

Syracuse Manuscript

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Syracuse University
Office of Multicultural Advancement

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On the Cover (From left): Abigail Covington '19, Stacy Fernández '19, Marcus Lane Jr. '19, and Maia Wilson '19



Photo by Ross Oscar Knight

FROM THE 'CUSE THE JOY OF GIVING

Like many of you, I was thrilled to learn of billionaire Robert Smith's gift to this year's graduating class at Morehouse College in Atlanta. As part of his commencement speech, Smith announced that he would forgive 100 percent of the student loan debt of the graduating class. This is a \$40 million commitment that will change the lives of those graduates in ways that they may not fully understand. Pretty amazing!

Why does this excite me? Because I have asked God on several occasions to allow me to be able to give at a significant level. Because I understand how difficult it is for so many of our students. Because it inspires me to see diverse donors giving at the multimillion-dollar level. Because our communities need a hand up, not a handout. Because I can only imagine how great it must feel to be able to help so many people in a single day. Because, at the heart of it, this was an act of love, and we need more love in the world.



Mostly, this excited me because of something that an elder said many years ago: "When my neighbor receives a blessing, I'm filled with joy because I know that God is in the neighborhood." She believed that her blessing was coming soon. I look forward to the day that Syracuse University finds a donor like Robert Smith, who is significantly impacting diverse students through philanthropy. And we now know that it's possible because it has happened at Morehouse.

But it's happening at Syracuse, too. Every day. Through your continued giving and support in a variety of ways. By giving what you can to the Our Time Has Come Scholarship Fund, you are part of a large network of donors who have made it possible for students of color to remain at Syracuse. Those students go on to become donors, too, because they understand the importance of giving back. And they know from personal experience that it takes a village.

Yet, the Our Time Has Come Scholars still graduate with more debt than they should. They could use larger awards. And we'd like to help a greater number of students than we can today.

So, if you've been dreaming about making a significant gift to Our Time Has Come, let us know. There are many ways to accomplish your philanthropic goals, and it all starts with a conversation. Let's have that conversation.

As Syracuse University embarks on its recently approved multi-year fundraising campaign, the time is now. We will pool all of our gifts—large, medium, and small—to double the Our Time Has Come endowment (and support other University priorities that you care deeply about) by the end of the campaign. Please participate and do what you can.

On behalf of our students, we ask you to either start giving or keep giving. I promise you, there will be a great deal of joy in it for you. Because of Robert Smith's example, we should all be inspired to do more. I truly hope his gift will create a wave of philanthropy across the nation. Let's not just post the article on social media; let's follow his lead.

In my own way, I can be Robert Smith...and so can you.

With Orange Love,

Rachel Vassel '91
Assistant Vice President, Office of Multicultural Advancement



OTHC HOLDS RECEPTION ON AVENUE OF THE STARS



The Office of Multicultural Advancement presented a benefit reception for the Our Time Has Come (OTHC) Scholarship program on June 11 in Los Angeles. The event, a celebration of Black Music Month, was hosted by Syracuse University Trustee Rob Light '78, and was held at the Creative Artists Agency on the Avenue of the Stars. Light, CAA partner, managing director, and music division head, announced a personal gift of \$300,000 to the OTHC Scholarship Fund.

Danielle Nottingham '99, co-host of *California Live* and an award-winning journalist, served as master of ceremonies for the event, which honored music and entertainment trailblazer Suzanne de Passe '68. dePasse is a music, television and film producer and co-chairwoman of dePasse Jones Entertainment Group. A graduate of

the College of Arts and Sciences, she served as creative assistant to Motown legend Berry Gordy and promoted the solo careers of Lionel Richie, Rick James, and other notable artists. She is credited with discovering the Jackson Five and guiding them to international success.

dePasse co-wrote the screenplay and received an Oscar nomination for the Billie Holiday biopic *Lady Sings the Blues*, starring Diana Ross. She later produced Motown television specials that won Emmy and NAACP Image awards. In partnership with Gordy, she produced the CBS western *Lonesome Dove*, adapted from the Larry McMurtry novel, and several sequels.

Syracuse University recognized dePasse with a Chancellor's Citation in 1986 in recognition of her significant alumni achievements.



→ Introducing the Office of Multicultural Advancement

New Name, New Council, Same Mission

Syracuse University's Office of Program Development started the new year in a big way: with a new name and the formation of an alumni advisory council. In case you missed it, the Office of Program Development is now known as the Office of Multicultural Advancement, a title that more closely aligns with its longtime mission to foster diverse alumni involvement with the University and raise funds to support African American and Latino students.

"This is simply an effort to more accurately reflect the mission and focus of what we do, particularly as we seek out external partners and sponsors for support," says Rachel Vassel '91, assistant vice president for the Office of Multicultural Advancement.

Since it was founded as a unit of Syracuse University's Division of Advancement and External Affairs in 1982, the office has created the Coming Back Together triennial reunion for African American and Latino alumni and held 12 reunions; created the Our Time Has Come (OTHC) Scholarship program to benefit African American and Latino students with unmet financial need and awarded more than 1,300 scholarships; and hosted countless regional events, activities, and alumni trips.

Vassel says the name change better positions the unit to serve its key constituents, both off campus and within the University. "Being known as the Office of Multicultural Advancement offers an immediate understanding of who we are and what we do, particularly as we seek out external partners and sponsors to further support our initiatives."

In another step to advance fundraising objectives in support of diverse students at Syracuse University, the Office of Multicultural Advancement has created

an alumni advisory council to assist with strategy and contacts to meet those goals.

"Every school and college at SU and many campus units use alumni in a formal capacity through advisory boards," says Vassel. "Given that we serve a specific population, I think it's really important for us to receive input from alumni of color who are interested in the work that we do and would like to support it in a strategic way."

The new 25-member Multicultural Advancement Advisory Council is comprised of African American and Latino alumni who have made significant achievements in their fields, are established Our Time Has Come donors, and are regular attendees of Office of Multicultural Advancement activities and programming. Board membership requires a two-year commitment and a minimum \$2,500 gift to the OTHC campaign each year. In addition, board members will be asked to serve as mentors for OTHC Scholars.

"We look forward to having this accomplished group work together with us as University volunteers, donors, and advocates for the diverse communities that we serve," says Vassel.

The first Multicultural Advancement Advisory Council meeting was held on campus April 11-12, coinciding with the Our Time Has Come Scholarship Program Reception at the Chancellor's House on the evening of April 11. Council members also took part in the first Syracuse University LEAD Volunteer Leadership Summit April 12-13, which brought together all University volunteer boards across schools, colleges, and units, as well as Syracuse University Regional Councils.



Multicultural Advancement Advisory Council Members

Dave Bing '66, H'06, businessman, former mayor of Detroit, and inductee of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame

Michael Blackshear '91, senior vice president and North America chief compliance officer at Chubb

Kristin Bragg '93, senior vice president for ad sales strategic planning at Turner Broadcasting System Inc.

Keith Brown '82, senior vice president of content at Firelight Films

Candice Carnage '90, chief operating officer of The Bronx Defenders

Vincent Cohen Jr. '92, partner with Dechert LLC

Derrick Coleman '90, retired NBA player and founder of D.C. Elite

Zhamyr Cueva '93, owner of Blend LIC, Blend On the Water, and Blend Astoria

Wesley C. Dias '74, chief executive officer and president of Argosy Consulting Group

Tina Eskridge '95, senior director of retail operations for North America and Latin America at Microsoft

Tara Brown Favors '95, vice president and human resources business partner at American Express

Victor Holman '82, lieutenant colonel, U.S. Army; secretary of the general staff for the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command

Monica Houston '90, former Modesto, California, city auditor

William (Billy) Hunter '65, retired executive director of the NBA Players Association

Gisele Marcus '90, executive vice president of strategic initiatives and operations/chief operating officer of the St. Louis Regional Chamber

María Meléndez '89, commercial litigation and disputes partner with Sidley Austin LLP

Fatimah Muhammad-Moody '90, CBT 2020 co-chair and chief executive officer of LinkVisum Consulting Group

Connie Orlando '89, executive vice president and head of programming at BET Networks

Shawn Outler '89, executive vice president and chief diversity officer at Macy's Inc.

Jamal Salmon, '12, vice president of marketing analytics at Paramount Pictures

Jessica Santana '11, executive director and co-founder of New York On Tech

Rosann Santos '95, CBT 2020 co-chair and director of strategic initiatives for student affairs at John Jay College

Gwynne Wilcox '74, partner with Levy Ratner, P.C.

Charles Willis Jr. '90, portfolio manager at JPMorgan Asset Management

Charles Wynder Jr. '86, priest-in-charge of Holy Comforter of the Episcopal Church, Program Staff Office for Social Justice and Advocacy Engagement, the Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C.



ALEX AGUIRRE '20

Alex Aguirre came to Syracuse University as an ice hockey recruit. But he also aspired to a career in medicine. It only took one season to realize that Division 1 hockey in the American Collegiate Hockey Association and being serious about science don't mix well. Science won out.

