

DyNAMC Future Leaders Speak with

Dr. Dallas Wilson Sr.

Senior Pastor of Center of Hope Ministries in Atlanta Georgia and DyNAMC magazine's winner in our "Kiss Me, I Love Diversity" contest.



Emerging Leaders to Faith Based Leader



Dr. Dallas Wilson Sr.

Pastor Dr. Dallas Wilson Sr. Senior Pastor of Center of Hope Ministries in Atlanta spoke with two of NAMCO's student members about leadership in the faith based community, his work, his passions, and winning DyNAMC's "Kiss Me I Love Diversity" contest.

DyNAMC Leaders for a Changing World gives students the opportunity to interview the cover subject featured on our cover of each issue. It's an opportunity for our emerging leaders, to connect with today's leaders.

Our students who interviewed Pastor Wilson, were Alexis Harris and Chykari Dodson.

Alexis Harris is a student at Savannah College of Art and Design, Atlanta GA, where she looks forward to graduating May 2017 with a B.S. in Computer Animation.

Chykari Dodson is a freshman attending Oglethorpe University, Atlanta, GA, majoring in Electrical Engineering. He has attended Elite Scholars Academy, Morrow, GA where he graduated receiving his College Preparatory Diploma at age 16 years old.

DyNAMC's Future Leaders spoke to Pastor Wilson at Center of Hope Ministries in Atlanta on August 19, 2015.

Be inspired!



left to right: NAMCO Student Members Chykari Dodson, Oglethorpe University, & Alexis Harris, Savannah College of Art Design.

Harris: Good evening, Pastor.

Pastor Wilson: Good evening.

Harris: How are you?

Pastor Wilson: I am fantastic.

Alexis: My name is Alexis Harris and we are happy to have you on the cover of DyNAMC Leaders for a Changing World Magazine. In selecting a name for the magazine, the word DyNAMC is an acronym from NAMCO. It is also derived from the word Dynamic, which, according to the dictionary, is a force that stimulates change or progress within a system or process; to be constantly changing or active; positive in attitude and full of energy and new ideas; strong, energetic, empowering, inspiring, spirited, honest, powerful, bold, and vibrant. The DyNAMC team gives a great deal of thought into who graces the cover and always selects individuals whose qualities, professionalism, and drive makes them a dynamic leader for a changing world. In addition, you are the winner of DyNAMC's international Kiss Me, I Love Diversity contest. Therefore, in your own words, Pastor, what makes you a leader for a changing world and what is your leadership style?

Pastor Wilson: Alexis, thank you for that question. I believe that leaders are not born. I don't believe leaders are made. I believe leaders are ordinary people who find themselves in a position against an obstacle, an adversary, or a foe and they

just decide that this is my moment to oppose whatever is opposing the community. That's who I am. I am just one person who decided that I can't blend into the tapestry. I've got to stand up, speak out loud, carry others, and lead others with me. My leadership style would be one of action. My leadership style would also be one of example. I'm

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not going to ask anyone to do anything that I'm not willing to do. If I'm not on the front line, I can't ask anyone else to be there. So, action where I am. I'm on the front line. Anything that's docile is not going to make a mark on this generation.

"Diversity is important simply because we're building communities. Communities should look like our nation. We have so much diversity here, that in building nations and in building businesses it should be reflective of who is here. So, diversity to me is going to be the building block for the next generation. It's no longer my group or your group. It has to become our group and when we come together, when diversity is no longer even the subject matter, when it becomes the norm, then, I think, ingenuity and inspiration will come from completely different places. Lack of diversity causes people to section off and withhold resources and knowledge because we're waiting for our team to get in position. But, when diversity truly takes its place, I think it levels the playing field and it allows leaders to really share, across the board. As a matter of fact, diversity wipes away the board." Wilson



left to right: Pastor Wilson and NAMCO Student Member Alexis Harris, Savannah College of Art and Design.

Alexis: Now, Pastor, what is one characteristic you believe every leader should possess?

