

Wesley Joseph McJulien

Leader Spotlight

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Abstract

This spotlight explores the professional life and times of Dr. Wesley Joseph McJulien, the first African American president of the Association for Educational Communications & Technology. This overview highlights his influence on the discipline of educational technology, insights into game-based technology and contributions to the profession.

Keywords

McJulien, Wesley Joseph – AECT – MIM – game-based learning – McJulien Leadership Lecture – ECT Foundation – African Americans



FIGURE 32.1
Wesley Joseph McJulien

Born December 28, 1933 in Long Island, New York
Died September 26, 2002 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Pioneer, leader, mentor, scholar, educator, tremendous personality, consummate politician, gentleman scholar and magnificent giant exemplify the terms used to describe Dr. Wesley Joseph McJulien. Roosevelt “Rick” Wright Jr. (2004), an AECT Member, reflected on his first meeting with Dr. McJulien as the most “magical moment in my life” and lauded Dr. McJulien’s life and accomplishments as a “superhighway of zenith milestones” (Wright, 2004, p. 20).

Dr. McJulien left an indelible impression that was characterized in love and quiet authority by many people throughout his life.

Dr. McJulien was born in Long Island, New York on December 28, 1933 (Wennberg, 2003). As a young man, he served in the United States Army as a Radio Telephone Operator. Thereafter, Dr. McJulien began his career teaching physical education at Yale Elementary School in Chicago, IL (Wright, 2004).

Dr. McJulien earned his Bachelors of Science (1957) in Health and Physical Education and Masters of Education (1966) from Southern University, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), in Louisiana (Wennberg, 2000). In 1965 at Southern University, Dr. McJulien further built his academic career from graduate teaching assistant to an assistant professor.

Seeking personal and professional advancement, Dr. McJulien earned his Ph.D. in Instructional Development from Syracuse University in 1971. Dr. McJulien's dissertation was entitled *The Effect of Modes of Presentation and Anxiety Levels on Individual Participant Achievement in an Educational Game* (McJulien, 1971). His dissertation specifically examined: "a) the effect of modes of presentation upon achievement, b) the effect of anxiety upon achievement, c) the effect of sex upon achievement and d) the relationship between modes of presentation and anxiety upon achievement" (McJulien, 1971, p. 11). As early as 1971, Dr. McJulien saw the value of game-based technology as a future area of research in the field of educational technology and that game-based technology would become an influencer of academic achievement.

From 1972–1974, Dr. McJulien held a faculty position at Southern University's Graduate School of the College of Education. Thereafter, Dr. McJulien moved to Louisiana State University (LSU) in Baton Rouge as a Professor of Educational Media in the College of Education. At LSU, Dr. McJulien became an active member of the Peabody Society, the college's development group that engaged in fundraising (LSU, 2001–2002). He stayed at LSU until his death on September 26, 2002 (Wright, 2004).

Dr. McJulien was highly involved in the leadership and direction of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT). He joined AECT in 1969 as a graduate student at Syracuse University.

Dr. McJulien's founding of Minorities in Media (MIM), an affiliate organization of AECT, in the late 1970s could be one of the most profound leadership moves he made in his career. MIM gave "minorities a voice in the governance and direction of the profession." Throughout the years, many African Americans joined MIM and found it to be a safe place to collaborate about research in educational technology and discuss personal and professional issues specific to African Americans and other marginalized groups. Dr. McJulien's leadership, in this area, demonstrated his focus on the inclusion of diverse people and perspectives in the profession.

Dr. McJulien also founded the Division of School Library Media Specialists; this exemplifies his vision and convergence of library studies and educational technology (Wennberg, 2000). This is significant as the discipline of Library Studies is exploding in the 21st century as the proliferation of information permeates our society.

The untimely death of Dr. McJulien's son in 1971, sparked the establishment of the McJulien Scholarship Award. This award was administered by MIM and the Educational Communications and Technology Foundation (ECT) to provide a minority student with scholarship assistance for graduate study.

Dr. McJulien served as the first African American President of AECT from 1980–1981. In this capacity, he hosted the conference with the theme of Designing the Future...Together! During his presidency, two important topics were addressed: "educational technologist at the elementary and secondary level and mentoring minorities in media" (Wennberg, 2000, p. 157).

Dr. McJulien formed the Past President's Council in 1980. The purpose of the Council was to provide Past Presidents with voice and vote privileges related to AECT business (McJulien, 1993).

Dr. McJulien served in a variety of capacities in his service to AECT. Some of those positions included: Member and Trustee of ECT and AECT boards; chairman of the Council Nominating Committee; editorial board member of the *Journal of Instructional Development*; Editor of *Minorities in Media* newsletter, member of the convention program committee; Chairperson of the Memorial Scholarship committee and other important positions (Wright, 2004).

After Dr. McJulien's death, ECT started the McJulien Leadership Lecture in 2003 to honor his legacy and leadership annually. This lecture hosted presentations from individuals who could serve as role models of successful minority media professionals (Wennberg, 2004) and more recently academic leaders in the field of educational technology.

Dr. McJulien's contributions both personally and professionally evidence a legacy of diversity, equity and inclusion that is an imperative in the 21st century and beyond. This Spotlight salutes his excellence!

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