The junior from Phoenix, Arizona, who is double majoring in neuroscience and molecular biochemistry, has already had research published in two scientific publications. Research on bio-inorganic crystallography conducted with SU Distinguished Professor of Chemistry Jon Zubieta was published in the world-renowned journal *Inorganica Chimica Acta*. "We found a way to manipulate a metal core complex to express different fluorescence to be able to track surgical infection in a human body," Aguirre explains.

Research on reducing post-operative deficits after lateral lumbar interbody fusion, conducted with Albany, New York, neurosurgeon Dr. Edward H. Scheid, was published in *The Spine Journal* and presented at last year's American Association of Neurological Surgeons conference. Aguirre developed a relationship with Scheid during a postgraduate year at Albany Academy between high school and college.

"I've had the privilege of shadowing him for nearly 700 hours," says Aguirre, who hopes to become a neurosurgeon himself.

Aguirre is president of Phi Delta Epsilon, the professional medical fraternity on campus, and through that organization is developing a mentorship program to connect pre-med first-year students with older students for support and guidance. "There's such emphasis when you come in about how hard being a pre-med student is, it can really be daunting to a lot of students," he says.

He's also the founding president of the Latino Medical Student Association at SU, only the third undergraduate chapter in the United States.

"Our goal is to raise awareness of medical disparities within the Latino community and improve health through prevention," he says.

It's an issue that hits close to home, as Aguirre's father is originally from Cuernavaca, Mexico.

Aguirre, a first-generation college student, is a Whitman Undergraduate Scholar and a WellsLink Scholar. He was named an Our Time Has Come Scholar in the fall of his sophomore year. "Being selected was an incredible honor," he says. "My parents have made unbelievable sacrifices for me to attend this school. The financial stability from the scholarship really allows me to focus on the application of what I'm learning—to take what I'm learning in the classroom and apply it through research."

SHANEL BAILEY '19

As she headed toward graduation, senior Shanel Bailey was satisfied she'd accomplished all she hoped for and more when she came to Syracuse University to study musical theater. "I wanted great musical theater training, but I also wanted a regular college experience," says the Queens, New York, native.

Bailey was admitted to seven out of the nine schools she auditioned for, choosing Syracuse for its tremendous school spirit as well as the connections she hoped the school would provide. "It was more expensive than other options, but I felt the reward would be worth the risk," she says.

That has paid off. Not only has Bailey attended her share of football and basketball games, she was cast and performed in six SU Drama productions, including three co-produced with Syracuse Stage. "It's a professional regional theater, so I've gotten Equity points as an actor and had the opportunity to work with professional directors and choreographers," she says.

Bailey was a member of Raices Latin Dance Troupe, one of her favorite activities as an SU student. "I grew up around a lot of Latin culture and it's something I really love," she says. "It was amazing to have that creative outlet outside of musical theater."

Another of Bailey's pre-college goals was to study abroad, something she thought might be financially prohibitive. But Bailey applied for and was awarded a Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship from the U.S. Department of State that funded a summer study abroad program to Madrid between her junior and senior years.

"My best friend's family is from Spain. They introduced me to paella, flamenco, and the Spanish culture I fell in love with," she says. "I always wanted to go there."

During her six weeks in Madrid, Bailey lived with a host family, took an advanced Spanish class, and learned flamenco, one of her favorite dance genres. She has since taught two dance workshops in Syracuse. "I've woven my Madrid experience into my daily life in various ways," she says.

A highlight of senior year was being named an Our Time Has Come Scholar. "The program immediately gave me another family on campus," she says. "Having a community of scholars of color celebrated in a school that is predominantly white has been an encouraging and profound experience."

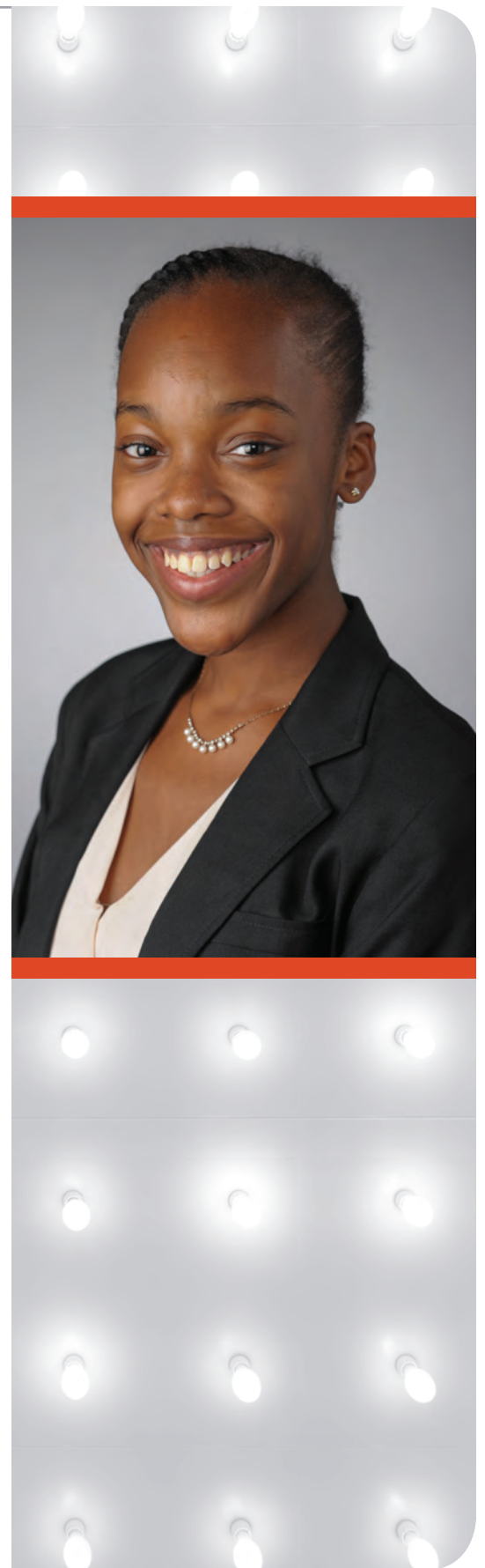
The financial support has been especially beneficial for her, as she spent her last semester studying in New York City as part of the Department of Drama's Tepper Semester. "Even though I'm living at home, there are extra expenses with MetroCards and other school fees," she says.

Bailey was selected to participate in Sorkin Week during spring break, an all-expenses-paid trip to Los Angeles, where students visit studios, meet with casting directors, view TV show tapings, get a taste of voiceover work, and meet screenwriter Aaron Sorkin '83.

"It was an amazing experience learning about film and television as a feasible part of my career," she says.

Bailey already has her first job lined up: She's been cast in three productions of the Glimmerglass Festival this summer in Cooperstown, New York, one of which, *The Ghost of Versailles*, will travel to France in the fall.

"I feel really fortunate that I've done what I set out to do and have accomplished what I have," she says. "SU helped make that happen."





ARU BANKS '19

Aru Banks '19 likes to create, whether it's drawing, painting, making music, directing videos, designing a website, or animating a video game. "I like to make things," he says.

The Brooklyn, New York, native came to Syracuse University to combine an interest in computer technology with art and design. In May, he graduated with a double major in computer art and animation and information technology, combining studies at SU's College of Visual and Performing Arts and School of Information Studies. He's hoping for a career in web development, video gaming, or at an animation studio.

Regardless of the genre, Banks says his work is heavily influenced by his upbringing. "New York has a culture and flair unlike anywhere else," he says. He blends that "NYC swag" with his love for comic books and video games to create his heavily stylized artwork.

As an SU student, Banks was able to get plenty of practical experience, both in and outside the classroom. For two years, he participated in Orange Shorts, the student-run animation club. "A group of animation students came together to work on a year-long project to develop animations and cartoons," he says.

He's also on the e-board of *Mixtape Magazine*, which covers hip-hop culture, where he creates digital content and video projects for social media. He also created the magazine's website.

Banks is a rapper himself, as well as a recording engineer and producer. Creating the video for one of his songs, "Lost in Thought"—which he wrote, mixed, mastered and recorded, as well as shot, directed, and edited the video—was the part of his capstone project for his computer art and animation major. He also helps mix, master, and record songs for other student artists on campus.

For his senior capstone project at the iSchool, Banks created a virtual reality video game for the HTC Vive virtual reality system, where players gain the "power of telekinesis" by using the motion controllers to manipulate objects in 3D space. He entered the project in the iSchool's RvDiPrize competition, held in March, and was awarded \$3,000 to continue his work.

"People tend to think art and technology are at odds with each other, but they're actually closely related," Banks says. "Innovations in technology help push art forward. For me, it's a natural combination that all makes sense."

Banks was named an Our Time Has Come Scholar last fall, timing that couldn't have been better. "I honestly didn't know if I was going to be able to come back to school for my senior year," he says. "Receiving this scholarship really helped alleviate the pressure of not knowing if I was going to be able to finish my degree."

NAKIRA CHRISTMAS '19

As a cheerleader for the Syracuse Orange, Nakira Christmas '19 experienced the rush of excitement of being on the sidelines and helping rouse enthusiasm among thousands of fans in the Carrier Dome. "I really loved it a lot," says the senior from Waldorf, Maryland.

