



# Raymond A. Mason School of Business

WILLIAM & MARY

DIVERSITY GOES TO WORK PODCAST

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## **EPISODE 29: TYE ASKEW – FIRST GEN LEADERSHIP: PERSPECTIVES FROM A FGLI STUDENT LEADER**

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### **Tye Askew**

I can't sugarcoat it. That's the reality of how it is. Again, people look at you. Opinion, observation, decide they want to give you opportunity. I realized that I can't control how people think of me. I can't force people to get to know me, but what I can do is control myself.

### **Phil Wagner**

Hello from the halls of the Mason School of Business here at William & Mary. I'm Phil, and this is Diversity Goes to Work. Buckle up because we're getting ready to take a deep dive into the real human lived experiences that shape and guide our diversity work in the world of work. Should be fun. Welcome, listeners, to yet another episode of Diversity Goes to Work. I'm particularly excited about today's guest, somebody who I know well. I've had the opportunity to work very deeply with somebody who I really think the world of. I'm joined today by Tyran Askew, who has been an MBA student with the College of William & Mary in the Raymond A. Mason School of Business for the past year. Tye was selected as a Major General James Wright Scholar, which is a prestigious lineage of scholars. He's joined our ranks. He's done some impressive work while here. Tye, it's an honor to have you on our podcast today. Tell our listeners a little bit about who you are, and then clarify some of your story for us. You've been a little bit here, there, and everywhere. You have an impressive leadership trajectory. Tell us who you are.

### **Tye Askew**

Yes, sir. Hi, sir. First and foremost, thank you for the opportunity. Dr. Phil has been a blessing to get to know you in a formal relationship with you as a person. Again my name is Tyran Askew. I'm a native of Virginia. I'm from south of Virginia. I grew up about an hour away from here. I grew up in a small neighborhood, Jericho, which is in Suffolk, Virginia. But throughout my first 18 years, I moved around a lot. We moved a lot. Whenever there was an opportunity, my mother packed up, and we went. So moved a lot. Bounced between Hampton, Newport News, back home to Suffolk, and just throughout the seven cities. After graduating high school, I made it out to Virginia State University. It's also where I enlisted in the US army and continue on four years. I've obtained my degree in Computer Science with a minor in mathematics, and I earned a commission as an army officer in a Signal Corps officer. And from there, it's been nonstop. So I commissioned in May of 2013, went to my basic officer course in June of 2013, completed that October. I became a platoon leader in Fort

Hood, Texas. And in January, I was in Afghanistan. So it was a very fast transition. It was extremely rapid, but I'm thankful for all of the opportunities that I was blessed with so far.

**Phil Wagner**

Excellent. So, Tye, we're here to talk about something that maybe our listeners have never even heard of before, particularly in the realm of DEI work. November 8th is commonly known as First Gen Day, and at the College of William & Mary, we use the acronym FGLI. So first, generation, low-income, which I think maybe might give some people pause, but our students have spoken very clearly. That is the label, that's the acronym, that is the designation they sort of want to use as a defining framework for us to talk about what it means to be kind of a trailblazer, a first-generation and or low-income student who really sort of breaks past previous boundaries and sort of takes life by the horns. Tye, you've got an amazing story, and I've heard it many times. You have shared it with MBA students, with undergrads. You've shared it in front of the President of William & Mary. Do you mind sharing a little bit about your story as a First Gen student with us? You've been involved in our FGLI initiatives in the Mason School. Do you mind defining what FGLI is in sort of your own experience and giving our listeners a little bit of your story as a FGLI student?

**Tye Askew**

Yes, sir. So FLGI First generation, low income. And I tell you, my FGLI story, I don't want to say is no different it's authentic because it's mine, but it's no different because we have thousands, if not millions, of FGLI students in our country. And the thing about being a first-generation low-income student, I tell you, sometimes we suffer that imposter syndrome, right? So I get first tip.

**Phil Wagner**

For sure.

