to developing a highly skilled workforce that will lead NRCS into the new millennium. To accomplish this task, we need you to be the kind of member who is always ready to reach out, to help out, and to be there for The Organization whenever it needs you. You must be the kind of member who stands up for what you believe in and does the right thing, even when the right thing isn't easy. You must be the kind of member whose presence makes a world of difference in many lives and whose absence would be deeply felt in many hearts. You must be a very special member.

Many of you are familiar with the poem, "Footprints." We want you to be there for The Organization, just as The Organization will always be there for you. Following are the words for those of you who are unfamiliar with this very memorable and inspiring poem.

Footprints

"One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times of his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it. "Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed you the most you would leave me."

The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

I hope that we are willing to make one set of footprints when necessary to "Bridge the Gap to the New Millennium and Fulfill our Field of Dreams."

James E. Tatum

Editor's Message

The 2000 Communications Committee members are very excited about the opportunities this year offers for us to promote The Organization.

During our first teleconference in July, the members' enthusiasm and exuberance were tremendous. As a result, their attitude fuels my motivation to work with them to achieve this year's goals for our committee.

Our major goals include:

- Publish three issues of The Link
- Revise and maintain The Organization's website
- Publish The Organization's annual accomplishments report
- Produce items, such as fact sheets, that will help members promote The Organization

Though we had a late start, the committee boasts the following accomplishments:

- Published two issues of The Link. We will publish one more between now and February 2001.
- Revised The Organization web site. Please visit our site at www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/ORGAN/ss.htm.
- Developed a fact sheet about The Organization based on an existing brochure assembled by Sarah Marshall and Jackie Roscoe. The Executive Board is presently reviewing the fact sheet. Once it is approved, it will be posted on our web site.

Much work remains to be done to promote The Organization and to increase awareness about its importance to NRCS and others. Though committee members are willing to work diligently to achieve this goal, we need your help. You can help us in the following manner:

- Submit story ideas for the next issue of The Link. We will be publishing one more issue; therefore, we desperately need articles.
- Submit articles on your accomplishments. If you have received an award or know of anyone who has received an award for efforts that further the goals of The Organization, write an article. Submit the article and photograph to the Editor.
- Offer the editor suggestions about how to improve the newsletter. Remember that it's your newsletter and we are always looking for ways to improve it.
- Visit our web site. We are also looking for ideas on improvements. Also, please inform Cara Clark or Esther

Bright about any changes you may have on information posted on the site. (See article on revised web site in this issue for their e-mail addresses).

Please contact me at 651-602-7859 (phone) or sylvia.rainford@mn.usda.gov with any comments or concerns you have regarding Communications Committee activities.

The Organization News

Nikki Giovanni's Presentation Video Available

The Organization videotaped Dr. Nikki Giovanni's presentation at the 8th Training Conference in Atlanta last year. Giovanni, a renowned poet, delivered a riveting keynote address on African-American history, sports, women, and her love for trains and the Pullman porters.

The Organization is interested in selling her 45-minute presentation to members for \$7.00 as a fundraiser. Before we move ahead with this project, we need to determine interest by members. We also need to know by January 6, 2001, how many copies to have duplicated.

If you are interested in obtaining a copy, please contact:

Sylvia Rainford, Chair, Communications Committee at 651-602-7859 or e-mail at sylvia.rainford@mn.usda.gov or Frank Ellis, Ways and Means Chair, at 904-755-5100, Ext. 103 or e-mail at frank.ellis@fl.usda.gov.

The Organization Is On-line and On-Track

Submitted by Cara Clark, Illinois

The World Wide Web is a powerful source of communication today and The Organization is taking full advantage of this resource. The Communications Committee has updated The Organization's web site and will keep it maintained. Check out our new look at www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/ORGAN/ss.htm.

We will use our revised site to keep you, our members, informed about issues of concern to you, membership resources, and upcoming events and opportunities.