Christmas cheered for both football and basketball during her first and sophomore years, and cut back to only basketball in her junior year, trying to balance the travel with academics and a growing number of other extracurricular involvements. "When you're an athlete you, really need to focus on that sport," says Christmas, who gave up cheer in her senior year to prioritize other activities.

Namely academics. "Nothing gets in the way of my schooling," says Christmas, a bioengineering major with a minor in electrical engineering. As a woman of color, she is a rarity in her chosen field and feels a responsibility to the women who follow in her footsteps.

"As a young black woman in the world of engineering, I know there are going to be battles I have to face. But I also know that there is a solution for every problem, and that gives me the drive to keep going no matter what adversity I encounter," she says.

For her senior capstone project, Christmas developed a rapid validation sterilization device. "I'm using powdered milk, looking at new ways to innovate filtering to ensure the powdered milk is safe for consumption," she says.

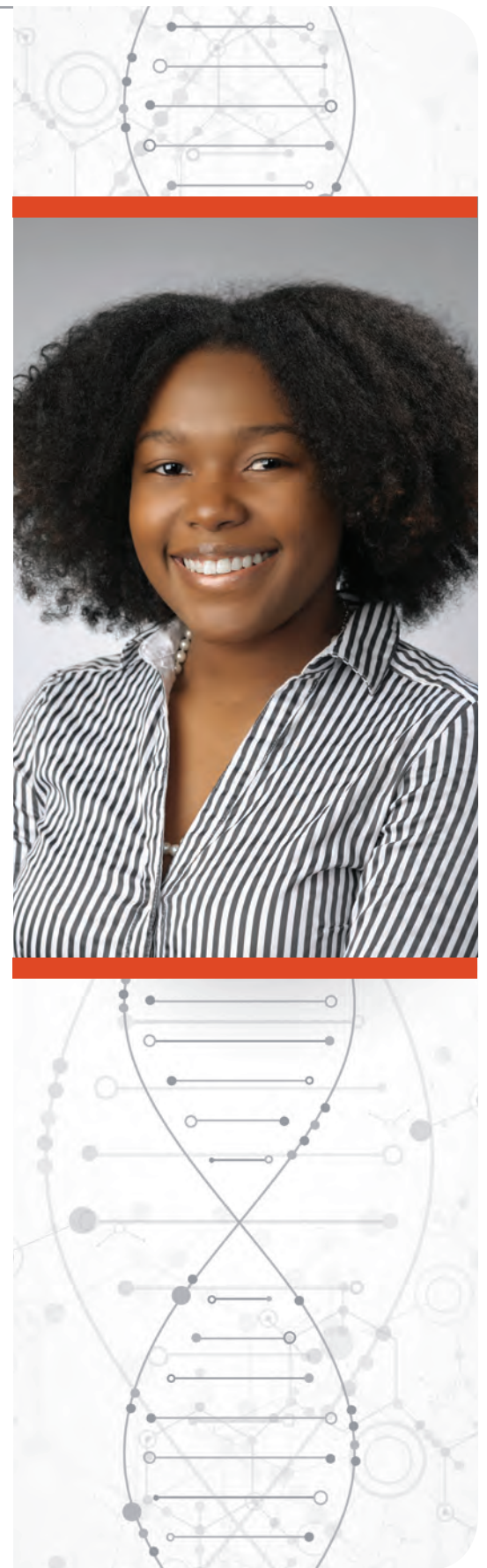
Christmas will stay at Syracuse University to pursue a master's in biomedical engineering. After that, she'll look at doctoral programs and says her goal is to work in tissue design, focusing on the anterior cruciate ligament. This summer, she'll return to National Grid, where she interned last summer in the outdoor lighting unit.

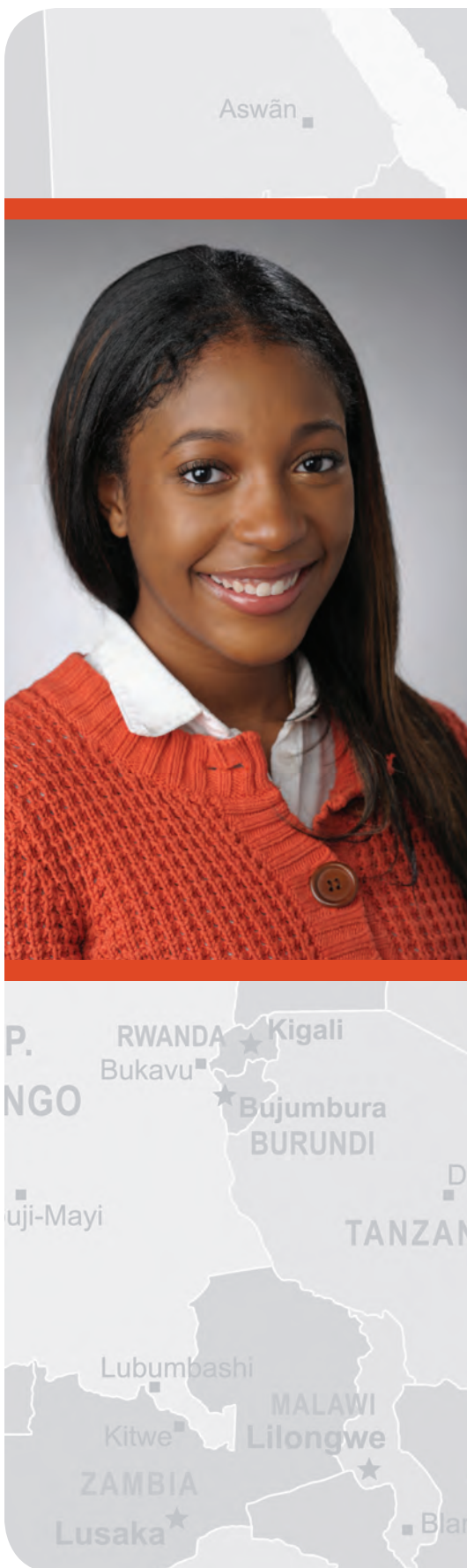
Outside of the classroom, Christmas is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha, tutors middle school students, and participates in the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Research Program, which provides paid research opportunities for students. Christmas works in the lab of Professor Mary Beth Monroe, working to create a degradable foam that could be used to create a blood clot, as one example, for use on gunshot victims.

Christmas was named an Our Time Has Come Scholar in her junior year.

"This scholarship is one of the best things that has happened to me in college. I've been fortunate to receive scholarships from several endowments, and that financial support really makes a difference," she says.

"But just as valuable to me has been the career building programming and the networking opportunities," she says. "The program has allowed me to understand that I am more than just another black student on campus. I am a seed that will continue to grow, and I will pass on what I am learning to future scholarship recipients."





AMBER HUNTER '19

As a broadcast and digital journalism student at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Amber Hunter '19 has reported on issues ranging from SU's mumps outbreak to the Syracuse mayoral election. A double major with political science, Hunter put those skills to good use during a study abroad program in Rwanda, where she studied the 1994 Rwandan genocide and the country's efforts toward restoration and reconciliation. She specifically tailored her research on women's empowerment in a post-conflict society.

Hunter is the first Syracuse University student to study abroad in Rwanda, spending fall 2018 semester there. She'd previously spent a summer abroad studying in Madrid and says she was looking for a program that would challenge her more and take her out of her comfort zone. "I'm very interested in human and civil rights," she says. "I knew that the intensive field-based learning program would give me the opportunity to learn a lot there."

Hunter says the intensive program surpassed her expectations. She lived with a local family (only the father spoke English) while doing an internship at Rwandan Girl Guides Association, where she conducted her research and facilitated youth empowerment workshops. She says learning about the role of women in the genocide inspired her research.

"In the context of genocide, most of the survivors were women," she explains. "Sixty-one percent of Rwandan Parliament is now women. I looked at what some of their challenges are in a culturally patriarchal society and examined how they were combatting social norms in society."

Hunter says she wanted to examine how young girls are also being empowered to continue the fight for gender equality in Rwanda. "Being able to learn about the genocide firsthand by speaking with people who actually lived through it was amazing."

Hunter plans to pursue a career in law. This summer she will participate in the Sidley Prelaw Scholars program, which aims to increase diversity in law schools and the legal profession. Hunter learned about the opportunity from Maria Melendez '89 during an Our Time Has Come Leadership Program.

Hunter was named an Our Time Has Come Scholar at the beginning of her junior year. "The program has been so valuable for connecting us with alumni for networking and resources," she says. "I would have never known about this program otherwise."

In addition to participating in Our Time Has Come, Hunter has served as a mentor for the Dimensions program, where upper-class women of color mentor first-year students to help them transition to the university.

"I participated in the program as a mentee my freshman year and found it really helpful, so became a mentor in my sophomore and junior years," she says. Her junior year, she served as the mentee intern, in charge of overseeing all of the mentor-mentee relationships and planning events. Hunter also tutored local high school students through the Say Yes to Education program throughout her college career and served as president of National Association of Black Journalists at Syracuse University.

Hunter capped off her senior year with being named a Fulbright Scholar. After completing the summer law program, she will move to Spain for nine months, where she will teach English to students in the Spanish school system.

