



Thaddeus H. Spratlen 5/1930 – 5/2021

Thaddeus H. Spratlen Celebration of Life

Tuesday September 28, 8:30-10:30

University of Washington Kane Hall Rm 220

4069 Spokane Ln, Seattle, WA 98195

8:30-9:00 am: Jazz Prelude

9-10:30 am: Celebration of Life

Drumming: Khalfani Mwamba

Welcome: Pamela Spratlen

Poem: Patricia Spratlen Etem

Engagement: Paula Spratlen Mitchell

Remembering Papa Spratlen: Gayle Robinson

Acapella performance: Townsend Price Spratlen

Video Tribute: Elise Y. Etem

WWU alumni student: Paul Merriman

MAP & Diversity Initiatives: Diane Martin

Spratlen Awardee: Robiel Isaac

Consulting & Business Development Center: Michael Verchot

UW President Introduction: Pamela Spratlen

UW President: Ana Mari Cauce

Family Generational Legacy: Emerson Albert Spratlen Etem,
Elise Y. Etem, Martin Alexander Spratlen Etem, Thaddeus Elbert Mitchell

Come Ye Disconsolate: Roberta Flack, Donny Hathaway

10:30: Drumming Processional: Khalfani Mwamba

Reception, Foster School of Business (Paccar Hall/Denny Yard)

With deep appreciation to these communities: UW Foster, CBDC, & OMAD, former colleagues, students & awardees, Mary Mahoney PNO, MASE Studio music and art curation & the Celebration of Life family planning team

My Life Journey, Thaddeus H. Spratlen

My life has been a journey up from down South. I was born in Tennessee to an entrepreneurial mother and a father who was a college educated minister. In high school I became a member of the National Honor Society and as a senior was elected class president, while overcoming the hardship of transitional housing - living with three separate families in four years.

I was awarded an academic tuition scholarship to Kent State in Ohio, and while I soared academically, the financial burden of covering expenses, in spite of working, became too burdensome. I left to join the Army in 1948 and was trained as a Signal Corps radio operator. Following that training I was admitted to Officers Candidate School and was sent to Camp Pickett Virginia. There, I met Lois Price, a nursing student at Hampton Institute. We were married in September 1952. Following OCS graduation, in November, I deployed to Korea as an artilleryman for a year; and returned, eligible to complete college funded by the GI Bill.

I attended Ohio State University and earned my BS in Business Administration and my Master's in International Economics. Yet, with two degrees in Ohio, I remained underemployed, therefore I elected to pursue a PhD. I remained at OSU, and completed the PhD in Marketing program, after being denied admission to the department of Economics. Financial stressors remained, hence I applied for university positions in the north. I became the first African American male hired at Western Washington State College in Bellingham and began teaching in 1961.

At WWSC (now WWU) I embraced academic activism in many forms; opposing the Vietnam War, and with Lois, helped organize Citizens for Civil Rights, and the Ethnic Studies Program. In addition to becoming tenured, I was elected President of Faculty Council, and achieved tenure. However, in 1969 we opted to expand Lois' opportunities, and moved to LA, where she completed a master's in urban planning, and I eventually gained tenure, both of us at UCLA. We continued in academic activism; advocating for Affirmative Action, an African American Studies program, and I researched and testified at federal senate hearings in support of South Los Angeles Equity in Economic Development programs, initiatives, infrastructure, and funding.

In 1972, seeking better professional opportunities, Lois and I moved to Seattle; I was hired as Associate Professor of Marketing at University of Washington. I focused my teaching on retail and marketing management, developing a project-based learning model. The defining opportunity came in 1995 as I became the Founding Director of the Business and Economic Development Program, combining my interests in equity, economic development, project-based learning, capacity building with inner-city businesses, access to technical assistance and capital, expanding higher education achievement for African American and diverse students (PhD Project, NEA, GO-MAP, ABBS) and multi-cultural marketing.

In legacy and life, I'm most proud of what Lois and I accomplished together in our 60 years of marriage; raising children, family, community, and collective commitment to meaningful causes.



Please visit Foster's Spratlen Celebration of Life website to learn more about Dr. Spratlen's legacy and impact:



SCAN ME

Donations in lieu of flowers are requested for the Thaddeus Spratlen Endowment, Consulting and Business Development Center, or to the Mary Mahoney Professional Nurses Organization.