



This article has been kindly written by Dr. Kenneth Wilson, EAST's Equity, Quality & Inclusion Work Group Co-Lead: Mentorship, Dialogue & Collaboration
Associate Professor, Trauma and Acute Care Surgery
Deputy Director, Trauma Center
The University of Chicago Medicine & Biologic Sciences

Dear members of EAST:

It is with sadness that we say good-bye to a soldier for social justice this Memorial Day weekend, William Lynn Weaver, MD, FACS, who passed away this May 26th, 2019. The 2019 EAST Plenary Session on Equity, Quality & Inclusion was highlighted by the appearance of Dr. Weaver ("Lynn"), former Surgical Chair of the Morehouse School of Medicine. Dr. Weaver, the elder statesperson of the plenary discussants, had a life's story extending back to being raised in the Jim Crow South, and being a teenage participant during the volatile integration of his all white schools in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1964. Dr. Weaver chose not to share the sting of racism, death threats or segregation at the meeting. Instead, Dr. Weaver highlighted his uncanny friendship with a southern gentleman from Eufala, Alabama, by the name of Martin L. Dalton Jr., M.D., FACS. Dr. Dalton was the Chair for the Department of Surgery at Mercer University Health Sciences Center in Macon, Ga. when Dr. Weaver became Chair of the Department of Surgery at Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, Ga. in 1995. The differences in their southern backgrounds in no way played a limiting factor in a friendship that allowed both Army veterans to formulate a plan to introduce Dr. Weaver into societies that had historically excluded the membership of African Americans. This message of mentorship resonates with the goals of the equity and inclusion model discussed at our Austin EAST meeting.

Dr. Weaver fully accredited the Morehouse Department Surgery Program during a tumultuous introduction of the surgical program into Grady Memorial Hospital, once exclusively under the auspices of Emory University. Despite unequal and often duplicitous treatment, Dr. Weaver held the belief that African American surgeons should be allowed to fully care for African American patients at the "Gradys". "The Gradys" is a term still used by Black patients denoting the unequal medical care received prior to the desegregation of Grady Memorial Hospital. Dr. Weaver could depend upon words of encouragement from Dr. Dalton, especially when addressing the lack of parity at Grady Memorial Hospital or when establishing a new surgical program juxtaposed to Emory University, with its storied past and national reputation. Dr. Weaver embraced the adage of his iconic mentor Lasalle D. Leffall, Jr. MD, FACS (the first African American ACS President in 1979, who sadly also passed away a day prior to Dr.

Weaver's passing, on May 25th, 2019), "equanimity under duress". It was the correct composure to lay down the cornerstone of change that allowed for the combination of the Morehouse and Emory trauma programs at Grady Memorial Hospital, some twenty years later.

Dr. Weaver accomplished many firsts despite a past of sanctioned exclusion. He became the first African American President of the Southeastern Surgical Society, Southern Surgical Association, and the Georgia Chapter of the ACS. He is also a past-President of the Society of Black Academic Surgeons. During their combined tenures as surgical chairs at Howard University School of Medicine and Morehouse School of Medicine, respectively, both Drs. Leffall and Weaver are accredited with the mentorship and training of a significant number of African American surgeons currently still in practice.

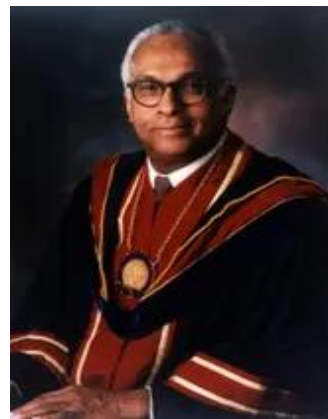
As EAST4ALL, we are privileged and humbled to know that Dr. W Lynn Weaver's final public speaking engagement was with us, the EAST family. Dr. Weaver's illumination of being embraced by Dr. Martin L. Dalton as a mentee and friend serves as a reminder as to how mentorship and sponsorship can establish firmer footing for those who possess both talent and bravery. Dr. Weaver clearly outlined how help from a mentor gave light to his path. The surgical world lost a surgeon-educator this Memorial Day weekend. As we have honored all who have served our nation, as did Drs. Weaver and Dalton, let us honor Dr. William Lynn Weaver again for his kindness and mentorship while propelling equity and inclusion forward.



Dr. William "Lynn" Weaver



Dr. Martin L. Dalton Jr.



Dr. Lasalle D. Leffall, Jr.



Dr. Weaver with Dr. Williams
(EAST4ALL co-chair) at the 32nd EAST
Annual Scientific Assembly

Podcast info & NPR interview here:

<https://brianwilliamsmd.com/blog/2019/blazing-a-trail-for-black-men-in-medicine-w-dr-william-lynn-weaver>

<https://www.npr.org/2017/08/25/545848025/-people-helped-you-whether-you-knew-it-or-not>

#EAST4ALL: An Introduction to the EAST Equity, Quality, and Inclusion Task Force

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/31058750>