"I know my experiences living abroad will be extremely useful and impactful for my future career," she says. "I know I want to combine the foundation of law with my passion for people and human rights to make positive change in the world, whether that's through politics, the nonprofit sector, or government."

CHARITY LUSTER '19

Charity Luster '19 loves proving doubters wrong—and she's good at it. As she prepared for graduation, Luster shared her story of overcoming obstacles to succeed and thrive at Syracuse University.

Luster dropped out of high school at 16. She went to Job Corps, a free education and job training program, to get her GED and ended up enrolling in its business technology program.

"I started to realize that, OK, I'm really good at this," she recalls.

Luster enrolled in Northern Maine Community College, first studying computer electronics and eventually computer and network technology. After earning an associate's degree, she only applied to one school—Syracuse University. "The school motto, 'Knowledge crowns those who seek her,' stood out to me as a representation of my life at that point," she says. "If I didn't go out and seek a way to better myself, if I didn't go out and seek a new major that nobody told me I could do, then I wouldn't have the knowledge I had at that point and the knowledge I have today."

Luster says being a nontraditional student helped her in many ways. "Because I came in understanding what I wanted from school and the journey I have taken, I ended up getting a lot more respect from the faculty members and staff that I worked with," she says.

But it wasn't all smooth sailing. Her first year at SU, Luster spent up to 40 hours a week working two jobs, one in food services and another at Macy's. "It would take me two hours or sometimes longer to get myself to and from work on public transportation," she says. "The experience drained me, and I was failing in school."

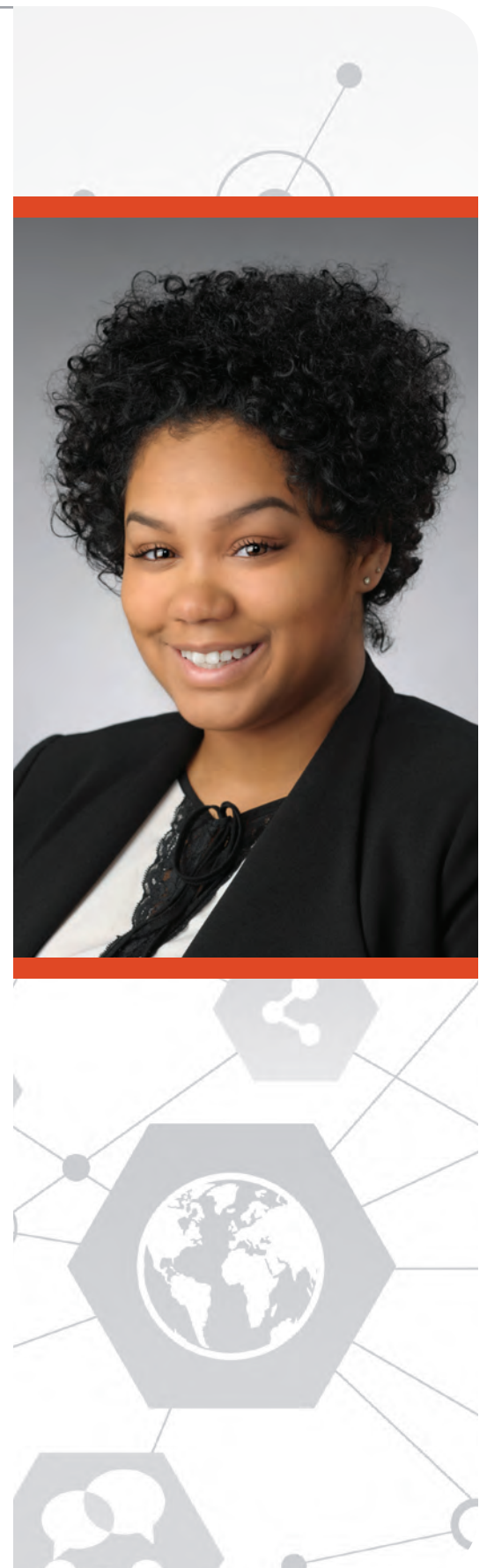
Her friend Stephen Benn '17, an Our Time Has Come Scholar, urged her to apply for a scholarship through the OTHC program. Luster says receiving that scholarship changed everything.

"I was able to quit my job at Macy's and focus on my classes," she says. "Without the financial help, without the guidance and encouragement of Angela Morales-Patterson, and the inspiration from the alumni who come back to speak to us, I definitely wouldn't be on track to graduate this spring. I feel forever indebted to the OTHC program."

Luster, who earned her degree in management information systems and services from the School of Information Studies, has served as both vice president and president of the National Society of Black Engineers, an organization that has been influential in her success.

"When I came in, there were a lot of other women like me in the chapter, to not only encourage me on the academic side but also encourage me on the professional development side," she says.

The Vineland, New Jersey, senior wants to open doors and encourage underrepresented groups to enter STEM education fields. "Helping other people have that moment is what pushes me to do what I do now," she says.



LIST OF DONORS OUR TIME HAS COME SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Gifts received for Our Time Has Come from October 1, 2018-May 10, 2019

GIVING LEVEL OF \$25,000 OR MORE

Syracuse Black Law Alumni Collective Endowed Scholarship

Felicia D. Collins Ocumarez G'98, L'98

In memory of Marvin Sr. and Dolores Collins

GIVING LEVEL OF \$10,000 - \$24,999

Office of Multicultural Advancement Gifts

Wegmans Food Markets Inc.

Delta Sigma Theta Endowed Scholarship Fund

Keith A. Moody '89 and Fatimah Moody '90

Undergraduate Black and Hispanic Scholarship Endowment

Thomas M. Schmidt and Vanessa E. Schmidt

GIVING LEVEL OF \$5,000 - \$9,999

AKA Iota Upsilon Chapter Alumnae 1975 Legacy Graduate Scholarship

Dr. Sharon A. Brangman '77 and Charlie E. Lester '81

African American Accounting Alumni Endowed Scholarship

Dr. Charles A. Houston Jr. '90 and Monica E. Houston C.P.A. '90, '91

Class of '74 Endowed Scholarship

Wesley C. Dias '74

Gwynne A. Wilcox '74

Undergraduate Black and Hispanic Scholarship Endowment

Melissa S. Rich '71 and R. Bruce Rich

Jacqueline M. Welch '91 and Tarik J. Welch

Allman-Manning Vocal Music Memorial Scholarship

Rosalyn Y. Allman-Manning '75

Alpha Phi Alpha Delta Zeta Endowed Scholarship

Mark C. Darrell '79 and Vivian A. Darrell '80

GIVING LEVEL OF \$1,000-\$4,999

AKA Iota Upsilon Chapter Alumnae 1975 Legacy Graduate Scholarship

Dwayne L. Joseph '94 and Lamindy C. Brandon-Joseph '94

Sonya D. Grant '94

Hope Whyllie-Cheeks '83 and Dr. Curtis Cheeks Jr.

Alpha Phi Alpha Delta Zeta Endowed Scholarship

Laraine B. Jones '75 and Rufus E. Jones '75

Allman-Manning Vocal Music Memorial Scholarship

Ronald Crenshaw and Evelyn Crenshaw

Class of '74 Endowed Scholarship

Phillip D. Dunigan '76

Leonard R. Garner Jr. '74 and Robin Garner

Connie Orlando '89 Endowed Scholarship

Constance M. Orlando '89

Delta Sigma Theta Endowed Scholarship Fund

Gisele A. Marcus '89

Candice L. Carnage '90

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Theta Xi Chapter Endowed Scholarship

Paul E. Rowe '80

Donald H. Saint-Germain '12

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Pi Iota Chapter Endowed Scholarship

Ronald T. Capers and Andrea T. Capers '95

Rev. Dr. Kevin D. Miller '88 and Myra Y. Miller '95

Helena Mitchell Scholarship

William C. Lindsey and Helena Mitchell Lindsey G'78, Ph.D. '87

Kappa Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Endowed Scholarship

Michael E. Blackshear '91 and Rhonda Blackshear

Akima H. Rogers '94 and Lt. Col. Pia W. Rogers '98, G'01, L'01

Delta Beta Executive Alumni Foundation

Samaria Harris-Pitts '83 and Michael Pitts

The Medtronic Foundation

Delta Beta Executive Alumni Foundation

Office of Multicultural Advancement Gifts

Cricket Wireless

Michael E. Blackshear '91 and Rhonda Blackshear

Vincent H. Cohen Jr. '92, L'95 and Dr. Lisa S. Cohen

Tina L. Eskridge '95

Lt. Col. Victor Holman '82 and Dakota Holman '83

Undergraduate Black and Hispanic Endowed Scholarship Fund in Public Communications

L. Kelly Atkinson Jr. '79



Undergraduate Black and Hispanic Scholarship Endowment

Anonymous
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
Strada Education Network
Sharon R. Barner '79 and Haywood E. McDuffie
Keith M. Brown '82 and Maria M. Perez-Brown
Bonnie L. Brown
Paul L. Cornell III '79 and Lois Cornell
Tenzer V. Cunningham '74
Colin A. Danville '80 and Dr. Jenice L. View '80
Lisa A. Williams-Fauntroy '91 and Michael K. Fauntroy
Tara A. Favors '95 and Dale Favors
Jamilie V. McCullough '95
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Offering Hope Through Humor

Trevor Noah Attracts Record Crowd at SU’s 34th MLK Celebration

Thousands filled the Carrier Dome January 28 to attend Syracuse University’s 34th annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, which included a sold-out dinner, singers, dancers, and speakers, including headlining guest Trevor Noah. A native of South Africa, Noah is a comedian, host of the Peabody Award-winning *The Daily Show*, and author of the bestselling autobiography *Born a Crime*, which was required reading for all SU first-year students this year.

