

Dr. Melva K. Wallace, Ph.D.

The 7th President & CEO Huston-Tillotson University

Dr. Melva K. Wallace is a true powerhouse—widely recognized as a *solutionist*, innovator, and fierce advocate for higher education. For more than two decades, she has made waves in the world of education, blending her passion for leadership with a tireless commitment to change. Today, she stands at the helm of Huston-Tillotson University, an esteemed HBCU in Austin, TX, where she proudly serves as the seventh President and CEO. Under her visionary leadership, HT has skyrocketed from being unranked to claiming the prestigious title of the *#3 HBCU in the country* by Niche.com, and it is now recognized as the *top HBCU for students earning the most immediately after graduation*.

But that is just the beginning. Since Dr. Wallace—known on social media as MKWthe7th—took the reins, she has dramatically transformed HT into a thriving hub of academic excellence. Through her efforts, she has boosted fundraising, increased student enrollment (both domestically and internationally), and sparked a surge in online learning opportunities. There's a new wave of energy around HT, and the city of Austin is buzzing with excitement about the institution being labeled as *"the best thing since sliced bread!"*

Dr. Wallace's extraordinary career spans much more than the realm of higher education. As a 2016 Presidential Leadership Scholar, she had the unique honor of studying leadership under three former U.S. Presidents—George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush. Her remarkable accomplishments also earned her the 2018 ATHENA Award, the highest honor in Louisiana for women excelling in their careers and supporting others in reaching their leadership potential.

A board member for numerous esteemed organizations—such as Centenary College of Louisiana, Christus Shumpert Hospital, Ballet Austin, and Austin PBS—Dr. Wallace is deeply committed to serving her community. She also holds the role of Board President for Extensions of Excellence and is a founding board member of the Higher Education Leadership Foundation, which has trained over 500 HBCU leaders across the nation. Many of these leaders have gone on to hold key positions at HBCUs nationwide, shaping the future of higher education.

Her entrepreneurial spirit has also left its mark. In 2011, Dr. Wallace co-founded the Shreveport Charter Foundation, which built the Magnolia School of Excellence, Shreveport's first new school in over three decades. She later helped expand the school system with the opening of Magnolia Upper Campus in 2016, a project that now serves over 1,000 students in the Shreveport area.

Before making her mark in higher education, Dr. Wallace thrived in the corporate world as a C-suite executive. But she discovered her true passion in expanding educational access, particularly for underserved communities. A proud collaborator with Grammy-winning rapper Tip T.I. Harris, she co-created and co-teaches the groundbreaking course *The Business of Trap Music*, which has been featured in Forbes and Billboard.

Dr. Wallace's leadership career has taken her through key roles at Southern University, where she broke barriers in student enrollment, secured funding for new campus buildings, and steered the university through the global pandemic as Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and

Enrollment. Her role as the first-ever Chief of Staff for the Southern University System made her a critical force in overseeing five campuses and 15,000 students across Louisiana.

As a leader, Dr. Wallace isn't just focused on academic institutions, she is also a passionate advocate for service. In 2023, she was honored by the United Negro College Fund as one of the top women presidents in the nation. That same year, Austin Business Journal named her one of Texas' 100 most influential professionals, surpassing figures like Elon Musk and 50 Cent. She is also a sought-after speaker and mentor, guiding young women across the country as they advance in their careers in fields ranging from medicine to finance.

Her accolades do not stop there. A proud alumna of Grambling State University and Jackson State University, Dr. Wallace has earned a reputation as one of the most influential and accomplished leaders in higher education having received the most Innovative President Award for 2025 by the National College Resources Foundation. She is a regular voice in the national conversation on the importance of HBCUs, frequently featured in media outlets that highlight her dedication to shaping the future of these beloved institutions.

Dr. Wallace is married to her incredible husband, Dr. DL Wallace, a Baylor University alum and former business executive featured on the covers of *Global Millionaire Magazine*, *Money Magazine*, and *In Life Magazine*. Together, they share a deep passion for education, with Dr. DL Wallace leading the education technology company Success Training Institute, which is revolutionizing soft skills training across the country. The Wallace's have even infused their shared love for HBCUs into the company's philanthropic arm, dedicated to supporting HBCUs nationwide. As a couple they were featured on ESG NEWS on the Historic New York Stock Exchange referred to as "Texas' Newest Power Couple" discussing business and finance.

In short, Dr. Melva K. Wallace is a trailblazer, a visionary, and a true advocate for change. You can follow her journey and insights on social media @MKWthe7th.