What We've Done

Our new design, using large buttons, makes it easier to select options and to maneuver throughout the site. "The Link" newsletter is now available on-line in both

HTML and PDF formats. You may view the newsletter from your computer and print as needed or you may download a high-resolution PDF file and print at high quality for duplication. Adobe Acrobat Reader version 4.0 or higher is required to read the PDF files on the site. This free program may be downloaded from the following address: www.adobe.com. A membership form is available on line as well. You can print the form, fill it out and mail it to Treasurer Charles Roberts. We have a link that will take you directly to the national NRCS vacancy announcements. In addition you may access directories for the Executive Board, chapters, and committees. You can e-mail chairpersons directly from the site. Chapter websites have also been included. If your chapter does not have a website, we encourage you to start one. Please let us know so we can link our site to yours and vice-versa.

What We Plan to Do

We plan to provide more useful information and resources to keep our members informed and to assist them with job and other opportunities. In addition, tools will be provided to increase The Organization's visibility. Future plans call for putting the following items on the site: The Organization's Strategic Plan, Bylaws, as well as brochures and fact sheets to promote The Organization.

What We Need

YOU—our members are a vital part of the success and effectiveness of this website. We need your input. What would you like to see on the site that will help to increase The Organization's visibility and increase use of the site? How can we make the site serve as a tool or resource for the advancement and growth of The Organization and its members? Review the site for a few moments. Located at the bottom of each page or section is a **submit** button for comments. Send me your comments and I will consolidate the responses and submit them to the Communications Committee for review and implementation. Feel free to contact Cara Clark at: cara.clark@il.usda.gov or Esther Bright at esther.bright@co.usda.gov (via e-mail *only please*) with your ideas.

2001 National Dues Increase

The national dues for The Organization will increase to \$45.00 per year starting in 2001. The Executive Board raised the dues during a meeting earlier this year.

National Membership Dues: Are You Current?

Submitted by Sarah Marshall and Charles Roberts

Now is the time to start thinking about paying your 2001 membership dues. Membership dues are paid based on a calendar year and should be paid to the National Treasurer between January 1st and November 1st of the current year. Please be aware that your dues will have to be paid by November 1, 2001 to be considered a paid member for the 2001 Training Conference.

Membership dues will be increased to \$45.00 for 2001.

Membership applications will be available on The Organization's web site at www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/ORGAN/ss.htm, and in each issue of The Link newsletter. Completed applications, with your \$45.00 check for national membership, should be mailed to **Charles Roberts, National Treasurer at P.O. Box 2282, 111 New Port Lane, Hendersonville, TN 37077-2282.** Please note that this is a new address for the Treasurer. Please mail two copies of the applications to the Treasurer. Only National Dues Will Be Accepted By The National Treasurer. Please remember to inform your local chapter treasurer when you have paid your national dues.

For applications or more information, please contact:

Charles Roberts at 615-277-2575 (work telephone) or croberts@tn.nrcs.usda.gov (E-mail).

North Carolina Chapter Plans Survey of Members

Submitted by Terry Best, North Carolina

The North Carolina chapter of The Organization is developing a display to showcase the Historically Black Universities The Organization members have attended. To aid in this effort, please fill out the short form located on **page 11** of this newsletter, detach and send to:

Terry L. Best
1006 Eastern Ave.
RM 107 Ag Center
Nashville, NC 27864
(252) 459-4115

How to Form a New Chapter

Submitted by Clifton E. Peters, Chair, Constitution and Bylaws Committee

Are you interested in forming a chapter of The Organization in your state or region?

To become an official chapter of The Organization, you must become chartered. Here are seven steps to follow:

- Develop a core group of people who are willing to become members of the proposed chapter.

- Discuss your intentions with your Regional Representative.

- Contact the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and review Article VII of the organization's Constitution and Bylaws for specific guidance and helpful hints in establishing a chapter.

- Develop a draft Constitution and Bylaws based on The Organization's.

- Submit a copy of your draft Constitution and Bylaws to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for review.

- Incorporate all changes recommended by the committee, if needed, and return the revised document to the committee for final review. Once approved, the committee will recommend to the Executive Board that a charter can be issued to the new chapter.

