

February 2018 Alumni Spotlight

Dr. Melvin Allen '69

The 1960s has been referred to as the “cultural decade” in American history. The country faced immeasurable sadness with the loss of President John F. Kennedy and Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. and celebrated incredible victories such as passing the Civil Rights Act and taking the first steps on the moon.

In the midst of national turmoil and triumph, a young basketball player from North Philadelphia came to Millersville State College for both an education and the chance to play collegiate basketball for the late Coach Dick DeHart (1956-82). Melvin Allen '69 entered his undergraduate career as an English major, but he was truly undecided at the time. Dr. Allen says he changed his major to philosophy in his sophomore year “after attending a debate between a theologian and a philosopher about Nietzsche’s startling claim that ‘God is Dead.’”



Dr. Allen quickly became a campus visionary and co-founded the Black Students Association (BSA), later dubbed Black Student Union (BSU), to give a stronger voice to students of color. Along with the Students for Progressive Action group, the BSA pressed President William H. Duncan to hire black faculty and improve minority enrollment numbers.

Upon graduating in 1969, Dr. Allen joined the college staff as a special assistant for minority affairs. He continued his education, earning a Juris Doctor from Dickinson School of Law in 1984. Dr. Allen then became an associate professor of philosophy at Millersville, following in the footsteps of his mentors, Leon Miller and Kurt Fischer.

Despite his many career accomplishments, Dr. Allen never lost touch with his early days at The 'Ville. His time here taught him that we must remain self-critical and never “allow initial assumptions about people to prevent relationship development.” These life-lessons will be echoed during the upcoming BSA/BSU 50th Anniversary Celebration, March 22-23. Dr. Allen is co-chairing the weekend entitled, The Imperative of Inclusion: A Celebration and the Work that Remains.

[Click here for more information about the BSA/BSU 50th Anniversary Celebration.](#)



Black Students Association (BSA) 1971



Coach Dick Dehart (left), Melvin Allen (right) and a few members of the Marauder basketball team.