

Unificationist Seungman (Victor) Williams Combines Faith and Football

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Seungman (Victor) Williams (center) is flanked by his brother Wonman (Joseph) Williams on his right and by his wife Lillian Poletti on his left during his graduation ceremony from Bridgewater College earlier this month.

Second-generation Unificationist Seungman (Victor) Williams, 22, knows what it means to beat the odds. Raised in poverty all of his childhood, Williams moved with his mother, Rhonda, more than 36 times in his life due to financial difficulty, living at times in homeless shelters and church basements. (Williams' father, Bruce, for years a custodian at the Columbia Road Unification Church, ascended in 2011.) Yet despite such challenges, he has not only maintained a strong life of faith but also accumulated enough scholarships to attend Bridgewater College, from which he graduated with a degree in Health and Physical Education in May, 2012. He is also happily married to Florida-resident Lillian Poletti, together with whom he attended the March 2012 Blessing Ceremony officiated by Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon.

"I went to the Blessing because I believe that Rev. Sun Myung Moon is the Messiah," said Williams. "Before I met Lillian, I underwent a seven-day fast and a forty-day prayer condition with my mother to prepare myself, and we prayed that all the people who were getting Blessed would bring joy not just to themselves and their spouses but also to God. After those conditions, a church member by the name of Wesley Samuel asked my mother for her permission to introduce Lillian to me. I wanted my mother to choose someone for me, and I had absolute trust in whomever she chose so when she mentioned Lillian, I agreed to meet her.

"Because Lillian lives in Florida, and I live in Virginia, our relationship is long-distance. But when we do see each other, we try to make the most out of that time. I feel very lucky and blessed to be with Lillian, who is so beautiful to me and becomes even more beautiful the more I get to know her on the inside."

Williams is the second out of four children. His younger brother, Wonman (Joseph) Williams, plays football for the Virginia Cavaliers and recently underwent an eight-day hunger strike as part of a movement called the Living-Wage Campaign initiated to support the workers of the University of Virginia (UVA). Joseph received attention from *Ebony* magazine, *ESPN* and the *Washington Post* for participation in the Living Wage Campaign. [*Sports Illustrated* will publish a feature on Joseph Williams in an upcoming issue.]

Seungman Williams has had just as big of an impact on his campus. One of the many scholarships that he received was the "Presidential Scholarship of Bridgewater College," created by former President of Bridgewater, Philips C. Stone. "This is a scholarship for first-generation college students, as Philips C. Stone was himself a first-generation college student," said Williams. "I received it, because Stone had read an article about me talking about how I had won the "Beat the Odds Scholarship," which is given to individuals who overcome large obstacles in their lives. The moment I stepped onto campus at Bridgewater, Stone met me, and we started having lunch together. I then gave him True Father's autobiography."

Williams was also part of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), and he answered the call of the FCA three times to give sermons to athletes, coaches and teachers at Bridgewater. He said, "At school, I set a goal of sharing about True Father and his teachings and bringing people closer to Heavenly Father. We should always be putting what True Father says first, and what he says to do, we should do to the best of our abilities. As soon as I set that goal, opportunities started arising. One time, a friend was asking about arranged marriages, and I started sharing about True Parents and the *Divine Principle*. I guess she really liked what I was saying, because she asked me to be a speaker for an FCA event. During that event, I talked about the heart of God, Jesus and the four-position foundation to a large crowd on campus. Once

I'd spoken, I was asked to speak again twice more, once at another FCA event and once during a Thursday-morning church service on campus, which I was grateful to do. I was nervous, but afterwards there were a lot of people who said they were very touched.

“As far as faith goes, there's a lot more temptation in college, and that requires more self-control. You definitely have a lot of experiences to meet Heavenly Father and to appreciate True Father's words. College is a wonderful time to learn and grow.”

Williams attends Lovin' Life Sunday service in Washington D.C. or Fairfax Virginia or watches the service from home. “With Lovin' Life, I think we're moving in the right direction. I love what Rev. In Jin Moon is doing, and it's also nice to hear each of the District Pastors speak,” he said.



Lillian Poletti and Seungman (Victor) Williams were married on March 2012 at Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Blessing Ceremony in the Manhattan Center.

A Big Fish in a Big Pond

Football plays a large role in Williams' life, and it's no surprise that he's been noticed for his athletic talents. He had initially received a full scholarship to William and Mary University in Virginia, but the football coach with whom he would have trained was fired before he could enroll at the University, and the scholarship was dropped.

“We were always moving, and things were always changing because of financial struggles, but one of the constants in my life besides going to church and having a life of faith was having an opportunity to play football,” he said. “I really find peace in playing and investing in football, and I'm blessed to have the physical ability to do so. My father always said that we should make conditions so that Heavenly Father can play football through us. I was recruited to play for Bridgewater College and played safety, a defensive position, throughout college. That was a humbling experience. I went from being a big fish in a small pond to a big fish in bigger pond full of bigger fish.”

Williams hopes to continue playing football, but also looks forward to a future of teaching physical education to elementary-school children either in Virginia or Florida. One priority is to live in the same state with his wife, Lillian, who recently visited Williams for his graduation. “Every time we're together, we just grow exponentially,” Williams said. “We're not sure where we're going to end up, whether in Virginia or Florida, but we want to be together. My family and I have been in Virginia for about nine years, during which we've moved about four times. But that's probably the least we've moved in such a long time, which was a blessing, because we were able to form relationships with the people in the area.”