**Tye Askew**

Teddy Roosevelt said he said people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. And I tell you, as a FGLI student, when I first graduated from high school, it wasn't until I got to my university I'm going to backtrack. Let's go back. So again. I'm from Suffolk, Virginia. Born and raised in Suffolk, Virginia. I'm from Jericho. And my FGLI story, again, is different. FGLI, you can come from poverty. You can be a farm hand, and if you have one bad harvest, then your family may suffer. You can be someone who just immigrated to the United States, and your parents are working hard to put you through college. There are so many different unique FGLI stories.

**Phil Wagner**

Right.

## **Tye Askew**

That it is very broad, but I tell you what, I feel like we all want the same thing, and that first thing is care. Again, I'm from Suffolk, Virginia. I grew up in Jericho, in the neighborhood I grew up in. I come from poverty. It's labeled as a low-income drug-infested neighborhood. And again, it's about a hour away from Williamsburg, a hour away from William & Mary. And I remember vividly, as a kid, some of the things I've seen, some of the things that shaped me to who I am. One of my vivid memories is I was seven to eight years old. I think it was 98, 99. We're on the corner playing basketball with my friends on Capital Street, and we see this man walking down the road, and he's covered in blood, and then he just drops in front of us, and he had got robbed coming through, coming through my neighborhood, he got robbed. And just being so young and watching that, it was kind of traumatic. And I still remember to this day because to this day, that taught me that life is very short. So sometimes I'll be out having fun, like, I have a blast, and it just crosses my mind that, man, one day I'm not going to be here anymore. Because I see we all went down one day. But it's also motivational because I know while I'm here, I want to make an impact as much as possible, right? So again, full circle being that first-generation low-income, I know that the neighborhood I come from it's not like where most people come from. And when you come to a university such as William & Mary, founded in 1693, the second oldest university behind Harvard, some will argue we are the first. It's kind of when you see these brick buildings, this historic, these landmarks. Sometimes you feel like I don't belong here, right? That impostor syndrome is real. And I tell you, even as an army officer with high confidence, I would not be telling the truth if I say it never crossed my mind, like, wow, I can't believe I'm here, right? So when it comes to being a FGLI student, a lot of times, you just want that care and support because growing up in my neighborhood, and where I come from, my high school career wasn't the best. I'll be completely honest with you. I'm from Virginia again. So I took the SOL Standard of Learning Test, and my cumulative GPA when I got accepted to college was a 1.9 GPA. The difference is that I had 600 in my English SOL, and I also had a perfect geometry SOL. So I was not a dump kid. It was just my environment. I prioritized different, like I prioritize the next day, opposed to, if I study hard right now, then I can possibly do this. It wasn't until something happened to me that had me in a hospital like I had to change. So, long story short, my aunt was like, you should apply for college, right? I always was going to go to the military, but she said you should take a step further to college. You have perfect SOLs. You have it in you. Just go. So me going to Virginia State University, founded March 6, 1882, Petersburg, Virginia. Historical Black College in Petersburg. That's where I went to. And I tell you, it was a blessing, right? Because as I said, I had a 1.9 GPA when I got accepted. But my first semester, with 21 credit hours, I pulled a 4.0. I've never seen it like, my transcript was A, A, A.

## **Phil Wagner**

Wow.

## **Tye Askew**

And the thing is, I tell you, is that for the first time, I was surrounded by a bunch of people who look like me, who inspired me, and motivated me to go the right way. You know, and

again in my neighborhood, I take pride in being from Jericho, and I had a lot of people older than me teach me how to do things, to make it to the next day, et cetera, et cetera. Jericho taught me how to survive, but when I got to college, they taught me how to live. So being at Virginia State University, having people that believe in you, again, that impostor syndrome here, these brick buildings, I see doctors, I see people who just something I was unfamiliar with. But I was sat down early and said I was told that these next four years will change your life if you want it to. This is going to be a transformational process. You have to believe in it, and you have to go along. But I tell you, it was hard, right because again, when you're a FGLI student, and I don't want to say this for all I don't want to speak for all of us, but when you're away at college that first year, those first two or three years, this stuff is still going on at home. And it's over time that you learn how to get over things, or something happens back home, and you push forward like, sadly, here I am at William & Mary, 31 years old now, and since I've been here, I've had people that I grew up with murdered, people locked up. I'm getting phone calls, and then I have to make a presentation less than an hour later. But, you know, this is not 18 19 year old me. I would have handled it a lot differently. But that foundation helping me understand and just know I had a support system was key for me. So I say the first thing is care. FGLI students need care. Again, when I say care, knowing that you care about them, it goes a long way. Authenticity.

