**Eddie N. Moore**

**Working with Dad**

My earliest work experiences were at my dad's store. I just really appreciated hanging around my dad and I found early on if I didn't go to work with him, which he was a merchant and sold fish and produce that, I didn't see him very often, so I would wake up early in the morning and get in the passenger seat of his truck and we'd go to the food distribution center and buy the greens, buy the fish, buy the fresh fruits, bring it back to the store, open up and I was always able to count very well, I guess that's why I ended up an accountant and I'd end up on an orange crate running the cash register for him because he trusted me not to steal anything out of the cash register. More than anything else, the experience of working with my father taught me people skills, every customer that came in the store was different. Their goal was to spend as little as possible. My goal was to get them to spend as much as possible. So you had to learn what I'll call charm and grace, or salesmanship and how to interact with sometimes difficult people. I believe that experience was just extremely valuable and meaningful for me and I think my last speech at Virginia State, I said that everything I needed to know about management, I learned at Eddy's market.

**Choosing Penn State**

At my high school at the time, once you were admitted to a college, you started wearing their paraphernalia. The people I identified with were wearing Penn State paraphernalia. I applied to Penn State, North Carolina State, and Howard University. I was accepted to all three, but Penn State actually, at that time was the least expensive of the three and I've been frugal, if not cheap, all of my life and I selected Penn State. I got this telegram on like a Thursday that said if you could put together $475 and be here by Sunday, you're admitted for the Summer Session at Penn State. To this day, I don't know how my dad did that in 1965, that was a large sum of money, but he did it and in brown paper bag with a rubber band around it, I came up with $475 in cash and mom and my sister and her husband, no her fiancé at that time brought me up to Penn State. The interesting thing is I was paired with someone who later admitted that he had never seen a live, in-person African American and he was from central Pennsylvania. So, I think he had the experience more than I did. I just rolled with it.

**Gaining Brothers**

I had an early experience on campus coming in the summer that there weren't as many underclass students, particularly African American as there were upper-class students, so we sort of got adopted by three Deltas who sort of showed us the ropes of campus and the do's and the don'ts and that was extremely helpful and of course, all of their boyfriends were Omegas, so they were recruiting us for Omega Psi Phi, which I ended up pledging and joining and becoming a member. I didn't have any brothers. I had no natural brothers, so this brotherhood had a lot of interest to me because I did not have a first hand experience, so the members of Omega Psi Phi truly became my brothers and we have been brothers for life and many of them, as well as some other fraternities at my retirement gala all came down. It was close to 20 people from Penn State days that came to Richmond to send me off into retirement. It was very moving.

**A Memorable Experience**

The James Brown concert stood out because it was at the time where he had his I guess famous anthem, "I'm Black an I'm Proud" and of course, the African American students, I think, at least I did, wanted him to sing it and he was sensitive to the crowd and he did and he adjusted the words for both crowds. He sang the song the way he wrote it, but he said now, some folks, the African Americans, you get to say "I'm Black and I'm proud" and for the other folks in here, you just get to say "mmm-mm" and I thought it was cute the way he handled it, because it had the potential to be a very tense situation.

**Attitude Adjustment**

I didn't come with the right attitude, I don't believe. I was trying to just get through this, survive, maintain a 2.0 or better, graduate, and let's see what happens next. After all, I plan on going into the Army, and maybe somewhat fatalistic attitude of, "well, I'm going to Vietnam. That's kind of dangerous. So who knows what's going to happen. So all I really need to do is finish, get this Lieutenant bar, and let's see what's next." It was a very bad attitude and I tell students now that that's not the right way to pursue college. Fortunately, the light sort of went on my senior year, late in my senior year and turned it around. Had a very above average military career - brief, which gave me an opportunity that my academics probably hadn't earned, but my world experience had earned and was admitted to Pitt for graduate school and that is where I really demonstrated probably the type of student I should have been as an undergraduate.