- All paperwork must be submitted to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee in enough time to get a final review and report submitted to the Executive Board. You should submit your paperwork one month prior to the annual training conference, usually held in December, to receive your charter during the conference.

For more information, please contact Clifton E. Peters, Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chair, at (601) 877-3849 or e-mail cepeters@lorman.alcorn.edu if you have additional questions or need guidance.

1998. He was named Information Systems Security Program Manager in 1999.

Before joining NRCS, Phillips worked at the departments of Commerce and Education for a total of 8 years.

Mario works with numerous departments throughout the agency to develop and distribute computer security policies and procedures for NRCS. He collaborates with managers and staff at all levels to ensure computer security becomes an integral part of the agency's operations. He becomes actively involved when there are reports of computer break-ins and breaches of government security within NRCS. He keeps abreast of computer security issues, hacker programs, and the new and apparently unending list of computer viruses that threaten NRCS' networked systems.

In addition, he issues security advisories from the FBI, the Federal Computer Emergency Response Team (Fed-CERT), and other agencies inside and outside of the government.

When he's not dealing with hackers, Mario finds satisfaction in helping children learn math and computer concepts. He spends hours volunteering and tutoring kids at his church. He also works as a volunteer at the Carpenter Shelter in Alexandria, VA.

Mario Phillips, NRCS National Deputy Information Systems Security Program Manager -

Someone you should know!

Three Organization Members Received National Awards

Submitted by Sylvia Rainford, Editor

Three Organization members received national recognition recently.

Malcolm "Mac" Henning and **Mike Anderson** received President Al Gore's Hammer Award and **William Stokes Jr.**, now retired, received the Chief's Civil Rights Award.

Henning and Anderson of NRCS National Headquarters were part of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Team that received the prestigious Hammer Award from the National

Partnership for Reinventing Government. Anderson works as a wildlife ecologist in the Ecological Sciences Division and Henning works as a resource conservationist in the Conservation Operations Division. Both were cited, along with their team members, for creation of a review process for incoming

NRCS News...

Mario Phillips: Overseeing NRCS' Computer Security

Submitted by Esther Bright, Colorado

Mario Phillips, NRCS' National Deputy Information Systems Security Program Manager, assumed his position 2 1/2 years ago. He is assigned to the Office of Chief Information Officer Mary Thomas in National Headquarters.

He began his computer science career as a computer systems administrator after he completed a Bachelor of Science Degree in Information Systems at the University of Maryland, and a Masters Degree in Engineering Management at George Washington University in 1993. He joined the NRCS Chief Information Officer's office, as a member of the NRCS Y2K implementation team in February

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program proposals to ensure they meet the goals of the program.

Vice President Al Gore's Hammer Award is presented to teams of federal employees who have made significant contributions in support of reinventing government principles.

Stokes, a former Water Resources Staff Leader and Black Emphasis Program Manager in Minnesota, received the Chief's Civil Rights Award from the National Civil Rights Committee for excellence in promoting workforce diversity in a non-managerial position. He actively recruited minority students and employees to Minnesota. Bill used several innovative approaches, including the initiation of a "host family" program to assist the students with summer housing.

Federal Executive Board Honors Organization Member

Submitted by Francine Gordon, Southeast Regional Office

Alfred Roberts, Civil Rights Manager at the Southeast Regional Office, received a Certificate of Nomination at the Atlanta Federal Executive Board's (FEB) Employee of the Year Awards and Luncheon ceremony in Atlanta this past summer.

Roberts was one of three people nominated for the Employee of the Year Award. He received the Certificate of Nomination for outstanding performance in Equal Employment Opportunity.

In 1999, Roberts served as a member of the successful Southern Landowners Outreach Conference Steering Committee and chaired its Marketing and Publications Committee. The conference targeted landowners with limited resources in 13

Southern states and the Caribbean Area. More than 300 landowners and agency personnel attended.

During the conference, Roberts interacted personally with most of the landowners. He listened to their ideas about how USDA can make its programs and services more accessible to them. He personally thanked the landowners for attending. He encouraged them to talk to relatives and neighbors about available USDA programs and services and how they could access them. Roberts also assured the landowners that NRCS would continue to establish a relationship with them after the conference.