### **Phil Wagner**

No, no, go ahead. I kind of wanted to build on that thing of care and ask you, we can come back to authenticity, perhaps, because I also want to come back to I want to come back to something else you said too, but to the point of care. As somebody who's been there, what actions as a FGLI student particularly, of course, you're so much more than that, Tye. We take an intersectional perspective. I know there's so many different identity elements, but maybe more specifically, in line with FGLI, what were those actions that the people that poured into you that helped develop you in ways that were meaningful to you? What were those actions that really resonated, that did something for you, that helped turn that imposter syndrome around for you? Can you think of specific things that really helped that turnaround?

### **Tye Askew**

The biggest specific things in Virginia State University was people sitting down with me and actually sharing some of their story with me. Again, not knowing that you're not the only one. So when you see somebody who've been through what you've been through, be able to relate to you and see where they got to, it's amazing, right? And I fast forward here at William & Mary. Dr. Dawn Edmiston. She's a FGLI student. She's first generation.

### **Phil Wagner**

Yeah, she's a wonderful person too.

### **Tye Askew**

Just talking to Dr. Edmiston. She didn't come from a privileged background where everything was handed to her. Her family worked as well, and she had to build her way up. Seeing leaders,

like, again, I'm military, so chain of command is key. So when you see Dean Pulley, the dean of the business school, in our FGLI meetings, in our EIB meetings, participating in all these events, you see that leadership from the top supports the program. Then you know that just at the top man supported. You see that as a student. No, they really care about this. No, this isn't a check-to-block initiative. When you see the dean, you see Dr. Carlane, you see yourself. We see all of our professors actively participating. You see Dr. Chong's supporting programs. And when you see the entire staff as buy-in, your peers have buy-in. It makes you feel a lot more comfortable because people are willing to actually learn about you. They're not stereotyping you, per se. Because I was taught a long time ago that people look at you, they make an observation. From there, they formulate an opinion, and they decide if they want to give you an opportunity or not. And that's really how I think about a lot of things. But here, people see me. I'm perceived how I'm perceived. A lot of times, people really want to learn more. They really want to know about you. They really want to see you go and do great things and go forward. It's just a wonderful feeling when you look around. You feel that support all over. So that's pretty much it.

### **Phil Wagner**

I love it. Sharing the stories thing, I think that's such a pivotal theme sort of writ large in DEI work. You can't be what you can't see. And so when you wear that story on your sleeve, our own Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs, Kim Smith, as a FGLI student, has been so open about her experience and how that drives her understanding of student success. And so I'm very thankful that you've been willing to share your stories here, but I want to give you a chance to go back because you were talking about authenticity, which is also just another pivotal theme. You want to go back to that? I didn't mean to interrupt you, but this was a helpful rabbit trail.

### **Tye Askew**

Yes, sir. Authenticity piece. Dr. Phil, I look at you. I think the world of you. You're one of my

### **Phil Wagner**

Ditto, man, ditto.

### **Tye Askew**

top professors, and again, it's because you're authentic. You're a very authentic person. And I can think of a few instances, but I'm going to say it again. You're a very authentic person. So when people know that the person they're talking to is not putting up front or they're not, again, checking that block, but they truly care, that means a lot. And I tell you, as FGLI coming from our backgrounds, a lot of us, nonverbal communication is key, and over time, we learn how to read people and recognize people for who they are. So you kind of understand when somebody's in the military, we call it faking the fault when somebody's just doing what they have to do to, I guess, the Roni Rule, like the NFL, say, just looking at you, having a conversation with you say they know it. It's a lot different when people really want to know how can we help. And I'll tell you again. I keep saying I can say nothing but great things about William & Mary, especially the Raymond A. Mason School of Business, because I've seen it.

