

# JAMES H. GILLIAM, SR. FELLOWSHIP

Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League

2019

## What is the James H. Gilliam, Sr. Fellowship?

To quote the current Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League CEO, Eugene Young, the James H. Gilliam, Sr. Fellowship is a program designed to give forward-thinking, ambitious millennials “game”. It is an intensive 10-month program in which selected individuals learn valuable skills, such as developing a personal narrative and how to conduct a one-on-one meeting; meet with key state game-changers, such as Secretary of Labor Cerron Cade and State Representative Melissa Minor-Brown; and learn how to advocate for policy change. Within this particular cohort, fellows have announced political campaigns, established statewide organizations, and made personal advances within their respective careers.

*“Don’t go where you want; go where you are needed.”*

*- Raheemah Jabbar-Bey*

## James H. Gilliam, Sr.

The namesake of the fellowship was a man of great dignity and honor. As a life-long advocate, he established the Urban League in the state of Delaware; furthermore, he founded one of the few leagues in the country to be advocacy based as opposed to direct services. His work within and outside of the League helped pave the way for state leaders, like Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester and the president-elect of Delaware State University Dr. Tony Allen, to have access and opportunities in their respective careers. As fellows we are honored to continue his work.



James H. Gilliam, Sr.

## In This Issue

- What is the James H. Gilliam, Sr. Fellowship?
- Who is James H. Gilliam, Sr?
- Fellow Testimonies
- Legislative Policy Conference
- Last Will & Testament



Fellows with Secretary of Labor Cerron Cade

## Fellow Testimony: Lovely Lacy

I think I have realized my potential is far greater than what I was imagining. I have also realized that the skills I already possess have been enhanced by the fellowship. I take something valuable away from not only each speaker but the other fellows. Each fellow perspective has given me a new view of how I view the world. I am forever grateful for the discussions and outside classroom experiences.

## Fellow Testimony: Kailyn Richards

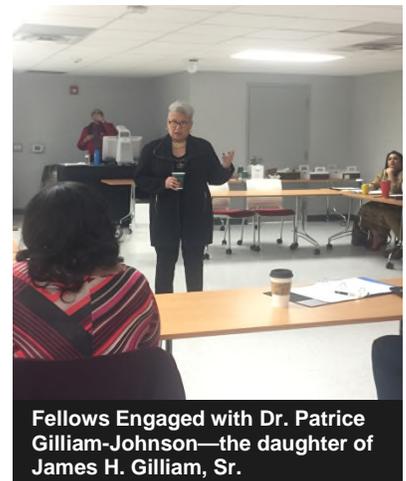
The Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League James H. Gilliam, Sr. Fellowship Program has provided me with the resources, skills, and support I need to excel professionally. Through the fellowship program I have been able to cultivate relationships with current fellows, alumni, and professionals that has led to new opportunities. JGFP introduced me to leaders across all sectors whose personal and professional narratives have played a major role in the overall impact of the fellowship.

## Fellow Testimony: Jasmine Smith

The fellowship has taught me how to navigate spaces that I didn't have access to prior. Furthermore, it's taught me valuable skills that I can use across many different platforms; such as facilitating, conducting a one-on-one meeting, and writing a personal narrative. Besides what the fellowship has taught me, it has granted me the opportunity to work with many other great young professionals in the state. I've learned from them all and developed many meaningful relationships with them.

## Fellow Testimony: Fahtyma Lee

This fellowship has given me so much hope. Living in this society can be so discouraging and defeating but joining this program has shown me that there are people fighting for equality and all things right. I'm so glad to be a part of this.



Fellows Engaged with Dr. Patrice Gilliam-Johnson—the daughter of James H. Gilliam, Sr.

*There's an African proverb that says "The young bird does not crow until it hears the old ones." Now — I'm not calling any of my elders old, but experiencing the wisdom of the speakers and leaders throughout the Gilliam Fellowship has allowed me to find my voice in advocacy in ways previously inconceivable. This is a program that meets your leadership where you are and prepares you to fly just a little higher.*

**- Kyle Sheppard**

## State of Black America

2019's State of Black America, "*Getting to Equal: United Not Divided*" takes a focused look at how policy has and continues to divide Black Americans from the general population.