The theme of this year’s event—the largest college-based MLK observance—was “The Global Impact of Civil Rights.” The event was co-chaired by Deresha Hayles ’19, a student in the College of Arts and Sciences, and Rev. Brian Konkol, dean of Hendricks Chapel. Hayles said the planning process for the event included highlighting similar community struggles from Selma to Syracuse to South Africa.

The celebration was emceed by retired Syracuse WSTM news anchor Jackie Robinson ’78, a graduate of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, who presented the Martin Luther King Jr. Unsung Heroes Awards. This year’s winners included Syeisha Byrd G’12, programs director for the Hendricks Chapel Office of Engagement; local Syracuse student artist Amiah Crisler; Priya Penner ’20, a political science and citizenship civic engagement major who serves as the Disability Student Union’s president; and Center for Community Alternatives community engagement director Marissa Saunders. A fifth award was given posthumously to Stephen Mahan, the director of SU’s Photography and Literacy Project, who died in July 2018.

A “Conversation with Trevor Noah” was moderated by Jennifer Sanders, a broadcast journalist for NewsChannel 9. Sanders and Noah discussed his book and topics ranging from apartheid to his use of humor to cope with serious events in his life.

Noah explained life under apartheid, which he called “legal racism.” He described how his white Swiss father, who was seen as superior under apartheid law, was unable to live with his Xhosa mother and how, as a mixed-race child, he fell into a class that wasn’t supposed to exist due to a ban on interracial relationships. Noah credited his mother for helping him process the harsh reality of life in South Africa.

One of the life lessons she taught him was to never let the racist actions of others ruin his day.

“You don’t let that injustice change who you fundamentally wish to be. In your pursuit of equality, you don’t need to lose the very joy that you wish to fully realize,” he said.

Noah spoke of the similarities between Nelson Mandela and King, saying that both fought for equality for all, not just those of their identity. From Mandela he says he learned to resist oppression from a place of love rather than a place of anger.

As for his comedy, “humor is how I see the world,” Noah said. “It is a visceral expression of our joy.”

Noah said he never expected his book to connect with people as much as it did, but it made him realize how similar people are to one another. Noah said all of his lessons come from his mother. Everyone is in control of what they do in their life, and while not all life experiences may be good, “what you make of those things will determine where you end up,” he said.

In addition to remarks by Noah, Konkol, and Chancellor Kent Syverud, the celebration featured performances by the Syracuse-based Adanfo Ensemble, an African dance and drumming group; the Black Celestial Choral Ensemble; SU’s 2019 Community Choir; Orange Appeal; the Black Reign Step Team; and local hip-hop group YAT, who performed in association with the Southwest Community Center’s Higher Standards Camp.

Black History Month Kicked Off with Black Lounge Event



Syracuse University kicked off an active month of Black History Month programming with the annual, highly anticipated dinner and music celebration, The Black Lounge, on February 2.

This year's event featured headliner Anomalous People, as well as performances by Simone Ayres '19, Charity Luster '19, Gaelyn Smith '20, and Creations Dance Company, and music by DJ Maestro. The event

was hosted by Michael Rainey Jr. from the Starz hit series *Power*.

In addition to the celebration of black music and culture, the event included an awards presentation. The annual Trailblazer Award and Distinguished Alumni Excellence Award were presented by the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Office of Multicultural Advancement.

Dorothy "Dottie" Russell was honored with the 2019 Trailblazer

Award, which recognizes a member of the campus community who has made a positive impact on Syracuse University. Russell has been a staple at Syracuse University Food Services for decades and has worked in the Schine Dining Center since the building opened. In addition to serving students and making them part of her campus family, Russell serves fellow employees as a committed advocate and union steward. She is recognized for her compassion and ongoing commitment to helping those who fall on hard times.

Charles "CJack" Jackson '91 (left) received the 2019 Distinguished Alumni Excellence Award. The award honors an alumnus who has made a difference for students through their leadership, engagement, and service. Jackson, an award-winning music, television and film producer and journalist, is a graduate of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. Through his companies, CJack Run Revue and The CJack Run Network, Jackson has provided Syracuse University students, Syracuse high school students, and community members with opportunities to learn about and advance careers in music, television, and production. He also founded and directed the SummerStart gospel choir and served as the special events coordinator for the program

Lawrence Jackson '13 Gives Sankofa Alumni Lecture



Lawrence K. Jackson '13 returned to campus February 26 to give the third annual Sankofa Lecture. A journalist, host, producer and public speaker, Jackson is anchor for NBC's digital news show *Stay Tuned*, a New York City-based program with more than 30 million monthly viewers, three-quarters under age 25.

The Sankofa Lecture, sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Office of Multicultural Advancement, welcomes a Syracuse University alumnus of African descent back to campus to discuss their accomplishments and career path as part of the University's Black History Month Celebration.

Speaking to an enthusiastic crowd at Watson Hall, Jackson described his journey from an undeclared SU first-year student who struggled to get accepted into SU's S.I. Newhouse School of Public

Communications to becoming a successful broadcast journalist. He emphasized the importance of perseverance in the face of rejection. "People tell you to be realistic because they don't want you to think too big, they don't want you to push yourself as far as you can go," Jackson said. "They limit what you're capable of."

Jackson also stressed being true to one's personal, racial, and ethnic identity to strengthen and individualize their journalism.

"Know who you are and know what you bring to the table," he said. "You have a voice that no one else can imitate."

After his opening remarks, Jackson engaged in conversation with moderator Abigail Covington '19, an Our Time Has Come Scholar. A question- and-answer session followed, allowing audience members to ask Jackson questions via Twitter.

A graduate of the Newhouse School's broadcast journalism program, Jackson served as vice president for the National Association of Black Journalists, produced his own show on the student-run radio station WERW, was the Angela Y. Robinson Scholar in the OTHC program, and a member of Omega Psi Phi fraternity.

Jackson's rise began as an on-air host for Sean "Diddy" Combs' music cable network, Revolt TV, where he served as New York correspondent, providing live news hits and breaking news coverage. He then joined Viacom as one of the hosts for the reboot of MTV's iconic show *Total Request Live*. He joined *Stay Tuned* in February 2018.

Student Creative Agency Makes Impact



Most students use college as a means to prepare for their future profession. By contrast, Kelsey Davis '19 used her Syracuse University experience to launch her career.

In 2016, Davis formed CLLCTVE, a creative agency that develops collegiate creatives in proximity to universities across the country to deliver creative solutions to brands. After a few semesters of running the company, she was joined by Ryan Williams as chief operations officer. The company has done projects for companies including 300 Entertainment, Land Rover, Coca Cola, and Puma.

"Generation Z grew up learning how to make websites and videos before they even thought about college, but they often lack the capabilities to scale and monetize from their creative skills while thriving in an intense academic environment," says Davis, who majors in television, radio, and film at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. "I was that student."

Davis decided to solve the problem by creating CLLCTVE, which specifically aims to end the exploitation of artists by giving young creatives the resources to leverage creative skills and social influence into power and financial gain. Serving as a liaison between creators and brands, the student-run platform empowers students to develop their craft, understand their respective industries, recognize opportunities, and precisely quantify the value of their work.

One of those student is Abigail Covington '19, an Our Time Has Come Scholar who serves as head of marketing and digital strategy for CLLCTVE. "CLLCTVE has given me hands-on experience in the business," she says. "I spent the three years prior working at a public relations firm and communications marketing agency, where I saw the nuts and bolts and got a layout for how things operate. CLLCTVE has allowed me to take what I learned from that experience and build on it by executing for a company on my own. I've had to be a generalist and learn an array of skills to ensure that we're able to do what is necessary to provide for our clients and our collegiate creatives."

Last October, with support from the Office of Multicultural Advancement, CLLCTVE hosted "Art of Finesse," a day-long conference that attracted 150 creative-minded Syracuse University students who attended a day of workshops, lectures, and demonstrations with some of the nation's top digital media brands and influencers.

The same weekend, CLLCTVE took first prize in the first-ever 'Cuse Tank entrepreneurship competition held during Family Weekend, which was co-sponsored by the Blackstone LaunchPad and Syracuse University Libraries. A panel of parent judges who are successful entrepreneurs in a variety of industry sectors voted on finalist teams, with CLLCTVE taking the \$5,000 top prize. A week later, they won first place and another \$5,000 at the Google Pitch Competition hosted by Black Girl Ventures in New York City.

CLLCTVE also took first place in the campus qualifier for the Hult Prize, a year-long competition that challenges college students around the world to solve a pressing social issue with a \$1 million top prize to help launch its social enterprise.