I've witnessed the different programs going on to make everyone feel comfortable, like the entire bigger than FGLI, but the entire population is welcome no matter who you are, and that's a lot. So authenticity from the top. Empathy that's another one.

### **Phil Wagner**

For sure.

### **Tye Askew**

I believe empathy is key because, you know, with some of the things we go through as FGLI students and me personally, like I said, I had a childhood friend. I know he lost his life a couple of months ago. And in the neighborhood neighborhood, my dad and my uncle live, so nobody knew what was going on. So I called out to my brother-in-law, who lives there. He was like, no, it wasn't your dad. It was somebody else. He was like. I tried my best to help him. He was like he just bled out. I tried to just having a conversation with someone you love, like, man. We got to get you out the neighborhood and then go into class. And so if I'm a little down that day, I'm not trying to push my hurt off on everyone else and tell them that they should be compassionate for me, but maybe they didn't know, okay, something's going on. All right. We'll work with this student and help them out and keep going.

### **Phil Wagner**

And I think it's a good reminder to leaders, right? So keep in mind you've got to take an empathy-oriented approach to your employees who are coming in every single day. You don't have the luxury of clocking in nine to five and forgetting about systemic racism or the violence that you've observed or the family issues that you carry in. So what I love about two things that you said is, yes, lead with empathy. But when we also lead with storytelling, it makes that empathy an individualized approach. It's not a blanket. It's not a giant bandaid, but it's very specific. You got to read the room. You got to know your employees. You got to develop those relationships. And I think that that's key. Tye, can I go back to the thing about imposter syndrome, because you said that the way you perceive yourself drives how we perceive others. I gotta be honest with you. I mean, you spoke flattery to me. Let me just return it to you. You are a top-notch student, like bar none. There's no caveat. You're a rock star in every way. Never, ever, ever would I have ever perceived you to be someone who feels a sense of imposter syndrome. You are confident. You are intelligent. You contribute relentlessly. I mean, you have an insight for everything in class. You're a model student. So talk to me a little bit about that imposter syndrome and either how you've overcome it or strategies that you've sort of implemented. Because again, I would have never, ever guessed you were anything less than 150% confident, never arrogant. Let me be clear here. You're very, very people-oriented, but, like, you're a confident leader. It's so clear. So how do you grapple with imposter syndrome? And how do you sort of perform in a way that rewrites that in your own head?

### **Tye Askew**

Again, being your authentic self that's something that you taught me. Over the years, I've been my authentic self for a while now, but actually understanding that and living it more to being

true to who I am and understanding. Right. So again, this is not anything directed towards William & Mary. Again, I love the school like. This is my second home, right? After Virginia State, this is my second home. But, you know, Monday through Thursday, I may come in with a suit dressed to the tee, tie clip, two-piece suit, nice oxfords. And then, on Fridays when we relax, I might come in with a polo shirt, pair of jeans, and pair of Jordans. And I tell you, Monday to Thursday people they wave are nice and hi. Friday, you see people move out the way a little bit more. I can't sugarcoat it. That's the reality of how it is. Again, people look at you opinion, observation, decide. They want to give you opportunity. I realized that I can't control how people think of me. I can't force people to get to know me, but what I can do is control myself, control who I am. And that the people who do know me. I want to make a good impression. Like, I want them to really get to know who I am. Because one thing we talk in the military is your reputation supersedes you. People see you, but once they hear about you and a lot of people start saying the same thing, and you know in your heart that you're doing everything to be righteous. I don't want to get controversial and start talking religion, but I believe in God. It could be Allah. It could be whoever your religion is. It could be your God. But I'm a firm believer that when God speaks a blessing, he's speaking on relationships. And I think that the relationships that I formed with people and the relationships that I continue to build have carried me a long way. I can lose everything I have. I can go dead broke. But I know if I call Dr. Phil once I lose it all, he's still going to be there for me to help pick me up.

