

# 1. The Michael E. Reed '75 Social Justice Professorship

## Who, exactly, is Williams '75?

The top-of-mind association: the Class of 1975 was the first at Williams to accept women as four-year students, comprising 139 of the 484 students who arrived our freshman fall. Williams' commitment to co-education reshaped the college—and every one of us—for the better.

Perhaps less known: our class also represented a dramatic increase in the number of Black students, as our 41 classmates nearly doubled the number in prior classes. These men and women represented progress and change at a school that long needed more diverse voices.

Each of us chose to be a part of this dramatic change, to be part of a new, different, and far more diverse Williams College. Who is Williams '75? We were pioneers of today's diversity at Williams. The sweeping change that occurred between Fall 1970 and Fall 1971 reshaped Williams forever, launching it on the course to the highly diverse college it is today, and helping cement its pre-eminence among liberal arts colleges. We all benefited. It is our brand, our unique identity.

With our 50th Reunion Gift, we have the opportunity to make that identity our lasting legacy. The first of our class gifts makes a permanent addition to the Williams educational experience by endowing **The Michael E. Reed Class of 1975 Social Justice Professorship**.

The professorship will create a scholarly agenda for the in-depth, interdisciplinary study of societal diversity, with the goal of equipping students to better understand and productively function in an increasingly complex world, while also covering related expenses for classroom work and research. Additionally, our gift will offer hands-on, applied experience in the field through internships, as well as research funding for both students and faculty working toward building a more vibrant, diverse, equitable, and inclusive society.

The professorship, internships, and research will study social justice broadly, focusing on those individuals or groups that have been or become marginalized for any reason. As such, it will prepare Williams students to thrive and lead in a rapidly changing world.

Such academic focus is both vitally important and very practical. A complex society grappling with increasingly dangerous threats—from climate to conflict to cyberthreat to the weaponization of

Today, Williams is a true microcosm of our society and our world, rich in diversity, backgrounds, and life experience.

**17%**

are the first generation in their families to attend college.

**44%**

are US students of color

**51%**

identify as female students

**53%**

of students receive aid from Williams

**40**

religious traditions are celebrated

**96**

languages are spoken



Michael E. Reed '75

*“At Williams, we aim to prepare students to live and lead in an extremely diverse, complex world so that they are able to listen and talk across differences with intelligence and compassion. Doing this can help remove barriers and address what seem to be insurmountable challenges. Williams is a microcosm of the world and broader society—we have the opportunity to give our students tools that will enable them to succeed at and beyond Williams.”*

**LETICIA S.E. HAYNES '99**

Mike Reed's successor and current Vice President for Institutional Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

information—needs to hear, understand, respect, and empower each and every citizen to reach their full potential. We need all hands on deck and all voices heard... be it in education, business, government, religion, and international relations.

### **Naming the Professorship for Mike Reed**

Many of us remember Mike at Williams as an outstanding athlete—an All-American hurdler—and as a big-hearted classmate and friend.

Following our graduation, Mike made extraordinary contributions to society and to our alma mater with his expertise in issues related to diversity. For the work he did at A Better Chance and INROADS, organizations dedicated to young people of color, the college awarded Mike a Williams Bicentennial Medal in 1993.

In 2006, Williams President Morty Shapiro asked then Trustee Mike Reed to take on a new role as Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity, critical to Shapiro's diversity action plan for the college. At the time, Shapiro wrote, "I cannot imagine anyone better suited for this important position. In addition to all his experience, Mike loves Williams. That love doesn't blind him, however, to the ways that the College could do better and I expect to be for all of us both nurturing and challenging."

After his work at Williams, Mike broadened his impact, heading diversity initiatives at Dickinson and Bowdoin. Sadly, Mike passed from cancer in 2022.

Today, Mike's work at Williams continues at the Davis Center, which advances broad campus engagement with complex issues of identity, history, and cultures as they affect intellectual, creative, and social life.

Our fundraising goal for the Professorship is \$7,000,000. Of that sum, \$5,000,000 will go to endowing the professorship, \$1,000,000 to student internships, and \$1,000,000 towards research.

### **2. The Class of 1975 Non-Traditional Student Scholarship Fund**

The college is driving a significant rise in students from non-traditional backgrounds: military veterans, community college transfers, students coming from the work force or later in life. Experience has shown that these students have a disproportionately positive impact in academics, student leadership, and life outside the classroom. The aim is to increase the representation from the current 25 to an ongoing 40 to 50 students. This requires recruiting, housing, academic and social support, and our underlying financial support. **The Class of 1975 Non-Traditional Student Scholarship Fund** is dedicated to providing permanent support to meet the full financial needs of this group of students.

### **3. The Class of 1975 Scholarship Fund**

Finally, classmates are invited to make donations to continue the great work we set in motion with our 25th Reunion Gift, **The Class of 1975 Scholarship Fund**, which is now valued at over \$2,000,000. Our fund fully supports two Williams students every year, and our scholarship fund has provided financial support for 40 students. The gift our class made in 2000 continues to make a positive impact on the college today, and continued support of this Scholarship is a meaningful way to participate in our 50th Reunion Gift.

### **Please Contribute**

We hope you will join in making this our permanent legacy by contributing to our 50th Reunion Gifts to any of these gift areas and in whatever way is right for you. You can apportion your gift by selecting one, two, or three of the options, and then declaring how you want your contribution split among your choices.