“Your decision to publicly speak about race issues, injustice, and inequality is inspiring. So, what inspires you, Pastor Wilson, to take such a leadership and active role in these types of national diversity issues?” Alexis

Pastor Wilson: Great question. I believe its love. I believe that you can love without leading, but you can't lead without loving. When you lead from a perspective of love and passion, then it does not become a job, it becomes a calling. It gets into your DNA. It never ends. Leadership is not something that you punch in and punch out. It becomes who you are. So, in order to lead effectively, you have to love what you do and also love who you lead.



Alexis: Now, Pastor, what do you feel is the biggest challenge facing leaders today and is there, or should there be, a difference in religious leaders in, say, a community or political venue?

Pastor Wilson: I think the challenge for modern day leaders, now, is the temptation to come out of leadership into celebrity status. You can't lead and be on every magazine, in front of every billboard, or on every news station. Leading, sometimes, means you have to get into the trenches with your boots on. I think there is

such a big cry now for celebrity status that, many times, leaders are compromising their values and what's best for the cause just to promote themselves. We are so bitten by mega popularity that we, sometimes, forget that some of the issues we really need to fight for are so small that they're not even newsworthy. I think there should be a difference between community leaders and religious leaders, and I also think there should be no difference. The difference is that we religious leaders get our mandate from a higher power so, many times, our stance may be different from that of a community leader on the same issue. We have the same agenda, we see the same ills and the same problems, but because of who we get our mandate from – that being God -- we may defer, from time to time. When you don't have the mantle of being a pastor, you can do or say things that a pastor may be restrained from saying. I do think that we can work together, however.

Although we may get there in different vehicles, we can still arrive at the same location.

Alexis: Now, Pastor, what is one mistake you witness leaders making more frequently than others?

Pastor Wilson: I think one of the mistakes is forsaking the day of small beginnings. We have been just so mega struck that we're overlooking the humble beginnings of movements. The movements that have shaped America were not massive. Many times, especially in the Civil Rights era, it was just a few people in basements of churches throughout the south making plans.

Chykari: Why is diversity important to you?

Pastor Wilson: Diversity is important to me because it's important to God. When I study the life of Jesus, I see that he came for everybody and not just one particular group of people. John 3:16 says, 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' So, I believe that His mission was as diversified as it got. He came to save everyone. What's interesting to me is that, when I examine His life a little closer, He spent a lot of time with people from sordid backgrounds. People who may not have been what we thought they should be, and may not have even been allowed in our churches. Those are ones he spent time with and he was able to sow something into their lives that changed their lives for the better forever. So diversity is important to me because it is important to God.

Chykari: What are your thoughts on diversity being critical to shareholder value, as well as building institutions, empowering communities, and leaders of the next generation?

Pastor Wilson: Diversity is important simply because we're building communities. Communities should look like our nation. We have so much diversity here, that in building nations and in building businesses it should be reflective of who is here. So, diversity to me is going to be the building block for the next generation. It's no longer my group or your group. It has to become our group and when we come together, when diversity is no longer even the subject matter, when it becomes the norm, then, I think, ingenuity and inspiration will come from completely different places. Lack of diversity causes people to section off and withhold resources and knowledge because we're waiting for our team to get in position. But, when diversity truly takes its place, I think it levels the playing field

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Chykari: With all these things being said, let's take this more into the corporate realm. How important are ethical business practices to you?

Pastor Wilson: Ethical business practices have to be, once again, the foundation of the community because if the business owners who are taking in money from the community are not practicing ethical business then there is someone in the community that's fallen through the cracks. Though we are sponsoring, though we are patronizing your business you're not patronizing the community. So, whatever group is being marginalized because of unethical practices that,



NAMCO Student Member Alexis Harris, Savannah College of Art and Design.



left to right: Pastor Wilson and NAMCO Student Member Chykari Dodson, Oglethorpe University.