### **Phil Wagner**

I'll spot you. I got you covered.

### **Tye Askew**

Being authentic to yourself, understanding who you are, and taking pride in who you are that's what really helped me get over the imposter syndrome. Like I said, even here at William & Mary, sometimes it's like, okay, keep on going. Go to class, get it done, and we're going to keep pushing forward and then giving back to others. That's another thing. But then we get into that a little later.

### **Phil Wagner**

Yeah, and I hear two things there. Right. So from a DEI practitioner lens, there is an imperative for us to sort of work in a professional development model that helps those who carry an imposter syndrome to help cultivate a sense that this is indeed just imposter syndrome, and it can be overwritten, but also at the same time, it's not a resiliency. I'm not trying to teach you how to be resilient. I need to change that Friday culture that you talk about as a DEI practitioner. That's on me. That, yes, support you. Help you realize you can overwrite those feelings of imposter syndrome but recognize there are cultural issues in place that are sort of driving those feelings too. And so I've got two levels of work here, and I can't lose sight that I got to really change that culture. So that can help sort of mitigate some of those feelings of imposter syndrome, too. This is such great insight. Let's pivot a little bit. So you were selected for a very prestigious MGJW fellowship here. Again, you're part of a long lineage of scholars who have gotten that fellowship, and it's in part because of your extensive leadership

experience in the Army. Can you tell us a little bit more about what you've learned about DEI while serving in uniform?

**Tye Askew**

Yes, sir. So my grandfather, he always told me, he said, Tyran go to the service. Service is going to change your life. And then Dee, another grandfather, he told me join the military to change your life. But the thing about Dee, which I love about Dee Dee still living down at Hampton University, right off of Aberdeen Road. I believe he's 89, and he went to the Korean War. 1951 I think he came home 1953. He told me when he came back. I have it on video. If you ever want to see it, I'll share it with you that he went to the Richmond bus station on his way home in uniform. Just came home from Korea. He said I would like a Pabst blue ribbon beer, a hot dog with nothing but mustard and onions. They told him in uniform, get out, go around back. We don't serve negros.

**Phil Wagner**

Oh, my goodness.

**Tye Askew**

But even then, he said, join the service because he knew, he always said, no matter what, like the service was different from traditional society. And I don't want to create separation, but I firmly believe that top 1% of the nations served in the military. That's what we like to say. We take pride in that. And since being in the military, when I enlisted in 2010, I remember my old First Sergeant saying, I don't see color, all I see is green. But I'll tell you, in these twelve years, over time, it's evolved. Because I tell you, as a company commander, I see color. I make sure that people know I see color. Right. Because I want you for who you are. Right. Because the idea, I don't see you as a person. I see you as a capability.

**Phil Wagner**

I love that it's such an important framing, Tye, as you know, in the DEI space. So important to see difference, to celebrate difference, to acknowledge difference. It helps us be more precise in our approach. So, yeah, I love that framing.

**Tye Askew**

And when we see color, we embrace each other, the different heritages. It's beauty in that, right?

**Phil Wagner**

Yeah.

**Tye Askew**

I read somewhere it's like a pot of gumbo. We take all these different ingredients, you mix it together, you come with something wonderful. So as a company commander, my XO was Italian. My Lt was Irish. His wife was a down-south sister from South Carolina. My platoon

Sergeant, just one of them Hispanic. I say all this to say our potlucks were amazing. We used to do stuff outside of work. Because in my profession, I can't think of many professions that they take anyone. If you say you want to serve, we put you together, and you've learned about each other, and it gets personal. Right. I can't think of many professions that you can possibly deploy thousands of miles away from home and never return. So, yeah, it's definitely professional. It's also personal. So we take the time to get to learn each other. We figure out who's who, who's good at what. And again, those potlucks it may seem like a simple meal, but no. Hey, what's that recipe? My grandmother taught me that. I never had lumpia before. This lumpia is amazing.

