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~Recognizing Powerful Role Models~

THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE’S COLOR OF SCIENCE PROGRAM PRESENTS

4G: Four Generations of African American Male STEM Role Models
HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE STRONG LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCIAL ROLE MODELS FOR YOUNG MEN OF COLOR

Philadelphia, PA, March 21, 2016 — Four generations of accomplished African American male STEM role models, passionate about science and technology, come together to share their powerful stories of success, the impact that being a minority has had throughout their STEM career journey, and their personal insight into why African American male role models are so critical to inspiring and guiding the next generation of leaders during The Color of Science program, April 1-2. Now in its sixth year, The Color of Science is designed to increase awareness of the significant contributions that women and persons of color have in science and technology, and illuminate the need for diversity within the scientific and engineering arenas. The two-day free event provides direct exposure to some of today’s most influential and proficient scientists and engineers, spotlighting their successes while showcasing the infinite opportunities available in a wide spectrum of STEM fields. Each year, The Color of Science chooses a theme, and in 2016 The Franklin Institute is highlighting African American males in response to President Barack Obama’s mentoring initiative, My Brother’s Keeper.

“President Obama issued a call to action to America’s leading organizations and The Franklin Institute through The Color of Science program is responding,” explains Dr. Frederic Bertley, Senior Vice President of Science and Education at The Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, who conceived of The Color of Science program. “Our hope is that by showcasing a range of four generations of accomplished African American role models, their various struggles and the hard work that led to their success, not only will young boys and men of color see that there are ladders of great opportunity and that they too can build their own future, but the larger society will see that these role models exist and hopefully this will also inspire others to recognize the great value of becoming a mentor.”

The event begins on the evening of Friday, April 1 with a powerful discussion among the four generations of inspiring role models. From an astrophysicist to the inventor of the electret microphone (used in all cell phones today), to the Senior Vice President of the United Negro College Fund, to a young budding engineer who came through the ranks of The Franklin Institute’s Youth Programs; the four featured scientists/engineers openly share personal stories of their STEM career journey before engaging in a group discussion around the pressing need for positive male role models for today’s African American youth, followed by an informal public reception. The event continues on Saturday, April 2 with Your Passport to the Color of Science, an expanded spectrum of diversity around gender and race, where the Friday night panelists join a wider range of scientists and engineers at stations throughout the museum exhibits to engage visitors and invited students in demonstrations that represent the foundational concepts of their specific area of expertise. Among the ten scientists participating on Saturday are The Franklin Institute’s Environmental Scientist, Dr. Raluca Ellis, Forensic Scientist Antoinette Thwaites, and GE Design Engineer Ginini Vitucci.

The Color of Science is developed and presented by The Franklin Institute in partnership with The Garvey Institute, with support from the PNAA Foundation, The Lomax Family Foundation and The Franklin Institute’s youth programs, a suite of science enrichment, career development, and youth leadership programs available to under-served students in the Greater Philadelphia region. Since its inception in 2011, the program has seen tremendous growth with iterations taking place in cities across North America and Canada.

The Color of Science two-day event at The Franklin Institute includes:

Friday, April 1 | 6:00pm
One-on-one conversational interviews and an intriguing panel discussion moderated by The Franklin Institute’s Chief Astronomer Derrick Pitts, featuring:

Dr. James West, Engineer, Inventor
Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Johns Hopkins University
2010 Benjamin Franklin Laureate
Dr. Larry Gladney, Astrophysicist  
Associate Dean of Natural Sciences  
Chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Pennsylvania

Dr. Chad Womack, Scientist  
Director, STEM Initiatives  
UNCF

Mr. Kirk Butler, Mechanical Engineer  
Senior Field Engineer, PCL Construction  
Franklin Institute PACTS (Partnerships for Achieving Careers in Technology and Science) youth program alumni

Saturday, April 2 | 9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Your Passport to The Color of Science

Accomplished scientists and engineers stationed throughout the exhibits to engage and interact with invited students and visitors.

9:30am: The Color of Science Laboratory

Students and young museum visitors travel through the museum receiving passport stamps as they take part in science demonstrations by a number of leading scientists.

12:30pm: Lunch-to-Go with the Scientists (invited students and youth groups only)

Students grab a snack to eat and mingle with the featured scientists and engineers before they explore the rest of the museum.

The event on Friday is free and open to the public, however space is limited. Advance registration is required; please visit https://www.fi.edu/color-science. Saturday’s lunch is for invited students only; museum visitors are invited to interact with the featured scientists throughout the museum.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

Video: The Color of Science  
Hi-Resolution Photos: The Color of Science 2015

THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE

Located in the heart of Philadelphia, The Franklin Institute is a renowned and innovative leader in the field of science and technology learning, as well as a dynamic center of activity. Pennsylvania’s most visited museum, it is dedicated to creating a passion for learning about science by offering access to hands-on science education. For more information, visit www.fi.edu.