Following their winning presentation, CLLCTVE was invited by the Syracuse's Mayor's Office to jointly develop a pilot program to work on a youth leadership initiative with the City. Over spring break in March, the firm competed in the global regional competition for the Hult prize, traveling to Boston to pitch to investors, industry leaders, social entrepreneurs, and NGO global leaders. "We didn't win, but the judges really loved our pitch and energy, and we made some great connections," says CLLCTVE art director Lucia Baez '19.

In early April, the firm hit a major milestone going live with its beta platform. "Our vision for CLLCTVE is to empower the next generation of creatives," says Davis, a native of Atlanta who came to SU as a Posse Foundation Scholar. "As a member of CLLCTVE's beta platform, college creatives are able to create an account, develop an online portfolio, follow and chat with other members, publish their own personal content, and gain access to our catalog of developmental e-learning resources."

Over the next few months, CLLCTVE intends to expand its reach from Upstate New York to colleges and universities across the country. "We have already extended our reach to Harvard University, Rutgers University, New York University, and a few more," she says.

Post-graduation, she and other team members (including Williams, Baez, and Covington) plan on staying in Syracuse to continue pursuing CLLCTVE, some attending graduate school at Syracuse University to gain additional skills that will help the company grow.

"We bridge the gap between Gen Z consumers and brands by developing and scaling our own network of creatives and allowing them to produce content for brands they know and love," says Davis. "At the same time, we are able to build, engage, and nourish a self-learning community, providing our college creatives with economic opportunity, professional development, and mentorship from the top brands and industry leaders in the world."

Keith A. Alford Appointed Syracuse University's First Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer



After a nationwide search, Syracuse University appointed Keith A. Alford as the university's first chief diversity and inclusion officer. Alford, associate professor and chair of the David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics School of Social Work, has served as interim chief diversity officer since July 2018.

"In his capacity as interim chief diversity officer, Keith has exceeded expectations, serving as both a leader and a bridge, bringing together diverse groups and viewpoints in constructive dialogue that has produced action," says Chancellor Kent Syverud. "I am grateful that the search committee diligently considered a strong lineup of candidates, and I am delighted that they found the most impressive candidate to be the person already doing the job in an innovative and effective way."

Alford's appointment fulfills a key priority of the Chancellor's Workgroup on Diversity and Inclusion, which delivered wide-ranging recommendations in 2016 aimed at creating a more welcoming, respectful campus climate.

As chief diversity and inclusion officer, Alford reports directly to the Chancellor, serves on the Chancellor's Executive Team, and provides executive leadership, oversight, and vision in the administration of services, programs, policies, and procedures related to advancing Syracuse University's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Alford will also lead the implementation of a University-wide strategic plan for diversity and inclusion that will centralize diversity and inclusion efforts in partnership with the University's 13 schools and colleges and provide students with an education informed by multiple points of view, life experiences, abilities, ethnicities, cultures and belief systems.

"Diversity requires inclusion, which means actively acknowledging, incorporating, engaging, and facilitating participation from all groups," says Alford. "Targeted university endeavors from all divisional operations are strengthened when diversity and inclusion are given

credence and fully embraced. The more we increase campus diversity on a number of fronts, the more educational advantages increase for everyone associated with campus life. I'm honored to serve in this capacity."

In his role as interim chief diversity officer, Alford is credited with working with faculty, staff, and students across campus to lead best practices on diversity and inclusion and in promoting increased dialogue and communication through programming and workshops on diversity and inclusion and understanding bias to the campus community.

LaVonda Reed, who along with Dolan Evanovich, senior vice president for enrollment and the student experience, co-chaired the search committee, says the committee was impressed with the caliber, experience, and achievements of the candidate pool. But it was Alford's proven ability to cultivate cross-campus relationships, his commitment to effecting meaningful change, and his depth of tangible and applicable experience that elevated him above other candidates.

"Through his commitment to outreach and dialogue, and his continuous advocacy for issues related to inclusion and engagement over his professional career, Keith has become the chief diversity and inclusion officer we were seeking," says Reed, professor of law and associate provost for faculty affairs. "As a member of our faculty, he has established himself as a thoughtful scholar and one who understands the capacity each of us possess to grow intellectually and in our interactions with the world around us."

Alford joined the Syracuse University faculty in 1996. He received a master's degree and Ph.D. from the College of Social Work at The Ohio State University and a bachelor of arts degree in history and sociology from Coker College.

Woolley Elected to University's Board of Trustees



Howard E. Woolley '80 is president and CEO of the Howard Woolley Group LLC, a strategic business and public policy advisory firm serving the telecommunications and technology sectors. He is a recognized leader in the field of regulatory risk management, public policy and government affairs.

After graduating from Syracuse University, Woolley worked for the National Association of Broadcasters, promoting diversity in the broadcast industry, and later worked in its government relations department. He ultimately rose to the level of vice president-regulatory affairs. In 1993, he joined Verizon's predecessor company, Bell Atlantic Corp., where he later became a senior vice president serving as public policy advisor to every CEO of

Verizon Wireless until he retired from the company in 2013.

Woolley's board service includes the Johns Hopkins Medicine Board of Trustees and telecommunications company Somos Inc., where he chairs the nomination and governance committee.

Woolley holds a bachelor's degree from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, where he serves on the school's advisory board. Woolley and his late wife, Gail '79, established an endowment at the Newhouse School. He also holds a master of administrative sciences degree from the Johns Hopkins University, where he is engaged in sickle cell anemia philanthropy.

Woolley counts as one of his most satisfying achievements the 2017 publication of his late wife Gail's autobiography, *SOAR: A Memoir* (Agate). Woolley lives in Potomac, Maryland.

New Leadership for CFAC



Tanisha M. Jackson, Ph.D., joined Syracuse University in January as the new executive director of the Community Folk Art Center and professor of practice in the Department of African American studies.

She's hit the ground running, with an immediate focus on strengthening programming for the center and increasing SU student engagement. "I'd love to get more students to come in and use the center, showcase their work, intern, get involved in creative research initiatives, and really view the center as their space," she says.

Jackson says her new role at SU provides the perfect marriage of her interests, values, and skill set. "CFAC is a space that specifically looks to develop programming and opportunities that center around African diaspora art and community engagement. In addition, my MBA gives me a great administrative background for running the center," she says.

Jackson joined Syracuse University from The Ohio State University, where she was assistant director of The Frank W. Hale Jr. Black Cultural Center. She concurrently held positions as an adjunct assistant professor of Africana studies at the University of Cincinnati, specializing in e-learning strategies, and as a visiting assistant professor of Africana studies at the University of Toledo. She attended The Ohio State University and earned multiple degrees—a master's degree in African American and African/black studies, along with a Ph.D. in art education—as well as earning an MBA from The University of Toledo.

Jackson is responsible for oversight of all CFAC operations—curating exhibitions, developing cultural programs and research initiatives, maintaining collections, coordinating public outreach, and managing fundraising. She also will teach one AAS course per semester on African diaspora art and culture.

In spring semester, it was a course on black film. "We looked at early African American film from the 1900s, films that really tell the story of African American experience within a cultural, social, and political context, reflecting our experience within the fabric of

America, and from there looked at narratives of today," she explains.

Founded in 1972 as a launching pad for African diaspora artists, CFAC has grown to support Latino, Native American, and women artists. The center offers public exhibitions, artist talks, classes and workshops (particularly in art, dance, and movement) and is a longtime academic partner of AAS. Jackson hopes to build on the legacy of community support for CFAC, continuing to serve as a resource for both Syracuse community and regionally.

"Art is a vehicle for human expression, serving as a way to bring community issues to the forefront of the conversation," she says.

Jackson, who has written extensively about the representation of black women in art and media, hopes to launch an arts research initiative at CFAC.

"I think there's a lot to explore through scholarship in the arts, and I want to encourage others to engage in this activity so we can really start exploring and documenting narratives with a critical eye," she says. "There's a lot of rich history within the Syracuse community that is connected to CFAC, so promoting arts scholarship can help to tell the story and convey just how significant has been."

"CFAC plays a major role in showcasing diverse cultural perspectives, offering critical engagement for students and the community," says Karin Ruhlandt, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. "I look forward to collaborating with Tanisha, who is a big-picture thinker with a clear vision of the arts and humanities for the campus community."

As part of the Colation of Museums and Art Centers on campus, CFAC showcased work by Syracuse University M.F.A. students during April and May, followed by its 47th annual Teen Show, a competitive art exhibition held in partnership with the local LINKS organization. "We are excited to support young artists in their work and as future patrons of spaces like CFAC," Jackson says.

The Teen Show is as old as the gallery itself. "This is our 47th year, and we have begun planning the celebration for our 50th anniversary, which will happen in 2022," she says. "We hope to have many alumni back to celebrate with us."

Perez Honored as Outstanding Journalism Educator



Simon Perez, associate professor of broadcast and digital journalism at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, has been named an Outstanding Journalism Educator by *Crain's NewsPro*. The honor was published in the January issue.

The nomination noted Perez's "ability to critique and create a realistic newsroom environment with strict deadlines while also maintaining a positive and open environment for learning."

