

Biography

Dr. Lonnie L. Howard

It Doesn't really Matter where You Start



The son of a SE Texas sharecropper, Lonnie's life started in a 3-room shack with no indoor plumbing. Placed in remedial classes and not viewed as college material, there were few options for him after high school. Because of a 'love of country,' Lonnie joined the U.S. Army. After an honorable discharge, his first job was as a janitor in an industrial shop. Life continued to be hard. He had no reliable transportation, almost homeless, and only ate a half can of sweet peas in the morning and the other half that evening.

Lonnie overcame these challenges, worked his way up from being a janitor to become a certified welder, a computer-aided drafter, and then moved into the HR area. However, still feeling educationally unfulfilled and struggling to earn a degree, he did not graduate with an associate until age 36. But less than 12 years later, he had completed a total of five college degrees: AAS, AGS, BS, MS, and PhD (University of Texas at Austin) with a 4.0 GPA. In addition, Dr. Howard went on to attend *postdoctoral training* in Emerging Online Leadership (Penn State University) and Strategic Business Management (Harvard University).

Amazingly, at the same time Lonnie was completing his education, he did a single-parent adoption of a toddler who had been sold for drugs at 3-weeks old and also began working in higher education. His career began as an adjunct (part-time) welding instructor but he rapidly progressed to serve in key (full-time) leadership positions ranging from Department Chair to College President. In fact, having remarkable success, this is his second college presidency. He was first President at Clover Park Technical College in Lakewood, Washington and now is the President of Lamar Institute of Technology, which is a member of the Texas State University System.

To inspire others, Dr. Howard says:

"It doesn't really matter where you start at in life. I believe with hard work, integrity, and education, anyone can achieve some measure of the American Dream."