



Dr. Tahira Reid Smith

Smithsonian-Featured Inventor | Engineering Professor | Mentor to 1500+ students

Dr. Tahira Reid Smith is a Smithsonian-featured inventor, Full Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Penn State University, and founder of Jump Dreams, Inc. — the company bringing the world's first automated Double Dutch jump rope system to market. Her 40-year journey from a third-grade sketch in the Bronx to a Smithsonian exhibit has been featured by the New York Times, Essence, NBC's Today Show, NPR, BBC, and PBS NOVA. A Fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, a distinction held by only a small fraction of ASME members, Dr. Reid Smith speaks at the intersection of innovation, faith, and cultural legacy. Her talks inspire students to believe their ideas matter and equip educators to recognize the inventors sitting in their classrooms.

AS SEEN IN



Smithsonian The New York Times



EBONY

SIGNATURE TOPICS



From a Bronx Sketch to the Smithsonian: How to Build the Career You Imagine: Dr. Tahira Reid Smith's career began with a third-grade sketch in the Bronx and grew into a Smithsonian exhibit, a tenured professorship, and a hardware company she founded. In this talk, she shares the decisions, detours, and disciplines that shaped a 40-year journey — and offers students a practical framework for building the kind of career most people only dream about. Audiences leave with the conviction that their ideas, identities, and ambitions are exactly what the future needs. *Ideal for: Convocations · Distinguished Lectures · Student Organizations*



Engineering Confidence: How to Think and Lead Like an Innovator: Innovation isn't a talent — it's a set of habits anyone can learn. Drawing on her work mentoring over 1,500 students and her own journey as a Black woman engineer, Dr. Tahira Reid Smith teaches college audiences how to think like inventors: how to notice problems others miss, ask better questions, and build the resilience needed to bring new ideas into the world. This talk gives students a framework for creative confidence that will serve them across their careers. *Ideal for: STEM Programs · Honors Colleges · Pre-Professional Societies · Career Development Programs*



Your Story Is Your Strategy: Turning Identity into Impact: The most meaningful careers are often built at the intersection of who you are and what the world needs. Dr. Tahira Reid Smith shares how her own cultural background, lived experience, and personal convictions became the foundation for groundbreaking research and a Smithsonian-featured invention. This talk equips students to see their identity as an asset — not something to set aside — as they shape the careers, research, and ventures ahead of them. *Ideal for: Identity-Based Student Orgs.*

 1500+
students educated

 50+
keynotes

 1700
citations

 50+
media interviews

 20+
awards

A Lifetime of Innovation

From Childhood Sketch to Prototype, Patent, and the Smithsonian



Dr. Tahira Reid Smith's groundbreaking invention – the world's first automated Double Dutch jump rope system – began as a third-grade sketch at PS 97 in the Bronx in 1986. Years later, as a mechanical engineering student at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, she transformed that childhood idea into a working prototype. Today, the photo from the day her prototype first worked is on display at the Smithsonian's "Change Your Game" exhibit, and she is bringing the invention to market through Jump Dreams, Inc., the Black-woman-owned company she founded in 2024. She recently showcased Jump Dreams at the Congressional Inventions Project's Women's History Month Innovation Showcase on Capitol Hill, and her upcoming children's book, *Tahira and the Double Dutch Dream: The Story of Jump Dreams*, will share the journey with the next generation of dreamers. Dr. Reid Smith is ready to inspire your students with stories of creativity, persistence, and the power of building a career rooted in who you are.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Smithsonian-Featured Inventor
- ✓ Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Penn State University
- ✓ Founder & CEO of Jump Dreams, Inc.
- ✓ Featured on Capitol Hill (March 2026)
- ✓ Mentor to hundreds of students and aspiring inventors



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