

Dr. Ronald Rhames

Midlands Tech Alum Leads Alma Mater

By Perdita B. Spriggs

Dr. Ronald Rhames embodies the Midlands Technical College (MTC) promise to students that “You can get anywhere from here.”

“No matter what you want to do in life, we can help you build the pathway to success,” emphasizes Rhames, named MTC’s sixth president in March. “Students can choose a career that takes them to work right away or helps them in their next educational step.”

Rhames is living that promise, making history as the first alumni and African American to helm South Carolina’s third largest technical college that educates approximately 18,000 students annually across six campuses. “Graduation day is so rewarding,” he says. “I see hope and optimism in the graduates as I shake their hands and give them their degrees. It’s very motivating.”

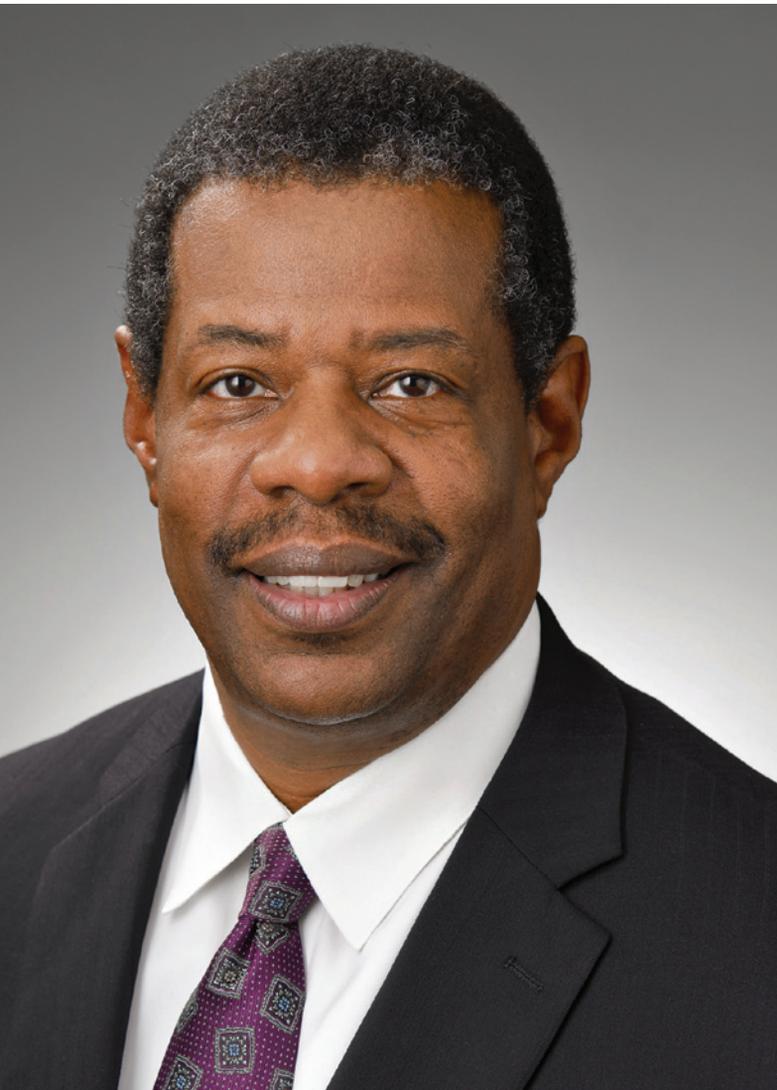
Rhames acknowledges that his humble Columbia

childhood instilled a solid foundation. He lovingly credits his mother as being the wind beneath his wings. “She inspired me and helped me to stay inspired,” he says of Sarah Rhames who did not complete high school but raised seven successful children. “She worked hard and was committed to her family and faith.” Rhames proudly notes that his niece and nephew are currently taking MTC courses to supplement degrees at four-year colleges.

Rhames detoured before enrolling in Midlands Technical College, working a three-year stint after high school. “I loved drawing and painting but decided to take a job at McDonald’s, and I developed an interest in business,” he remembers. “I realized that business is an art, and business leaders need to be creative to stay competitive. It’s just a

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DR. RHAMES AWARDS DEGREES AT 2015 COMMENCEMENT.

different type of canvas.”

Rhames ended up on MTC’s campus for social reasons and decided to enroll in classes. “When I started taking classes, something unique happened,” he reveals. “I began learning more about business, and the faculty took an interest in seeing that I succeeded. Sometimes that first year or so [after high school] isn’t clear, and MTC helped me to focus.” Rhames’s MTC associate’s degree in management serves as the backbone for his advanced degrees and ongoing professional development.

Recruit, Retain, Complete

Now as MTC’s chief executive, Rhames is focused on leveraging goodwill, encouraging community investment in the school, and expanding MTC’s influence. “My emphasis is recruitment, retention, and program completion,” he says, highlighting current marketing and rebranding efforts. “We offer an accessible, affordable, and high quality education. We want to be the community’s first higher education choice.”

Active in several professional organizations, Rhames is currently board chair of the National Association of College and University Business Officers. He also sits on boards of the Midlands Education Business Alliance and the Midlands Middle College, one of two charter high schools on MTC’s campus. In his spare time, Rhames enjoys the performing arts, working in the yard, walking, and spending time with family and friends.

“I encourage everyone to pursue education as a lifelong process,” he says. “The more you learn, the more you grow, and the more you have opportunity to demonstrate your abilities.” ■



Midlands Technical College - Associate’s Degree in Management

Benedict College - Bachelor’s Degree in Business and Economics

Central Michigan University - Master’s Degree in Administration

Nova Southeastern University - Doctorate of Business Administration

Southern Association of College and University Business Officers’ College, Business Management Institute at the University of Kentucky

Kellogg Fellow for Leadership in Community Colleges