businesses. They greatly increase access to capital for small diverse businesses and they help to place diverse owners at leadership tables in Washington, D.C., and all across our country. We receive some resistance, particularly from larger corporations that are comfortable with statements like, "We already support a similar organization" or "As a large corporation, we don't do business with small minority businesses." Even worse, when we bring up the fact that data reporting shows that some corporations do not hire and/or do business with Native Americans and/

or African Americans, they become abrasive and hostile. As a former Champlain Police Officer, Counselor in Principles, your affiliations with the NAACP's school system, founder and Senior Pastor of Center of Hope's Church of God in Christ, Inc., and Superintendent of The Empowerment District, overseeing and providing spiritual leadership for several churches, what advice can you give us as NAMCO Student Member Emerging Leaders that can help support NAMCO and **DyNAMC** counter some of the negative, abrasive behavior of some larger corporations who do not want to embrace diversity?

once again, puts the community off kilter. So, every business needs to use ethical practices, not just in hiring, but even inventory, even what's on the shelves. It needs to be reflective of the community, be community sensitive, and even be priced ethically for the environment that they're in.

Chykari: How do you feel that youth can best make their viewpoints known to corporate decision makers?

Pastor Wilson: Youth can best make their viewpoint known to the corporate decision makers in two areas. One, education. The first thing they need to do is get some financial education to teach their dollars some cents. If youth came together, or just began to examine how they spend money and learn how money works, then they would have the authority and the power to get the ear of corporate America, spending where they wanted when they wanted. So, not just the education, but the, the discipline. Thinking more about the future. Not funding things that have no ethics, purchasing items that are not building community. Then they would get the ear of corporate America by where, when, and how they spend their money.

Alexis: Both NAMCO and **DyNAMC** Magazine do a terrific job at bringing attention to the issues and more importantly the solutions to social change in business as it relates to diversity and inclusion. NAMCO works strategically with agencies, large corporations, and organizations to level the playing field by increasing access to contracts for diverse

Pastor Wilson: I think this generation can do a couple of things. One, don't stop-don't shop until these corporations ways drop. There is no reason why we should be spending our hard earned money with corporations that are not sensitive to diversity and not just us withholding our funds, but we need to let the nation and the world know

of their practices, of their inability to be inclusive of all people, and then we'll get other supporters. So, once again, don't stop-don't shop until their corporate ways drop.

Chykari: So, away from the seriousness. Now, let's take a trip into you. What is the typical day like in the life of Pastor Wilson?

Pastor Wilson: Taking a trip into my life is going to be a short trip, but let me see. Let me give it a shot. I'm up in the morning at about 5:30 preparing for a 7:00 a.m. nationwide prayer call. So, I spend some time with the Lord in meditation and prayer. Then, before the call, I go back upstairs because I've got to get my babies ready for school. I have a fourteen year old daughter and my ten year old son and my nine year old daughter. So, I'm making lunches. I'm getting the cereal ready. I'm finding the milk. I've got to get one shoe here, another shoe over there. I love it. I love that God has blessed me to be able to be a part of their lives at this stage of my life. It blesses me. Then I run back down to my office. I do my prayer call where I pray with people all around the country, some from around the world. I leave there. I take my babies to school. It blesses me, again, to have prayer with them, again, in the car and then, watch them walk into the school. It's just an emotional thing for me every day that God would bless me and challenge me to be a covering for lives that are so vulnerable. I love it. After that, I'm able to go home and take off my "drop off to school" clothes, put some clothes on and, depending on my day, I'll do a little bit of exercise, or I'll meditate and read. On some days I'll get ready for bible study lessons. That's typically my week. But, on Sunday, I'm up at 4:30 or 5:00 in the morning. We have an 8:00 a.m. service. I wake up my son, simply because he's got to roll with me and we really get together, pack my bags, get dressed, and we're out the door on our way to church. We're at the altar at 7:00 a.m., just praying, asking for God's blessings upon the day and upon our worship experience. We go get changed and to get ready for our 8:00 a.m. service. We do the 8:00 a.m. service and I preach as hard as I can, giving the best that God has given me. In between services, I teach a wonderful Sunday school class, called "Impact." Impact is for young adults, aged 18 to 35ish and we have an awesome time there, just sharing about issues that are near and dear to their hearts. After that, I'm back into my 10:30 a.m. service and I am preaching again like it's my last opportunity. When that service is over, I give a sigh

of relief. I reintroduce myself to my kids and my wife, who I love dearly, and we go get something to eat. We go back to the house and maybe watch some sports on television, go to sleep, and do it all over again the very next day.