### **Phil Wagner**

Yeah.

### **Tye Askew**

My XO, hey, sir, I made this marinara sauce myself. And then XO, man, how did you make this? Learning about each other's cultures and the way we do things. And again, when people see that we care about each other's background, we acknowledge the differences, but we all understand that we do have a common purpose to support, defend the Constitution of the United States. You can't beat it, and just that DEIBA space in the military, that's exactly who we are. But I always add an extra letter. I added A we got the diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, but also acceptance. We want people to know that you're accepted for who you are. We praise that. We acknowledge all the differences because, again, our profession is so unique in what we do. And I'll never forget I was a company commander down the Third Infantry Division Fort Stewart when the George Floyd situation happened. And I had to get ahead of it early because when it happened. Calling it how it is, I had my white soldiers walking around with their heads down, and some of XOs were a little irritated. The entire company is just, whoa, what's going on here? So for the company back, we call it U shape we had a U-shaped formation. Take off your caps. Let's talk. And we just had to let the soldiers know what just happened is not a reflection of America. We're not going to be divisive. It's not going to create polarization. That's not a reflection of America. Individuals made a decision that wasn't the best decision, right? But as individuals, the idea of the racism and the policies, etc. Those are ideas. That's something that's abstract. You people, you're concrete. You can choose to believe what you want to believe. But if you believe ideologies like that, then you fall into that category. But I know my soldiers, most soldiers, we all care about each other, so we squash it. We understand each other, we accept each other, and we keep it moving. So, I mean, DEIBA is it's the military.

### **Phil Wagner**

You know, what I love about you army guys is I would think, I would think it would be my supposition that y'all would just throw the soft skills right out the window, right? No, I want all the technical stuff. You all legitimize what I do in the classroom quicker than anybody else because you get it right. It is all about relationships. Relationships establish communication context. It is context that drives the strategy we use to achieve results in communication. So,

no, I appreciate just that entire framing. I think it's particularly true in the DEIBA space. I love how the acronym continues to grow, and I'm here for it. Language is messy. Language grows. We pivot with it. I love thanks for sharpening us. So let's go back to giving back to the community. I want to ask you about that because you do, and you give so much back. You have given so much at William & Mary. Speak to some of your community service work that you do, the programs that you've developed, and you've done some great mentorship stuff. What drives your interest in pouring into young folks, particularly, you do a lot with middle schoolers giving back. Like, what drives those interests? Why do you do what you do?

### **Tye Askew**

To be completely honest, I do it because I wish somebody would have done it for me, and I could sit back and complain about what wasn't done, or I can make a difference about what was done. And my Aunt Geneva, Sally Geneva Hobbs. She's a Virginia State graduate as well. She was my second mom. Before cancer took her overtook control of her body, she had the entire family at her house. Like anybody in the neighborhood, you knew the routine. You were coming into Aunt Neva house, sitting at the kitchen table if it's breakfast time. You get yourself some corn pops, Apple Jacks. If it's lunchtime, you get a bologna and cheese sandwich with a bag of chips. But you're going to do basic math. You're going to do your basic reading comprehension, et cetera. She laid that foundation of education. So even though, like I said, we see drug race, or shot house race, or fight and all that, she would take us away from those environments and give us a book. So she had me reading *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. So with the world going on outside, I'm inside of the house, learning how he tricked one of his friends to paint a fence with, like, firecrackers or something along those lines, and just learning the essentials of Mark Twain, reading *Little House on the Prairie*, *Laura Ingles Wilders*, et cetera, et cetera, and that really helped me as a kid stay out of trouble and grow more. And it's kids all around the nation, across the world, who want that same opportunity. And being in Afghanistan in 2014, I never forget I saw a young kid, like eight or nine years old, in the middle of the day selling stuff with his family. I'm 22 years old, not knowing much, and I talk to my platoon sergeant. Hey, Serg, why that kid, not school? He said it's ain't America. He's doing what he can to feed his family. I'm like, this kid is eight years old. Then I go back home, and I got family members dropping out of school, right? So just seeing things like that, we got to fix it because I think a big misconception is that our way of life is guaranteed, that our democracy is going to stand. No, our democracy is a bunch of ideas, but it takes educated, strong people who believe in the country and believe in America. Americans, not this type of America who, believe in Americans. We depend on each other, right? So it ended up with a nonprofit that started off with, again, my Aunt Neva Sally Scholars. And I would award scholarships to young men and women going to Virginia State University. Since then, it's expanded, right? So we do. Sally scholars. That's the key initiative. And then we have, like, Carl's Crew, who's named after my grandfather. We go to the local middle school or any local school. Since I've been here at William & Mary, I've tutored the entire year, right? I may have missed a couple of sessions, take my son to soccer practice, but when I'm here. I'm talking to these kids because, in addition to tutoring, I'm talking to them about life. Let them know the decisions you make early will impact the rest of your life. Let them know the importance of