NRCS Welcomes Five New USDA/1890 Scholars

Submitted by Sarah Marshall, National Headquarters

It is customary for NRCS state offices to service USDA/1890 national scholars from their states. Upon graduation from high school, scholars are assigned to a work site close to home for the summer. In the fall, they begin classes at their respective universities.

USDA welcomes the following five high school graduates this year: Tiffany Lewis, Fort Valley State University; Noni Lee, Virginia State University; Annie Vaughan, Alcorn State University; Sharita Thomas, Lincoln University; and Howard Conyers, North Carolina A&T State University. The students hail from Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, and South Carolina, respectively.

Each scholar has been assigned a mentor. They are looking forward to a rewarding experience with NRCS.

The Organization invites you to become acquainted with the scholars whenever the opportunity permits. Howard Conyers was

among the high school students who were afforded the opportunity to attend The Organization's annual training conference last year. The students were highlighted at the opening session with keynote speaker Dr. Nikki Giovanni, a renowned poet.

The USDA/1890 National Scholars Program, created in 1993, is designed to strengthen the partnership between USDA and the seventeen 1890 institutions; to increase the number of students studying agriculture, food, and natural resource sciences; and to offer career opportunities to the scholars at USDA.

Each year USDA accepts applications for the program. The deadline is January 15 of each calendar year.

For more information about the 1890 scholars program, please contact Sarah Marshall, Outreach Division, at 301-504-2224 or visit the program's web site at <http://1890scholars.program.usda.gov>.

1890 Land Grant Institutions

- **Alabama A&M University**
website: <http://www.aamu.edu/>
- **Alcorn State University, Mississippi**
website: <http://www.alcorn.edu/>
- **Delaware State University**
website: <http://www.dsc.edu/>
- **Florida A&M University**
website: <http://www.famu.edu/>
- **Fort Valley State University, Georgia**
website: <http://www.fvsu.edu/>
- **Kentucky State University**
website: <http://www.ksu.edu/>
- **Lincoln University, Missouri**
website: <http://www.lincolnu.edu/>
- **Langston University, Oklahoma**
website: <http://www.lunet.edu/>
- **North Carolina A&T University**
website: <http://www.ncat.edu/>
- **Prairie View A&M University, Texas**
website: (<http://www.pvamu.edu/>)
- **South Carolina State University**
website: <http://www.scsu.edu/>
- **Southern University, Louisiana**
website: <http://www.subr.edu/>
- **Tennessee State University**
website: <http://www.tnstate.edu/>
- **Tuskegee University, Alabama**
website: <http://www.tusk.edu/>
- **University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff**
website: <http://www.uapb.edu/>
- **University of Maryland, Eastern Shore**
website: <http://www.umes.edu/>
- **Virginia State University**
website: <http://www.vsu.edu/>



Kudos to an Organization Member: Alfred Roberts, Civil Rights Manager, Southeast Regional Office (second from left) stands among presenters and honorees at the Atlanta Federal Executive Board's annual awards luncheon. The three honorees for civil rights accomplishments (middle) are flanked by award presenters A. Carole Dortch (left), Chair, Atlanta Federal Executive Board; and Monica Kaufman, (right) Television News Anchor, WSB 2 News, Atlanta.

(Photo provided by Al Roberts)

Pioneers of the Soils



Left to Right - NRCs Retirees Sylvester Fletcher (left), Garland Lipscomb (center), and William Shelton (right). Photo courtesy of Dwayne Mays, Lincoln, Nebraska

Sylvester Fletcher, Retired Party Leader in New York and New Jersey, began his career with the former SCS in the late 1950s. Garland Lipscomb, Retired Soil Scientist in Pennsylvania, became the agency's first African-American State Soil Scientist in 1981.

He was stationed in Pennsylvania for most of his career. William Shelton, Retired Soil Scientist on the Soil Correlation Staff at National Headquarters, is believed to be the agency's first African-American soil scientist and the first on the National Headquarters Soils staff.

