

Biography

Dr. Lonnie L. Howard



The son of a Southeast Texas sharecropper, Lonnie was born in a 4-room shack with no indoor plumbing. Placed in remedial classes and not viewed as college material, he had few options after high school except to join the US Army. Following his honorable discharge but having no employment skills, Lonnie's first job was as a janitor in an industrial shop. Life continued to be difficult. At times, he was almost homeless, had no reliable transportation, and only ate a half can of 'sweet peas' in the morning and the other half that evening.

Despite these hardships, Lonnie never forgot his mother's optimistic saying, **It Doesn't Matter Where You Start** "*It doesn't matter where you start...the important thing is where you finish.*" Fortunately, he did work his way up from being a janitor to become a certified welder, crane operator, QC inspector, computer-aided drafter, and senior HR/staffing recruiter. Today, Dr. Howard is in his second college presidency and has achieved remarkable outcomes increasing enrollment, completion rates, governance, and helping to generate \$15.7M in auxiliary revenue. He first served as the President of Clover Park Technical College in Lakewood, Washington and is now the President of Lamar Institute of Technology in Beaumont, Texas.

To inspire students, Dr. Howard shares his story and mother's words:

"It doesn't [really] matter where you start." He goes on to add, *"With hard work, integrity, and education, anyone can achieve some measure of the American Dream."*

Lonnie did not graduate with an associate until age 36; less than 12 years later, he had a total of five college degrees: AAS, AGS, BS, MS, and PhD (University of Texas at Austin). Dr. Howard also completed postdoctoral training in strategic business management (Harvard University) and emerging leadership (Penn State University). His career progression has been rapid; serving in key teaching/administrative positions such as Faculty, Department Chair, Research Associate, Educational Consultant, Associate Vice President of Instruction, Vice President of Academic Affairs-Interim, Director of University Outreach, and Executive Director of the School of Continuing & Professional Studies at the University of Houston.

As a single parent, Lonnie adopted a toddler who had been previously sold for drugs at 3-weeks old. Now age 24, his son (Matthew) is completing a PhD in English Literature.