education, and you ever read this book and just sparking those conversations in my nonprofit again, TLA Seeds? The idea is to plant a seed. General McChrystal wrote a book, Team of Teams, and in his book, he talks of his leadership style of a gardener. Gardener, they plant seeds, they cultivate the soil, they water it, they remove any weeds, they make sure it grows, and at some point, it becomes a fruit-bearing tree which drops more seeds. So my logic, you know, I go out, and I can reach people. They reach more. So when I was in college, I went back to my high school. I got four people to come to Virginia State. They're now army officers. If they go back and get four more, you have 16. So again, I just want to make an impact. The local middle school tutoring, back-to-school drives, Sally Scholars, and I just want to keep expanding. I just want to help people because, again, we're here such a finite amount of time. It's not forever. I just want to make a lasting impact. I have a son now. I'm expecting another one in January. I want to make sure that the world they inherit is worth inheriting. I can sit back and complain from the sidelines, or I can do something about it.

### **Phil Wagner**

Gosh, you're so inspirational. So let me ask you, given your story, given all that you've been through, I don't think it would be a particularly selfish endeavor to say, I'm going to inspire others just by sort of focusing on me. I'm going to develop my own story. Let me be sort of a visible inspiration. You don't do that. I mean, you are such an inclusion-oriented leader. You are constantly giving back. Tell me a little bit about where you get that concept of inclusive leadership, particularly as one that pours back out into others. And then, if you can, can you give our listeners sort of tips or tricks or recommendations for how they can grow and develop in their own DEI leadership journey, developing their own inclusive leadership philosophy?

### **Tye Askew**

Earlier, I don't want to recant my statement, but earlier I said I wish people would have done it for me. And I'll tell you, my community, Jericho, they did a lot for me in the idea of African proverb that it takes a village to raise a child. My neighborhood raised me. And I remember one time I was throwing rocks at a train, and Miss Alice stayed on the corner. She called my mom, came, and popped me on my way home out in the rain. Saw me, asked me why I was crying. I told her why she popped me. By the time I get home, my mom's on the porch with a belt waiting for me, like, why are you going to the train? So this idea of reinforcing the concept, but in order for them to do that, they didn't care. They saw somebody in need. They saw somebody who needed guidance, and they provided it to them. So if you want to help out in the DEIB space, check your biases at the door. If you see someone who you think you can connect with, try to connect with that young person. But again, if you are the FGLI or minority if you seek that mentorship or guidance, you have to go out and ask for it as well. You can't always expect people to come to you, and you can't always expect that it's full duplex communication. You have to send and receive. So it's a partnership, right? The three ships I was taught, friendships, relationships, and partnerships, you maintain those three, keep them afloat. And that's the biggest thing is recognizing when there is someone who needs help, and it's simply helping them and doing it without bias.