**Taking the Helm at Virginia State**

Very little of life contribution until that point was addressed toward the African American community. Virginia State had a horrible reputation. Their books could not be audited. Their administration was terrible. The campus was in real disarray and the then Governor Wilder and the board decided that it was better to get things straight - meaning administratively, than it was to continue on a path that might have made Virginia State Morris Brown, before Morris Brown became Morris Brown. Meaning, a closed University that lost all of its Federal funding. So, we went in there with a goal of turning around the administrative responsibilities and the financial responsibilities and that was accomplished in about 3 years, so as, you might suspect, the faculty said, okay, we don't need this guy anymore. And we had a real turbulent period with the faculty from about year 2 to year 5, but we straightened that out, and I received an inspirational speech from Fred Humphries, long time President of Tennessee State and Florida A&M about what have you done? The sacrifices that have been made in the middle crossing, taking a culture, a race that was considered uneducated, un-educatable, say in the early 1900s, bringing them through an average of high school, bringing them through the opportunities to go to college, but what had you done after that? And Virginia State had not done very much. It made great strides probably through the early 70s and sort of just plateaued out and it caused me, the non-academician to say, we're going to change. We're going to do more research; we're going to become a research-centered institution. We're going to offer terminal degrees and we're going to move up the food change. And we started on a course; say about 7 years into my administration, developed something called the 20/20 plan. We thought it was cute. The year 2020, nobody does a 17 year strategic plan, but we did and 20/20 is allegedly perfect vision, so we were saying, what does this university - what do we want to be in the year 2020? And we set a path and by 2010, we had accomplished about 70% of the things that we had laid out in our plan when I left office. So, I am very, most proud of the financial reputation the university now has, the fact that it does offer terminal degrees now and the little guy with only a Masters was the President that was able to fight that battle and get that through. Endowment is on very solid ground, the academic reputation is much higher than it was, and the student body is performing at a much higher rate. So, all of that came together and that's the why. My sister went here to Virginia State, I had aunts and uncles on the faculty of Virginia State, I just felt that it was the perfect opportunity for me to make a contribution and to turn around an institution that our family had great ties to.

**Advice to Students**

I think perseverance is the most important thing I could tell a student. It's not always going to be easy. It's not always going to be in the timeframe that you might expect, but to stick with it and endure the race until the end. I would also tell them it is important to have a reasonable amount of fun in life. It shouldn't be the center of your life to have fun, but I remember my mother, when I came home with those just, horrible grades, saying okay, you've had the fun now, go to work. And I do believe all work and no play makes Johnny a dull boy, but you've played enough. And I expected a much worse outcome than that, so I felt that I needed to straighten up a little bit. Again, I would say you would need to set goals and targets and you need to understand that they should be revised as you get more information. I mean, I love that all children want to be fireman, policemen, astronauts, cowboy player, major league baseball player, basketball player, but as you get more information about it really takes, you should reassess your goals and maybe modify them once in a while. So, I think re-assessment, self-assessment is really good. And, I think education is a life-long experience. Even if you're not in a formal education environment, you need to continue to go to seminars and meetings and listen to speakers and cultural events so that you continue to round out your education always. Make the most of the opportunity they have. They are attending one of America's finest universities. There is a wonderful education opportunity that is respected throughout the country and that they should make the most of this opportunity and remember that they represent this university and all others that they'll attend in everything that they do going forward. There is really something to this alma mater and everything you do represents in part, The Pennsylvania State University.

**College as Practice**

The college experience is about practicing. Preparing yourself for what's going to happen in the world. If you think you're going to be a businessman, them maybe you ought to practice carrying a bag around campus while you're here. Wearing a necktie, a suit once in a while. Etiquette banquets. You need to practice. You need to prepare. What Penn State did is it prepared me for the real world. I mean, Penn State - we were told there were 191 African Americans here out of 25,000 students when we came. Occasionally, we would sit around the fraternity house when we had nothing else to do and try to develop that list. We never got past 110 on the list. So, we never believed the University's count, but when you're in a society like that, it really prepared me for dealing with the military, where I was always the only African American officer in a battalion of officers. It prepared me for Gulf Oil Corporation where I probably - actually, the only other African American in the accounting department was a Penn State graduate also. So it prepared me for the environment that I was going to face that was not balanced in any way. So, you know, as recently as this meeting I just referenced, I walked into a room with 20 other board members. Members of corporate boards, which I happen to be on 2 corporate boards, and I was the only African American in the room and someone said that I won't join a board unless it has this, unless it has that. And I told them, I said, you know, if I took that attitude, I wouldn't sit in most of the rooms I've been in. I feel it's my obligation to sit in these rooms so that others have an opportunity to come behind me and sit in the rooms. So I accept or I impose a burden on myself to continue to create opportunities for others - even at this point. I'm constantly looking for ways to make our boards more diverse. More diversity in the boards, to create opportunities for young people to come along and get the experiences they need so that they can excel later in life and I just think that that has to be done. So it's the uplift, another one of our principles. You're responsible for uplifting your community. You always should accept that role and never forget it.