

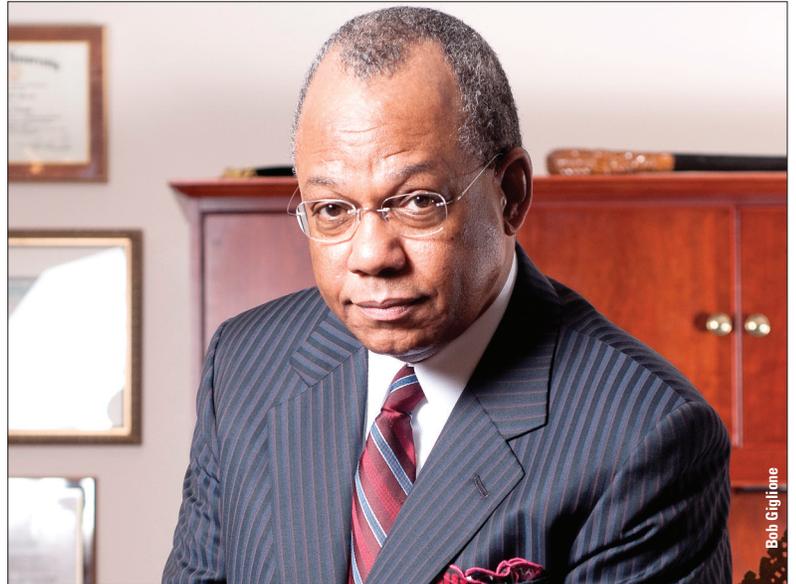
TWO MINUTES

A man of faith

Rev. Calvin O. Butts III

balances life as a college president and religious leader

SUNY College at Old Westbury is in the midst of a building boom. Not only did the school recently unveil a new, 147,000-square-foot academic building, it's also rebuilding its library, adding to its science building and putting a new façade on its campus center. School president, the Rev. Calvin O. Butts III, discussed what the construction plans mean for the future of the school.



What does the new academic building mean to the school? It represents a continuing renaissance, a new birth for the State University of New York at Old Westbury. The old academic village was here when I arrived. It was in such disrepair. This new building is not only state of the art. It's gold, LEED certified. It's energy efficient, friendly to the environment.

Can you serve more students? We can serve more students in a more collegial atmosphere. This complements the center of our campus. It brings students, faculty and administrators together.

After 15 years at the school, what do you see as the biggest change? It's the spirit on the campus. Any successful administrator has to create a certain tone. I think we've been able to create that. There's shared governance. We work closely with the faculty. Students have more input than ever before. I think spirits are lifted by seeing the new construction.

What's the status of graduate programs? There were no graduate programs here when I arrived. Now there are more than 15 in business and education and mental health. The graduate programs are essential today to keep enrollment up and encourage students.

Why not just focus education on employment instead of liberal arts? If you just focus on a job, you're really limiting yourself. Our position as a liberal arts college isn't to make women and men computer technicians or hospital techni-

cians. It's to take hospital technicians and potential computer technicians and make them men and women. That's what's going to benefit the world.

I've heard you speak before and know you're an accomplished speaker. Do you lecture at Old Westbury and on what topic? I've given a couple of lectures on American history. That's all I can do. I've got to raise money. The state budget has been cut drastically. We've got to raise money to keep state institutions at the current tuition level.

How's the fundraising going? Fundraising is difficult. Most people don't realize that increasingly state university presidents have to be fundraisers. If we had a level of funding this year, we had to supplement that funding this year by almost \$4 million.

Is there one thing you want to do next at the school? I'd like to increase our residential population, so I have more students living on the campus. I'd like to add new academic programs in terms of engineering. And I'd like to strengthen my cultural programs in terms of dance and theater and music.

Where do you get the energy to be a reverend, college president and public figure? That's a difficult question. I think that comes from my father, the example of those who have gone before me. If I look at the achievements of my own father, if I look at young men who died young like Dr. King and

Medgar Evers, if I look at the contributions of Thurgood Marshall or women like Harriet Tubman, I feel like what I'm doing is minor compared to what they did. I look at my mentor, Samuel Proctor, who was a pastor and a college president.

How do you link the various sectors of your life? It's not separate. All of it is tied together. I have a calling to serve. My mantra is education and faith go hand-in-hand. While I can't proselytize on this campus, I can walk right. I can try to provide an excellent example of good living and a well-trained mind.

How involved are you as the minister in your congregation's lives? I do marry the in-love, bury the dead, counsel those having trouble in heart, soul and mind. I do bless babies. I'm a priest. I'm also a prophet. I call out moral wrongs. I protest against what I think are bad activities by our government, like war. I believe in peace. I also talk about the value of being rooted in a faith that goes beyond oneself.

What are your sermons about at church? I'm speaking about the same thing. I talk about education and faith. I talk about our nation as one of the best experiments in human relationships the world has ever seen. I talk about making sure the poor have what they need for opportunities or an abundant life. I talk about how great an institution Old Westbury is. I tell the people to look at the state institutions. You don't have to go broke to go to college.