

## Woods Hole Black History Month 2004: Talk Abstracts

[Home](#) | [2002 Events](#) | [2003 Events](#) | [2004 Events](#) | [Juneteenth](#) | [History](#) | [The Committee](#) | [Related Links](#) | [Photos & Activities](#) | [Contact Us](#)

### **Setting the Bar Higher: Moving Beyond Tolerance, Dr. Dana Mohler-Faria, President, Bridgewater State College**

[February 9, 11:00 AM, Redfield Auditorium, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution]

As a product of public education and as president of the largest state college in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Dr. Mohler-Faria is uniquely suited to examine the profound impact that public education (and specifically public *higher* education) has had on the advancement of people of color in the days following the historic Brown v. Board of Education decision. He will argue that while considerable social, economic and legal strides have been made in the past fifty years, the development of a truly diverse and multicultural climate still requires a large-scale, attitudinal shift on the part of society if it is to become a reality. In addition to his overall assessment, Dr. Mohler-Faria will also highlight the work of Bridgewater State College's recently-formed Diversity and Affirmative Action Taskforce and its mission of moving beyond the policies of tolerance in race relations.

---

### **Technology and the Dream, Clarence Williams, Special Assistant to the President, Massachusetts Institute of Technology**

[February 19, 12:00 Noon, Redfield Auditorium, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution]

This presentation will consist of a discussion on the findings from my recent book, *Technology and the Dream*.

The origins of this book go back to the fall of 1995, when I began the Blacks at MIT History Project. I thought of the Project as a way to develop a record of the black presence at MIT, a resource that others might build on. As I gathered material over four years, it became clear that the story of blacks at MIT is a story about how a small, determined group has reached for opportunities, seized them, and gone on to achieve much--sometimes with help, sometimes in the face of obstacles, always driven by deep motivation and both personal and community drive. It's a story not just of the past, but of the present and future as well.

*Technology and the Dream* is a collection of oral histories, exploring racial issues at MIT during the last half of the twentieth century. At first, my plan was to interview around 30 individuals, but that number eventually grew to over 200. Nearly half were students. In addition, 23 black faculty were interviewed, 38 black staff and administrators, 16 non-black faculty, and 10 non-black staff and administrators. The former President of Harvard University and now the 300th Anniversary University Professor of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard noted that "This book offers a wealth of insights on the experience of African American students at a leading university that no recitation of statistics could duplicate--before the students entered, while they were enrolled, and after they graduated. The varied personal accounts remind us never to regard any ethnic group as monolithic, while acquainting us with the special burdens that almost all black students experience in a predominantly white university. For anyone concerned with student affairs or affirmative action, this is a valuable, informative volume." William G. Bowen, President of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and President-Emeritus of Princeton University celebrated the book in this way:

“This extraordinary compilation of reflections on the black experience at MIT offers a personal voice to a history that is still unfolding. Clarence Williams's introductory essay, which details the history of determined efforts by a great university to become more inclusive, is a high compliment to MIT yet is not self-congratulatory. There are lessons here for everyone interested in broadening educational opportunity in America.”

---

**The Origin and Evolution of the Steel Pan**, *Justin Petty, Professor and Director of Broadcast Media Technology, Roxbury Community College, member of Pan Loco Steel Band*

[February 24, 3:00 PM, Redfield Auditorium, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution]

This lecture will be presented by Justin Petty and will focus on the invention of the steel pan, which is the only acoustical instrument invented in the twentieth century. It will also focus on the social and economic factors that led up to this wonderful invention with an emphasis on the institution of slavery and carnival on the island of Trinidad.