## **Phil Wagner**

That's good. All right, so final question for November 8, First Gen Day, nationally, particularly, but also across the globe, I'm wondering, can you leave us with some final words to our FGLI listeners? Maybe students or people who are graduated? What words of inspiration can you give those folks on knowing your worth, overriding that imposter syndrome, and not just surviving but thriving in life and in the world of work?

## **Tye Askew**

So the first two I know plagiarism give this out to Nelson Mandela. *A Long Walk to Freedom* one of the best reads of books I've ever read. In that book, he said it was not the lack of ability that limited my people. It was a lack of opportunity. Mainly for FGLI, minority, no matter who you are, if you find your ways in college, specifically William & Mary, I tell you, you have the opportunity to change your life. And by getting here, it shows that you have the ability. You just have to believe in yourself and actually do it. And Nelson Mandela also said that education is the most powerful weapon in which you can use to change the world. I believe that. My uncle and I, we have conversations all the time, and he tells me there's three things that prevent us from growing as people, as a nation. He says it's poverty, ignorance, and racism. Right? So poverty, poorness a lot of crimes are committed cause people don't have money. Sadly, people do whatever they think is necessary to get out of poverty. It may not be the right decision. And then ignorance. People have certain perceptions of people when they see the world a certain way because they're too ignorant to really understand or attempt to understand exactly the full story, right? And then the whole racism piece, I think we understand that, right? When I say racism, most people immediately think white against black. No. When I say racism, I mean holistically. You see black lives matter. You see the, stop Asian hate. I've seen white people get discriminated against. What you're doing over here is such and such. All the ignorant racist has to stop. Because I tell you, we all get cut. We are going to bleed red, right? There are differences in the culture. There are differences in religious. But at the end, we all people. If you ask me Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, you start them off at the basic level. I think it's physiological. We all want the same thing. We work our way up to self-actualization to realize who we are, so just help each other. Again, God said, love others as I have loved you. We follow that premise. We follow that concept of treating people the way you want to be treated. That golden rule that our moms taught us. You will be fine. And lastly, this is my perspective. Coming from business school, I think life is like the stock market, right? You see something that you believe in, you say, okay, I'm going to get this new cryptocurrency, Colonial Williamsburg coin or Apple? Where are you going to put your money? Chances are you going to choose Apple because Apple has a good brand. People believe in it. It has value. It's the same way. Again when people look at you, they make an observation, they form an opinion, decide they're going to give you opportunity. So life is like the stock market. You should bet on yourself. But by betting on yourself, make sure that you're something worth investing in because people will put time into you, which is money. Time is money, right? People will put other resources into you with the hopes that you're going to grow and they're going to get a ROI. And that ROI is not monetary. It's just the satisfaction of, say, man, look at this young man, young woman. I'm glad I could help him or her. This person is going to be

a productive American, one step closer to securing our democracy for what it is. So I hope that helps.

**Phil Wagner**

It does. Again, you're an inspiration, and I appreciate all that you bring. It's hard to be first, Tye, and you're first in so many ways. It's so clear to me you'll never be last. I mean, I fully believe in the principle. You reap what you sew. You have sewn so many valuable insights in our community here at William & Mary to our community globally. And so I look forward to watching you thrive, to you reaping the benefits of being such a strong, inclusive leader. Thanks for sharing your story with us. Thanks for sharing your insights with us, Tye. It's a privilege to talk to you always, but I'm really particularly excited to have you here. So thanks for joining us.

**Tye Askew**

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to just get up here and speak. I mean, your platform is an amazing platform that represents the entire William & Mary, and I think you're a great person. So by you just giving me the invitation, that meant a lot, and I pray I upheld and represented William & Mary well. Thank you.

**Phil Wagner**

Thank you. Thank you, my friend.

**Phil Wagner**

Thanks for taking a second to listen to Diversity Goes to Work. If you like what you heard, share the show with a friend, leave us a review on Apple podcast or wherever you listen to podcasts and reach out because we're always looking for new friends. And if you'd like to learn more about any of our programs or initiatives is here in the business school at William & Mary, be sure to visit us at [mason.wm.edu](http://mason.wm.edu). Until next time.