Perez is an award-winning bilingual reporter and a 20-year news industry veteran. His professional experience includes work in television (KPIX CBS 5 in San Francisco; WRIC ABC 8 in Richmond, Virginia; WGXA Fox 24 in Macon, Georgia.; and Canal de Noticias, NBC NewsChannel in Charlotte, North Carolina), newspaper (ABC *Prensa Española* in Madrid; *Daily News-Record* in Harrisonburg, Virginia.; and *Danville Register & Bee* in Danville, Virginia) and magazine (*Macworld/España* in Madrid). He also served as a reporter for the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games in 1996.

"Simon has high expectations of his students, but he gives them the tools and the benefit of his professional experience to meet those expectations," says Chris Tuohey, chair of the broadcast and digital journalism department. "Our goal is to make our students employable in all aspects of journalism immediately upon graduation. Simon plays a major role in helping us meet that goal and employers know it."

Rolling to Lead Art Education Association



James Haywood Rolling Jr. G'91, dual professor and chair of art education and teaching and leadership in the College of Visual and Performing Arts and School of Education and director of diversity, equity, and inclusion in VPA, has been elected by his peers as president-elect of the National Art Education Association (NAEA).

The NAEA is the world's largest professional membership organization exclusively for visual art and design educators at all levels. Rolling's six-year term (two as president-elect, two as president, and two as past president) began March 17.

Rolling is a past member of the NAEA board of directors, serving as higher education division director from 2011-2013. He is the 2014 recipient of the National Higher Education Art Educator Award for outstanding service and achievement of national significance and served a three-year term (2015-2017) as senior editor of *Art Education*, the bimonthly journal of NAEA.

Rolling has been a commissioner-at-large on the NAEA Research Commission since 2014 and is its newly elected associate chair. He is also the author of *Swarm Intelligence: What Nature Teaches Us About Shaping Creative Leadership* (St. Martin's Press), a surprising look at the social origins of creativity, and the *Arts-Based Research Primer* (Peter Lang Inc.), both published in 2013.

Rolling has written grant project proposals garnering more than \$2 million of external funding since 2014. He is the founder of the 4A Arts & Creative Literacies Academy, a college-community partnership between Syracuse University Art Education and Dr. Edwin E. Weeks Elementary School. 4A Academy features a cross-disciplinary STEAM education instructional format exploring the arts and sciences and serving more than 800 students in grades K-5 daily.

Rolling earned an M.F.A. in studio arts research at Syracuse University.

Alston to Lead Philosophy of Education Society



Kal Alston, professor of cultural foundations of education and associate dean for academic affairs in the School of Education, will serve as president elect for the Philosophy of Education Society (PES) for 2019-20 and president of the organization in 2020-21.

Alston has been active with PES for more than 30 years, previously serving as chair of the Commission on Professional Affairs, the Committee on Race and Ethnicity, and the Just Community Committee, which is an outgrowth of recent work completed to articulate an anti-harassment policy for the society.

Since joining Syracuse University in 2005, Alston has held University-wide roles, including senior vice president of human capital development, as well as both senior associate provost and associate provost for academic administration. In 2018, she was named the associate dean for academic affairs for the School of Education, where she oversees curriculum, accreditation, scholarships and various supports for graduate student research and learning. She received a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

The Philosophy of Education Society is an international forum that promotes the philosophic treatment of educational practice, policy and research.

Wilson to Retire from Student Supportive Services



If success is measured by the number of lives a person touches for the better, then Bob Wilson G'72 is surely one of the most successful men at Syracuse University. When he retires as director of Student Supportive Services (SSS) at the end of July, Wilson leaves an incredible legacy in the thousands of students he's helped become the first in their family to earn a college degree.

SU's Office of Supportive Services administers SU's Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) and SSS programs, state, and federal programs initiated at SU by Horace Smith and Robert Boney that support low-income, underrepresented, first-generation, and disabled college students. With assistance from the Office of Admissions, OSS identifies promising students in these target groups whose admission credentials are on the fringes, then provides social, emotional, and academic support programs to help them succeed.

To help students overcome institutional barriers, Wilson calls the OSS approach "purposeful," beginning before students arrive in Syracuse, laying groundwork in a summer program before their first semester, and then working closely with students for four years until they graduate. In the last 10 out of 12 years, the graduation rate of OSS students has met or exceeded that of Syracuse University's general student body.

Wilson says the work has a ripple effect beyond the individual students who graduate from SU. "All of those folks that get degrees influence those around them by example," he says. "Take Maria Lopez '05, G'07, who now works in our office. Her two sisters and her mother all went on to earn a college degree because they saw her do it and she could help them navigate the process."

Wilson, who received Syracuse University's Martin Luther King Jr. Unsung Hero Award in 2018, admits his career was largely accidental and good fortune.

In 1970, the young Brit received a letter from a college friend who

had come to Syracuse University to start a rugby program. "I need a bit of help, mate," he wrote.

Wilson packed his bags and came, coaching rugby while earning a master's degree in education. He met and married a Syracuse girl, whom he took back to England with him in 1973. After 10 years of missing her family, they returned to Syracuse. Wilson took a job at Syracuse University so he could finish a few remaining graduate credits.

After a couple of years counseling student-athletes in the College of Arts and Sciences, he landed at OSS in 1986. "I kind of stumbled on this position, but ultimately it was the perfect position for me," says Wilson, who has continued coaching rugby during his 37-year SU career. "I am a first-generation student myself and find it easy to be supportive of first-generation students."

Wilson is credited with creating a safe, supportive, and nurturing home base for SSS students and a culture of unconditional positive regard. Through the years, as SU's academic profile has risen, so have the challenges for SSS students.

"Our students may be at the margins of admission requirements, but they are very good students, and we've had to become more sophisticated in our programming to help them compete in an increasingly competitive academic environment," Wilson says.

In a baccalaureate speech last year, Manny Zapata '18 called OSS "a family and a space where students aren't judged by where they come from but rather are afforded the opportunity to belong and have agency to their own futures."

That's exactly what Wilson has strived for. "Working with young people can have its frustrations," he says, "but the end results are spectacular."

SummerStart on Hold

Syracuse University has suspended the SummerStart program for 2019 while it reevaluates options for a more focused and impactful future relaunch. Incoming first-year students in the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) and Student Support Services (SSS) program will still be fully supported during the 2019 Summer Session II with similar programmatic efforts.

According to a statement, "the University recognizes the positive impact of a summer bridge program, and the decision to pause the program was informed by strategic analysis and significant enrollment declines."

SummerStart originated as the HEOP Summer Institute to provide critical thinking, leadership, study, and time management skills to incoming HEOP students, as well as provide a primer for high school-to-college transition issues, academic policies, and University resources. In 2001, the program was renamed SummerStart and became a University-wide program available to any incoming first-year student wanting a jump-start on college life and academics, including international students and student-athletes.

Tanksley to Lead HR at Lincoln University



Jake Tanksley '85 joined Lincoln University, a historically black university in Oxford, Pennsylvania, on June 10 as vice president of human resources. He is the institution's first vice president for human resources, providing executive-level leadership for the university's strategic investment in talent management and organizational transformation.

"We are thrilled to welcome Mr. Tanksley to our leadership team," said President Brenda A. Allen. "His breadth of experience in human resources will be a welcome addition to the Lincoln community."

Tanksley brings more than 25 years of human resources experiences to his new role, previously holding leadership positions at Inroads Upstate New York, Carrier Corporation, and since 2005, at Syracuse University.