A Student Trainee's Experience in Minnesota

Submitted by LaTersa Hampton, Senior, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

Editor's Note - LaTersa Hampton, an 1890 scholar, spent the summer as a student trainee in the Waseca Field Office in South Central Minnesota. This was her first summer in Minnesota.

I truly enjoyed my experience in Minnesota. I was given an opportunity to learn more about conservation programs that were familiar and unfamiliar to me. It truly was a tremendous adjustment for me! Minnesota is a very beautiful state. One of the things that I liked most was the beautiful lakes and parks. I acquired much information that will be most useful to me for the rest of my life.

I worked with District Conservationist Jim Jirik entering his records into the Performance and Results Measurement System (PRMS). As a result of my help, his PRMS records were up to date.

In addition to entering data into PRMS, I helped the district conservationist with

programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). For instance, I was able to calculate the estimated payment rate, both monthly and annually, on buffer strips for CRP applications for the farmers. Working with the farmers gave me a chance to establish a good relationship with them. When signing up for CRP, the landowner would receive an upfront cash bonus. Some of the other programs that I worked with included the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM). CREP and RIM were very new to me and I was eager to learn more about these programs. I received hands-on experience with these programs on visits throughout the county with a Soil and Water Conservation District employee.

I received additional hands-on experience in surveying. I learned how to identify various native plants. Also, I was introduced to new and unfamiliar farm equipment and farm practices.

One of the things I learned was the proper way to read a map since I had to know my location at all times. The proper way to read the map is North, South, West, & East. I was also trained on how to read a plat book and soils map, but I really enhanced my skills on the plat book. The training sessions that I attended and participated in were very helpful in improving my skills.

I cannot say enough about how proud I am of myself for not giving up years ago when I experienced a few hardships. I would have missed out on many great opportunities. Instead, I stuck with it and kept my head held very high. I would like to thank Mr. Kenneth Lee of Arkansas (an Organization member) for his encouraging words. Also, while in Minnesota, I met someone who truly inspired me—Ann English, the Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations for the area that I worked in. She is also an alumnus of my university.

But most of my inspiration came from a very dear lady to me, my mother, Eltha Hampton. She has always taught me to do my very best in whatever I chose to do and God will do the rest.

My advice to future employees: Always believe in yourself and be willing to adjust to a new environment. Last, but certainly not least, always put God first in whatever you do. I will leave you with one of my familiar verses: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13)



Book Review...

MAXIMIZE THE MOMENT— God's Action Plan for Your Life by T. D. Jakes

Reviewed by: Dorothea Martinez

Are you living from day to day—going to work, coming home and finding that your couch in front of the television set is turning into your best friend? Are you satisfied with your accomplishments? Do you know there's much more to you than what meets the eye?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you must read the book, "Maximize the Moment—God's Action Plan for Your Life," by T.D. Jakes, a renowned minister.

This book contains three parts: Part One - Minimize the Moment; Part Two - Master the Moment; and Part Three - Maximize the Moment. Each section is described briefly below:

Minimize the Moment

In order to maximize our lives, we have to minimize our load. We must determine what is worthy of our attention and focus on what's important. Jakes states that, "some things must be dismissed as nuisances." He calls them the "gnats and flies of life."

Jakes uses visual language to impart powerful messages throughout the book. He also uses biblical quotes and references freely including the following: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29, New King James Version).

He explains that, "You do not have to please anyone except God, our Father. We are accountable to Him alone. Doesn't he tell us to have no idols, no false gods? You may say that you don't worship idols, but you do worship them when you dedicate your life to impressing others or when you allow the opinions of others to determine your actions. Those others become idols in your life."

Master the Moment

To master the moment we must "Plan to Win." We must have a sense of mission control, a combination of a long-term visionary plan with the energy and action

needed to accomplish it. We must have faith. Faith is basically conviction in a heart that refuses to fail. We must surround ourselves with wise and competent people. Move in the moment, Jakes said. Moving in the moment helps us to plan and make decisions. We can't wait for things to happen to us; we must make things happen for us.

