

Leading With Respect

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One of the traits I have noticed about successful leaders is respect. While leaders certainly may have the respect of the public, what I mean is that great leaders respect themselves and other people. In contrast, leaders who live for the limelight and attention I believe ultimately make poor leaders. A respect for yourself means that you understand who you are and where you are going. This brings an inner confidence. These type leaders have conviction and inspire others. They stand for something. People want to follow those kinds of leaders.

Dr. Beverly Hogan, President of Tougaloo College, is one of those kinds of leaders. I recently had the opportunity to visit the campus of Tougaloo and visit with Dr. Hogan. Her passion for people and the institution quickly came through as we had a spirited discussion about leadership. Before becoming the 13th President of the school in 2002, Dr. Hogan enjoyed a long and distinguished career in public and private leadership. A Tougaloo graduate, she studied psychology and began her career in the mental health field including being Executive Director of the Mental Health Association of Hinds County and later statewide director for the Mental Health Association of Mississippi. She went on to serve as Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Federal State Programs in the Allain administration and served for ten years as a Commissioner for the Worker's Compensation Commission. In 1997, she returned to her alma mater and for five years served the college in a variety of roles before being named President.

Tougaloo, which was founded in 1869, has a very applicable motto that it is a place "where history meets the future." This historic college has played a big impact in Mississippi and is poised to be a leading educational institution in the future. Interestingly, 40% of the African American physicians, dentists, and other health care professionals and attorneys practicing in Mississippi are Tougaloo graduates. In addition, over 35% of the African American educators in the state are graduates of the college. Over 60% of Tougaloo's graduates enter graduate or professional school after graduation. The college is listed in the *U.S. News and World Report's* "America's Best Colleges" and is rated as one of the best colleges in the Southeast by *The Princeton Review*. According to the National Science Foundation, it is also listed among the top fifty U.S. institutions whose graduates earn their Ph.D. degrees in the science and engineering disciplines.

Dr. Hogan and the leadership at Tougaloo are obviously on the right track. As I toured around the campus, I noted a lot of construction as they prepare for the future. Dr. Hogan shared some of her core beliefs that have guided here in her varied leadership roles. First, as I noted above she believes that you have to respect yourself and others. She believes that while people don't always have to agree, they should always demonstrate respect for one another. She also noted, "I always try to be firm, friendly, and fair. I have found that when you treat people fairly, they will fare well; demonstrating respect for others." Dr. Hogan also shared the principle, "in order to get what you want, then you have to help other people get what they want." This is a win-win and servant mentality that similarly demonstrates respect.

We discussed how important it is to build trust in an organization. In order to build that kind of trust, you have to "be consistent, be clear, be transparent and be accountable." Her advice to young



leaders is to explore your inner self and know what your real values are. Once you know your values, then you can align yourself with organizations that share your values. She also emphasizes to young leaders to take 100% responsibility for their actions. Real leaders don't pass the buck, and they don't make excuses. Dr. Hogan shared how as a young leader key people had taken the time and interest to encourage her to grow as a leader.

Today, Dr. Hogan is in a great position to influence tomorrow's leaders. She knows who she is and has aligned herself with an institution that is near and dear to her heart. She shares Tougaloo's mission to provide academic excellence and to encourage its students to have a strong sense of responsibility to themselves and the communities they reside. They are not just training the minds, but also shaping the character of these talented young people to make difference in the world. As Mississippians, we should be proud of the rich tradition of the college, and its potential to impact tomorrow for a better future.

Quick Facts:

Dr. Beverly Hogan, President, Tougaloo College

Favorite Books on Leadership: *Discovering the Leader Within You* (John Maxwell); *The Old Man and the Sea* (Ernest Hemingway); *Jesus CEO: Using Ancient Wisdom for Visionary Leadership* (Laura Beth Jones); *You Can't Send a Duck to Eagle School* (Mac Anderson)

First Job: "When I was twelve years old I started babysitting for family and friends."

Proudest Moment as a Leader: "One of my proudest moments as a leader was when I presided over my first commencement ceremony and conferred the degrees to the graduating students. It was a great moment!"

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