Chykari: So, could you name someone who, when you were younger, had a powerful effect on you as a leader?

"How do you feel that youth can best make their viewpoints known to corporate decision makers?" Chykari

Pastor Wilson: Millicent, my older sister. She was murdered when she was in college, years ago. She was the first from my family to go to college. What she did was show me that, at least, it could be done. I believe you can't hit a mark that you can't see. But, to know that she was there, and she left such a legacy that, whenever I talk to some people who even lived in that city or went to



NAMCO Student Member Chykari Dodson, Oglethorpe University.

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that school and I ask them if they remember this event, I've not found anybody that had anything ill to say about her. So, her short life really gave me the understanding that life can be short, but you do the best you can with what you have and to always strive for the best in everything you do. She taught me that being number one is something that you should always strive for and that's what I try to do now.

“So, away from the seriousness. Now, let's take a trip into you. What is the typical day like in the life of Pastor Wilson?” Chykari

Chykari: What are two resources that you would recommend to future leaders, like NAMCO students looking for insight on how to become a great leader?

Pastor Wilson: The first thing I think they need is a good work ethic. This generation has got to put their boots on and get to work. The stage of looking at television and wanting what everybody else has, from clothing to cars, is over. It's time to work, to make your mark on the next generation. It's going to take a work ethic. Next is education. Education,

to me, means, not that everybody's going to college, but everyone needs to have a defined skillset. You need to know what you do.

If you don't know what you do, someone is going to tell you what you have to do and what you have to do is always going to pay you less than what you know how to do. Lastly, this generation needs to have passion. Find out what you love to do and if

you can work in that area and you are willing to build and learn and educate yourself, then you're getting ready to make your mark that cannot be erased.

Alexis: Your decision to publicly speak about race issues, injustice, and inequality is inspiring. So, what inspires you, Pastor Wilson, to take such a leadership and active role in these types of national diversity issues?

Pastor Wilson: One, because I am a black man. After you remove the education, the pastoral role, the speaking engagements, even a half decent suit, the core of who I am is a black man. So, when I see anyone being mistreated, when I see black men being mistreated, I know that the same thing can and will happen to me if we don't do something about it. I think we have to stop divorcing ourselves from the struggle. It's so easy to change the channel or flip to the next screen on the computer but when you begin to embrace the struggles that you see as your own struggles, knowing that they may be happening down the block or around the corner today, but they're inching closer to your address every moment, it will inspire you to get up and just begin to do something.

Alexis: Your entering **DyNAMC's** Kiss Me, I Love Diversity international contest shows a human side, which is very impactful to younger generations. What advice would you give young people who desire to get more involved in diversity issues?

Pastor Wilson: I will tell any young student, who is getting involved in any issue of diversity, that you can't go into this thin-skinned. You must go into this knowing and believing in the larger picture and not thinking that you're going to change your first day, your second day, your hundredth day, or maybe even your fifth or tenth year. What we're doing is changing a mindset and a mindset is hard to change. So, for anyone getting involved in diversity issues, go in knowing that it's going to be a struggle but the struggle is well worth it and victory is at hand.

Chykari: Pastor, what's been your best, or rather, the most rewarding experience in your journey thus far and what can we look forward to past your Sunday career?