Maximize the Moment

This section of the book tells us not to let anyone or anything deter us from our purpose. We must evaluate our relationships, our career, our choices, but hold fast to the vision of ourselves crossing the finish line, knowing that we have run the race with the bold integrity of who we are.

Jakes tell us to persevere as we stretch and strain, sprint and crawl, laugh and cry toward the final destiny that God has set before us.

Jakes also talks about "a place called 'there'" in this section. He refers to "there" as being a feeling. It is the passion that burns within us like a flaming torch. It's what makes a teacher teach and an actor act.

Many of us can identify with the feeling of "there." For example, "there" for me will be what I will feel when I publish my first novel.

When we get "there," Jakes says, we will know it in the deepest part of our souls. There is no harm in not being "there," however. The real tragedy occurs when we are not even heading in the right direction. In other words, we're lost.

"I must warn you, if you are going to get 'there,' be careful to whom you join yourself. This road is narrow and at times difficult, don't let someone deter you, don't let someone push you off your path. It is difficult enough to get 'there' without tying your wrist to a person who will cramp and hinder you. Remember, it is better to go lonely than not at all," Jakes says.

When we're working toward achieving a goal, sometimes we find that we are not getting there as quickly as we want to because of distractions in our lives. Jakes describes this as being "off our path." He states, "When you're off your path, your soul will ache." "It's not like a toothache, a backache, or a stomachache. You feel this pain in the deepest part of your essence. The only thing to relieve your aching soul is repentance. This word simply means to turn around and go the other way," Jakes explains.

Summary

This book tells us that it is sometimes wise to reflect on where we are and to assess where we are going. But most of all, we need to ask ourselves how we are doing. We do this primarily because we are the only ones who can really say how we are doing. We're the only ones who will stick around to hear the answer," Jakes says.

"There are no worthless people, just people who have been misfiled, misappropriated or, misallocated, but those who need to be reassigned to the purpose for which they were created," he continued. How many of us would refer to people as being misappropriated or misallocated? It sounds more like someone unlawfully dealing with money, yet we understand perfectly what the author is saying.

Jakes' writing style truly fascinated me. I really enjoyed the vivid terms he uses throughout the book. I could visualize his messages, anecdotes, etc.

Information from this review summarizes the book's contents. Please take the time to read this treasure of a book. It's spiritually inspirational and enlightening.

About the Author

T. D. Jakes, a minister, motivator and entrepreneur, has influenced millions of people. He has a remarkable gift for deeply touching the hearts and souls of those who need to hear spiritual truth in practical terms. He is the author of *The Lady, Her Lover, and Her Lord* and other inspiring volumes which impart a profound message for all who desire to be spiritually fortified and remain goal-oriented.

Colin Powell's Rules

Submitted by Julie MacSwain, Minnesota

Still active in civilian life, Colin Powell continues to live his life by 13 rules he collected over the years. It's been reported that he kept these written down on a small white card labeled "Colin Powell's Rules."

Colin Powell's Rules

1. It ain't as bad as you think it is. It will look better in the morning.
2. Get mad, then get over it.
3. Avoid having your ego so close to your position that, when your position falls, your ego goes with it.
4. It can be done!
5. Be careful what you choose. You may get it.
6. Don't let adverse facts stand in the way of a good decision.
7. You can't make someone else's choices. You shouldn't let someone else make yours.
8. Check small things.
9. Share credit.
10. Remain calm. Be kind.
11. Have a vision. Be demanding.
12. Don't take counsel of your fears or naysayers.
13. Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier.



Poem

Written by an anonymous Columbine High School student

Submitted by President James Tatum

*“The paradox of our time in history is that
we have taller buildings, but shorter tempers;
wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints;
we spend more, but have less;
we buy more, but enjoy it less;
we have bigger houses and smaller families;
more conveniences, but less time;
we have more degrees, but less sense;
more knowledge, but less judgment;
more experts, but more problems;
more medicine, but less wellness.*

