

Chancellor Williams and Oggi Ogburn

Photographer: David "Oggi" Ogburn



Art Critique

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Art 360 Introduction to Painting

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David “Oggi” Ogburn photographs of celebrities is on exhibit in the Fine and Performing Arts Building at Bowie State University. There are many interesting photographs on display. The title of one of the piece that I have chosen to critique from Mr. Ogburn's collection is entitled “Chancellor Williams & Oggi Ogburn” . It is a 16X20 inch black and white photograph of an elderly man and a younger version of famous photographer David “Oggi” Ogburn. The date and location of where the photograph was taken is not revealed.

The black and white photograph captures a picturesque view of two men having a conversation. The backdrop is inside a home with simple decorations. Thought there are several vertical long stem lamps, the room is naturally illuminated with the sunlight shinning through the windows. The elderly man is sitting in a comfortable chair with his left leg crossed over his right leg. He is wearing dress slacks with a buttoned up knit collared shirt. He appears to be in his seventies, and he is wearing sun glasses inside a home which could indicate that he is blind or has a sensitivity to light. He is comfortably resting his left hand on the plush chair.

The title states that the elderly man is Chancellor William. A Chancellor is a leader of a college or university, usually either the executive or ceremonial head of the university or of a university campus within a university system.¹ My first reaction to the photograph was to question whether or not the man was an actual Chancellor? Several other questions then entered my mind. Was Chancellor his first name and not a title? Is he a historian? Has he written any books? Is he a great story teller?

My quest to know more about this elderly person lead me down a path of great revelation. My research reveals that the man depicted in the photo first name is really is Chancellor. My initial

¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chancellor_\(education\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chancellor_(education))

questions were answered when I learned that Chancellor Williams was in his mid 70's in the photo. I learned that he is a historian and an academic professor who devoted his lifetime and academic pursuits to the study of ancient history. He conducted field studies covering 26 nations in West, Central, East and Southern Africa, researching some 105 different societies and language groups. ²

Professor Williams published over 50 articles, professional books, and lectures. Among his publications are *The Raven*, *The Rebirth of African Civilization*, and the greatest book, *The Destruction of Black Civilization*. ³

Beginning in 1975, Oggi Ogburn had the honor of traveling and working with the great author-historian, Dr. Chancellor Williams. As Dr. Williams assistant and friend, Oggi has photographed him in his travels. Oggi has served as Chancellor Williams eyes and ears for many years.

Photographer David Oggi Ogburn was born on December 14, 1942 in Brooklyn, New York to Archibald and Nannie Ogburn. He graduated from Andrew Jackson High School in Queens, New York in 1961. After taking courses at Saint Paul's College, Ogburn went on to receive his B.A. degree in sociology from Howard University in 1968, as well as his M.A. degree in urban studies in 1973. Ogburn was hired in the 1960s as a social worker for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. From 1969 until 1971, Ogburn worked as a merchandiser for General Motors. In 1970, he also worked as a freelance photographer, and founded Oggi's Kitchen Photomarket in 1971. Then, in 1975, Ogburn began serving as assistant to the Historian Chancellor James Williams, where he documented his work through photography and audiotape until 1987. ⁴

The photograph depicts the type of relationship that Oggi had with Chancellor, that of a mentor to a

2 <http://www.raceandhistory.com/Historians/chancellor.htm>

3 <http://www.raceandhistory.com/Historians/>

4 <https://www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/david-oggi-ogburn>

mentee. His facial expression suggest that he has something to impart to young Oggi. AS Chancellor sits comfortably in the chair he turns his head to the left in young Oggi's direction and speaks.

Oggi is sitting on the floor at the feet of the elderly man. He is resting his back against a sofa. This indicates that he deliberately choose to sit on the floor. Perhaps as an act of humility and respect to the Chancellor. Oggi has an Afro and is wearing glasses. He is also wearing a long sleeve button down shirt with bell bottom jeans and boots.

As he sits, his knees are pulled close to his chest and his arms are wrapped around his knees while his right hand cuffs his left hand to lock in his position. He is holding a pencil in his left hand. Oggi appears to be hanging on to Chancellor's every word. Although he has a pencil in hand, there isn't any writing pad or paper to accompany the scene. Oggi is listening intensely and internally absorbing and recording the words that Chancellor are speaking.

I like this photograph for several reasons. It taught me some remarkable history. It also sends a message that young people should always be willing listen. Willing to seek advice and hear what the elderly have to say. It inspired me to want to serve and learn from our elders. The photograph sends a message of humility and respect.