Pastor Wilson: Wow. Ministry, for me, has been rewarding from day one. Just the fact that God speaks to me gives me something to say to people that encourage their lives. It has been a reward beyond measure. If I had to pinpoint something, you would be a prime example. Being able to sow seeds into young people and that God has blessed me to live long enough to watch you mature from a bike riding little boy to getting ready to be a freshman at a university. Not just you, personally, but there are so many stories just like that. I have some family members who are part of our ministry that have been with me twenty years. Some kids that I used to pick up, now I'm picking up their children and we're still part of the family. That, to me, is just jewels that are invaluable. What's next for me? Education. If we're going to change a generation, and change some of the calamities of any given culture, it's going to start with education. Education, to me, is the one platform where race does not have to play into what's going on. When students come to the forefront and say, "I'm just here to learn. It doesn't matter the color of my skin, my gender, my personal preferences, I'm here to learn." I need, as a tool of change in this community, a school of excellence. A school that is teaching more than just reading, writing, and arithmetic. Mentoring. Teaching vision. Giving young people vision, giving them direction, helping them to see beyond where they are to where they need to be. That's what I need. That's going to be my calling beyond the pulpit. It's going to be education. To educate the next generation.

Alexis: So, Pastor, there is a great deal of easily accessible information about you regarding your accomplishments. Therefore, what do you like to do for fun that people might be surprised to know?

Pastor Wilson: What do I like to do for fun? Eat. I guess it's America's greatest pastime. I love basketball. I'm a huge basketball fan and I can watch three or four games a day. I love to play basketball when I can. I think my greatest joy and what I like to do when I'm not working is to spend time with my family. I have four amazing children, one amazing granddaughter, and a beautiful wife. That's what I love to do for fun. I spend so much time working that when I get an opportunity to spend some time with them, just being normal. Doing anything from road trips to just lying on the floor watching television and sharing a bowl of popcorn. That's fun for me.

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Alexis: Finally, Pastor, when you finally retire someday, what do you hope or expect to have accomplished? What do you want your legacy to be?

“Could you name someone who, when you were younger, had a powerful effect on you as a leader?” Chykari

Pastor Wilson: Wow. What a fitting question for the end of our time together. When it's all said and done for me, I want to have inspired a generation to love God and to serve humanity. That's what it's all about for me. Lastly, the most important thing to me is that those four children that the Lord gave me, and however many grandchildren I have at the time, along with my wife, can look me in the face and be proud of what we've done together because I don't do this on my own. I could not do it without Bertina, Kayla, Symphony, Myles, Kerrington, and Kennedy. I just couldn't do it. They have always been my inspiration and I want them to be proud. Lastly, when it's really all said and done, I just want to hear them say, “Well done, thy good and faithful servant. Well done.”

Chykari: Lastly, could you give me three words that summarize who is Pastor Dallas C. Wilson?

Pastor Wilson: Of all the questions, this appears to be the most difficult. To sum up myself in three words. Okay. Let's see how I can do this. First, I love God. Everything that I do, everything that I am, rests upon the platform of my unquenchable love for God. I'm still in awe that He can use a

rusty old bent tool, like me, for His glory. I love God. The next of the three words would be I love my family. That's who inspires me. The pats on the back around the world mean nothing to me, as much as those three kids, my grandbaby, my older daughter. Just speaking words of love and affirmation. They help me to pull off all the layers of who I am to others and I get to be Dad. I get to be Grandpa. For my wife, she just reminds me of who Dallas Wilson is. Lastly, let me work. I come from a generation where nothing was given to me. I am not the son of a Bishop. I am not the son of a woman of high regard in the church, at least when I was younger. My mother was the one frying chickens or fish dinners, and delivering them to barber shops in New York City. My father was a musician, but they had a lifestyle that helped us, and all of our children, to find God. They gave me a work ethic. Nobody gave me anything. Except God. We had to build. We started with one person in our living room and God is just so awesome in this journey. There you have it. I love God. I love my family. Just let me work.

Alexis: Pastor, thank you so much for sharing this time together. I really appreciate all the information you gave me. Thank you.

Pastor Wilson: Alexis, you're the reason why I'm here. You are the next generation of leaders. Thank you for your time.