Focus was also placed on the influence of social media during the 2016 presidential election. While many of us use social media without thought, it was noted that social media is a powerful tool in the undermining of political power amongst the African-American community and must be addressed.

Moreover, SOBA provided readers with noteworthy information such as states with restrictive voting laws, states with ongoing litigation regarding voting rights, and states with expansive bills introduced or carried over.

The State of Black Union can be found through the following website: [http://so-ba.iamempowered.com/sites/so-ba.iamempowered.com/files/SOBA19G2E\\_NUL-SOBA-2019-ExecutiveSummary\\_FINAL%20COPY.pdf](http://so-ba.iamempowered.com/sites/so-ba.iamempowered.com/files/SOBA19G2E_NUL-SOBA-2019-ExecutiveSummary_FINAL%20COPY.pdf)



## Legislative Policy Conference

Fellows had the opportunity to travel to DC and attend the legislative policy conference in May, which was hosted by Marc Morial, the president of the National Urban League. During LPC, at the State of Black Union, conversation was held regarding Russian interference of the 2016 presidential election and how the African-American community was specifically targeted and affected.

Marc Morial was clear in his assertion that “the right of African-Americans to vote—our right to participate in the civic processes of this nation—quite simply is under attack.”

Through these conversations, it became evident that among several items of actions to be taken, trust needs to be re-established in the voting process. Furthermore, policies need to be enacted to protect the votes in communities otherwise disregarded and disenfranchised. By means of an expert panel, recommendations were made as to address and correct infringement on voters' rights. One particular recommendation that was proposed was to eliminate discriminatory voter ID requirements. Another was to grant statehood for DC to grant its citizens full voting rights.

Through this engaging field trip, fellows were able to witness first-hand the significance of policy and policy analysis.

# LAST WILL & TESTAMENT

One aspect of being a fellow is engaging with different speakers and receiving valuable information that they provide. One speaker that resonated strongly with the fellows is Senator Margaret Henry Rose. While speaking on her illustrious career, she also described how she passed her senate seat to her successor with a Last Will and Testament. As the second cohort of the James H. Gilliam, Sr. Fellowship, we leave the following for our successors:

## Make the most out of your experience.

The fellowship is what you make of it. Relationships were forged, coalitions were created, and careers were strengthened. The beauty of the entire 10 month experience was that any thought that we had could be materialized with the support of the program coordinators, speakers, and even other fellows. This allowed for many dynamic opportunities.

Do not allow differences of opinions to influence relationships. Some of our most cherished relationships were with others that did not share the same philosophical beliefs that we held.

Maintain an open mind, attempt to learn something from every engagement, and always ask yourself what can you do. What can you do through the fellowship to further yourself, your family, your community, the fellowship, and the Urban League. Do not be satisfied with simply attending sessions. Challenge yourself to find opportunities outside of the fellowship that align with its mission. Push every boundary.

## Receive game.

Enjoy the journey. Work hard. Do not let any opportunity slip away.



## Thank You!

We would like to thank the program coordinators, Eugene Young and Drew Serres for allowing each one of us the opportunity to participate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> James H. Gilliam, Sr. Fellowship. We also would like to thank all of the speakers who took time out of their days to impart their experiences and wisdom to us.

Apryl Walker

Michele Roberts

Raheemah Jabbar-Bey

Rabbi Yair Robinson

Secretary of Labor Cerron Cade

H. Raye Jones Avery

Zach Phillips

Dr. Guillermina Gonzalez

Senator Margaret Rose Henry

Karen Lantz

Paul Calistro

Lisa Minutola

Jon Offredo

Charlie Copeland

Theré DuPont

Representative Melissa Minor-Brown

Dr. Patrice Gilliam-Johnson

Jeffrey Richardson

Dr. Tony Allen

Angela Walker

Kimoko Harris

Christian Willeaur

Tamarra Morris

Matthew Albright

Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester

Senator Chris Coons

Jordan Haedtler

Paul Brathwaite