



Saturday School

of the George B. Thomas Sr. Learning Academy

Celebrating 30 Years of Service



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News Release: July 20, 2016

Dr. George B. Thomas, Sr. Retires

Saturday School Leader Promoted Educational Equity Over a 65-Year Career

Silver Spring, MD – July 2016: Dr. George B. Thomas, Sr., founder and president of the George B. Thomas, Sr. Learning Academy and its signature Saturday School program, retired from his leadership position with the organization, effective June 30, 2016. Dr. Thomas was assisted by fraternity brothers from the Mu Nu chapter of Omega Psi Phi to open the first Saturday School class in 1986, where 19 students arrived ready to learn and improve their academic performance.

Over its 30-year history, Saturday School has grown to be an important partner with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), providing instruction and mentoring to more than 3,000 students at 12 locations across Montgomery County on Saturday mornings during the school year. When he opened the doors to the first Saturday School classroom, Dr. Thomas was acting on his belief in the importance of education as the guarantor of a level playing field. “I grew up in a family of sharecroppers in segregated South Carolina, but I took to heart the message my mother repeated—that education is the great equalizer,” Dr. Thomas said. “She was determined that I would have a good education. The full life that has provided me is there for all of us if we persevere and are encouraged by a caring community. That community of support and learning is what Saturday School delivers.”

“Dr. Thomas is entirely dedicated to the children of Montgomery County and is determined that each child that participates in the program gains the courage to take the next step forward to learn and grow,” said Khadija Barkley, executive director of Saturday School/George B. Thomas, Sr. Learning Academy. “He has truly made a difference for thousands of children in Montgomery County.”

Dr. Thomas took advantage of every opportunity to learn, leading him to a distinguished career marked by service to his country and community. He served in the U.S. Air Force for five years before joining MCPS, where he was a classroom teacher, school-based administrator, and administrator in central offices. Subsequent stints as an instructor and professor at Howard University and the University of the District of Columbia were steppingstones to the presidency of a Historically Black College, Voorhees College in South Carolina.

As Dr. Thomas completed his tenure at Voorhees, he was appointed the first Presidential Scholar in Residence at the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO), the professional organization of the nation's public and private black college presidents. From 1984 to 1994, Dr. Thomas served as a senior level administrator at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), where he received the Secretary of Transportation's Silver Medal Award for Meritorious Achievement in recognition of exceptional service.

Dr. Thomas holds degrees from Voorhees College, South Carolina State University, The American University, The University of Maryland (College Park), and a doctorate in Curriculum and Educational Administration from The George Washington University. He has received numerous awards over his long career, including the Washingtonian of the Year Award in 2008, the Maryland State Department of Education's Excellence in Minority Achievement Award (2007), the Unsung Leadership Award from Leadership Montgomery (2008), among many others.

Dr. Thomas will be succeeded by Mr. Reginald Felton, currently vice president of the George B. Thomas, Sr. Learning Academy Board of Directors.

ABOUT SATURDAY SCHOOL / GEORGE B. THOMAS LEARNING ACADEMY:

Saturday School is a program of the George B. Thomas Learning Academy, celebrating 30 years of community service in Montgomery County.

Saturday School provides students, grades K-12, with tutoring and the extra support they need to become confident and successful learners. For only a small fee, our twelve Centers offer a 6th day of learning through certified teachers and a nurturing environment that enhances both students' lives and their academic achievement.

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