*We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values.
We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often.
We’ve learned how to make a living but not a life;
we’ve added years to life, not life to years;
We’ve been all the way to the moon and back,
but have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbor.
We’ve conquered outer space, but not inner space;
we’ve cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul;
we’ve split the atom, but not our prejudice.
We have higher incomes, but lower morals;
we’ve become long on quantity, but short on quality.
These are the times of tall men, and short character;
steep profits and shallow relationships.
These are the times of world peace, but domestic warfare;
more leisure but less fun;
more kinds of food, but less nutrition.
These are days of two incomes, but more divorce;
of fancier houses, but broken homes.
It is a time when there is much in the show window
and nothing in the stockroom...*

Calendar of Events

Below is information of major meetings that may of interest to The Organization members:

February 2001

2001 National Association of Conservation Districts' Annual Meeting

February 4-8

Fort Worth, Texas

For more information, contact Robert Raschke on 303-988-1810.

March 2001

7th Federal Interagency Sedimentation Conference

March 25-29

Reno, Nevada

Federal and non-Federal scientists and managers from various disciplines will discuss recent accomplishments and progress in research and on technical developments in the physical, chemical, and biological aspects of sedimentation. Tours, exhibitions, and presentations of papers are among the planned activities.

For more information, visit the website at http://water.usgs.gov/wicp/SED7FISC_crf.html.

Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) Annual Conference

March 30 - April 1

Washington, D.C.

Hosts: Purdue University and University of Illinois.

For more information, visit the MANRRS website at: www@manrrs.org.

May 2001

Seventh National Watershed Conference

May 20-23

Richmond, Virginia

The theme: "Small Watershed Programs: Past, Present, and Future." This conference will examine our nation's rich history with upstream small watershed programs and will explore innovative ways of accomplishing watershed project objectives as traditional sources of assistance become harder to get. For more information about the conference, contact John W. Peterson, Ph: 703-455-6886, fax 703-455-6888 or jwpeterson@erols.com.

June 2001

National Conference on Locally Led Conservation Efforts

June 3-5

Lied Conference Center

Nebraska City, Nebraska

National forum for individuals and groups to share lessons learned about locally led or locally driven conservation efforts and to stimulate the advances of this "bottom up" approach to natural resource management. For more information on the conference, please visit www.arborday.org/programs/conferences.html.

July 2001

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People NAACP's 92nd Annual Conference

July 7 - 12

New Orleans

Please visit the NAACP at <http://www.naacp.org> for more information after January 2001.

2001 National Urban League Conference

July 28 - August 1

Washington, D.C.

For more information, call 212-558-5385 or visit the National Urban League's website at <http://www.nul.org>.

August 2001

Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) 2001 Annual Conference

August 4-8

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

For more information, visit the conference website at www.swcs.org/what_calendar.htm or contact Charlie Persinger, Director of Member Services at 515-289-2331, Ext. 12.

North Carolina Chapter Surveys Members

Submitted by Terry Best, North Carolina

The North Carolina chapter of The Organization is developing a display to showcase Historically Black Universities The Organization members have attended. To aid in this effort, the chapter needs the following information:

Name of Historically Black University you attended:

I am a member of:

_____ Sorority

_____ Fraternity.

Please forward your responses to:

Terry L. Best
1006 Eastern Ave.
RM 107 Ag Center
Nashville, NC 27864
Ph: (252) 459-4115
Email: tbest@nc.usda.gov

Membership Application

YES! I would like to become a member of *The Organization!*
Enclosed are annual dues of \$45 for 2001.

() New Member—Referred by _____

Please renew my membership to *The Organization!*
Enclosed are annual dues of \$45 for 2001.

Please make check payable to: "*The Organization*"

Please mail completed application form along with membership dues to:

Charles V. Roberts, Treasurer
The Organization
P. O. Box 2282
111 New Port Lane
Hendersonville, TN 37077-2282
Phone: (615) 736-5471

<input type="checkbox"/> Change of Address Date: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Address: _____

Hm. Phone: () _____
Ofc. Phone: () _____
E-Mail _____
Indicate Committee of Interest:

Would you like to be included in The Organization's Membership Directory?:
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Sylvia Rainford, Editor

The Link

P.O. Box 65751

St. Paul, Minnesota 55165-0751