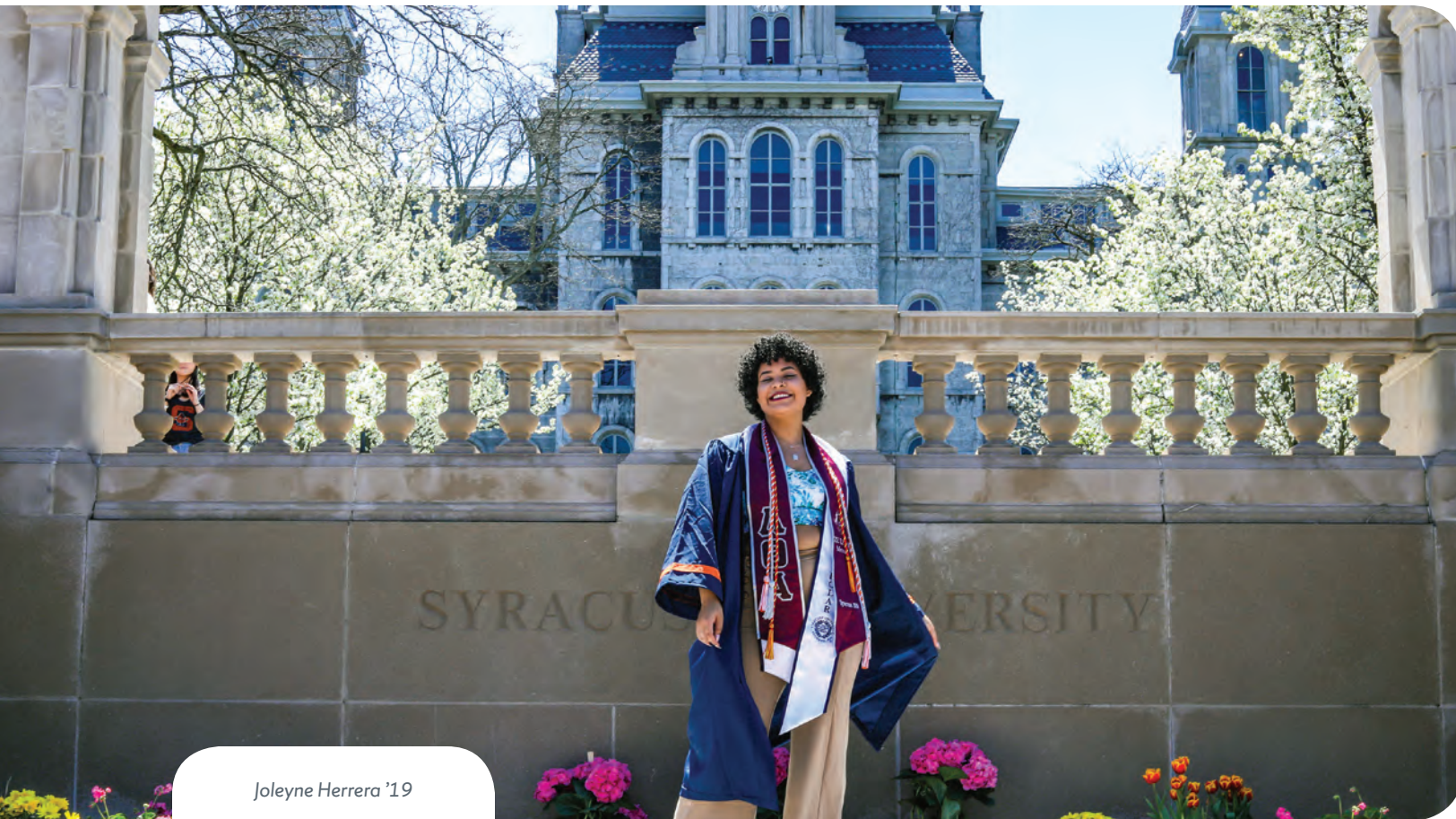
Tanksley joined SU as the first director of human resources to specifically support a large administrative unit—the Division of Advancement and External Affairs. In that role, Tanksley addressed the needs of fundraising and alumni relations staff in Syracuse, New York City, Los Angeles, and Dubai. He also coached senior leaders, managed recruitment and performance management, handled compensation, and guided policy development and employee relations.

He was promoted as the director of recruitment and retention for Syracuse University's central Office of Human Resources, while continuing to serve as the Division of Advancement and External Affairs human resource director for an additional year. Tanksley established the University's first Veteran Employees Resources and Affinity Group and developed the University's senior leadership white glove onboarding process.

In his most recent role, as a senior human resources business partner and director of staff development, he provided strategy and guidance to senior leaders, supervised organizational development and training, streamlined the performance review process, and transitioned the review process to an electronic system. Tanksley also implemented the University's inaugural new supervisor orientation program and launched the first campus-wide Faculty and Staff Appreciation Week.

Tanksley earned an undergraduate degree in speech communication and marketing and is a proud alumnus of the Black Celestial Chorale Ensemble and Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. An active community volunteer, Tanksley served on the board of trustees for WCNY Public Broadcasting and for Mercy Works, Inc. Youth Vision Center, and on the Ministry Leadership Team at Abundant Life Christian Center. He also served as a mentor for the Our Time Has Come Scholarship Program.

Photo by Christian Kiegler



Joleyne Herrera '19

Ramón B. Chicón '94

Building for the Future



As a native New Yorker, Ramón B. Chicón '94 takes great pride in having designed some of the city's iconic landmarks. The Syracuse University-trained architect is the design genius behind projects ranging from Bowlmor Lanes in Times Square to the renovation of the View 34 Plaza in Murray Hill.

"I like making people feel happy about their built environment," he says.

He takes particular pride in his accomplishments considering his humble beginnings. Chicón's family emigrated from the Dominican Republic; he is the only one of four children born in the United States. His father worked as a dishwasher and ultimately the head cook at Yankee Stadium.

"He worked very hard to provide for his family and make a life for us," says Chicón, who was inspired to the field of architecture by his surroundings—the George Washington Bridge and the neo-gothic City College of New York—and a grade school art teacher. "I didn't know what an architect was until she told me I should be one," he recalls.

Chicón applied to architecture school at City College (the more affordable choice) and Syracuse. Although he wasn't accepted into SU's School of Architecture, he was offered alternative placement in the College of Arts and Sciences. "Syracuse had one of the top-ranked programs in the country. I took a chance that I would be able to transfer," he says.

Indeed, Chicón spent his first year at SU focused on excelling at his core requirement courses and developing a portfolio to reapply to the School of Architecture. Those efforts paid off.

Chicón says he took advantage of every opportunity presented to him and excelled in the process, becoming one of the top design students in his class.

"Being a kid from Harlem in one of the nation's top architectural schools was a big deal for me," Chicón says. "I made sure to keep striving for better in the hopes of making a difference and making sure that everyone's effort, including my family's, was not in vain."

Despite his talent, Chicón's undergraduate experience was not without struggle. "Funding my college education was a challenge, to say the least," he says. "I was paying my own way."

Chicón secured support through the National Hispanic Scholarship Fund and through assistance from SU's Office of Student Supportive Services, where he worked part time as a work-study student, editing the office newsletter.

"There were many great professors and administrators that truly cared about keeping me enrolled in school," he says. Through their assistance, he was awarded a merit-based Allwork Scholarship from the American Institute of Architects in 1990 and 1992, and was named an SU Remembrance Scholar for 1992-93.

Chicón's thesis project—designing a cultural center for Washington Heights—was selected for Super Jury as one of the top projects and received the Dean's Thesis Citation. He graduated with honors.

Through a referral from SU Professor Kermit Lee, Chicón interviewed and was hired at the internationally acclaimed architecture and engineering firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in the technical group. After three years, he moved to the Rockwell Group, where he became an associate and flourished with creative design. Chicón next took a position with Eclipse Development, directing the design of Equinox Fitness Clubs across the country. As project manager for high-end real estate developer Alexico Group, Chicón led the renovation of their corporate offices and of The Mark Hotel, considered one of the most luxurious boutique hotels in the world.

"I learned the craft of the construction side of the business," he says.

In 2010, Chicón launched his own firm—BLU3 Development, a full-service real estate development and project management company, working with developers and owners to get their ideas built. His first project was the flagship Bowlmor Lanes. In 2015, he and a partner started MuCh Architecture. He's currently putting the finishing touches on a small commercial building in Manhattan.

"It's a stand-alone one-story building in a plaza with public space, which is unheard of in New York City, where space is typically maxed out with a high-rise. It's like a little jewel box," says Chicón, now a father of four himself, with wife Kerry Swenson Chicón '92, whom he met at SU. "It's taken nearly four years to develop the project."

Chicón does not take his success for granted. "It took a lot of support to get me to where I am today and I am extremely thankful for that support," he says.

Ron Wilson '92

Equity and Inclusion



As a young man, Ron Wilson '92 had the triple goal of becoming a civil rights advocate, a judge, and a college professor. In the course of his career he's accomplished each of those goals and then some.

Today, Wilson is vice president of equity and inclusion at the University of Arizona. He also serves as the university Title IX senior administrator, drawing from his extensive background in the law, civil rights, and due process to help the university of more than 45,000 students cultivate a campus environment free of harassment and discrimination.

Title IX, one of the Education Amendments of 1972, guarantees gender equity in sports and protects students from sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, and dating violence. Wilson joined the University of Arizona as director of Title IX in October and was promoted to his current role in January.

"It's an inaugural position and department that will utilize researched-based best practices" says Wilson. "One of the first phases of the implementation process is to evaluate and assess diversity, equity, inclusion, and Title IX resources on the campus as well as review personnel policies and procedures. In addition, my team will work collaboratively with various stakeholders to develop an action plan around recruitment, retention, tenure, promotion, graduation rates, and persistence."

The University of Arizona is involved in several high-profile lawsuits, but Wilson says that's not necessarily a bad thing. "We want students and employees to come forward if they feel that their rights have been violated," he says. "It is common for the number of complaints to increase when employees and students trust the process and leadership. The University of Arizona is in an excellent position to adopt and implement best practices. Our goal is to become a national model for trauma-informed violence education, prevention, and awareness."

Although new to this role, Wilson was well known in the Tucson community, where he worked in the county attorney's office and then spent a dozen years as presiding judge for the city of South Tucson—the first African American presiding judge in the state. During that time, he also taught courses at the University of Arizona in constitutional law, black politics, and black history in the Africana studies program as an adjunct professor.

In 2014, medical issues spurred Wilson to reevaluate his career as a jurist. He retired from the bench, deciding he'd like to pursue

a career as a higher education administrator. In 2015, Wilson accepted a position at Edinboro University in Pennsylvania as director of social equity, chief diversity officer, ADA coordinator, executive director, ombuds, fraud officer, and Title IX coordinator, a fulfilling role that he says allowed him to learn various aspects of higher education and become an expert in several diversity-, equity-, and inclusion-related spaces. Last summer, he was encouraged to apply for the vacancy at the University of Arizona.

Undoubtedly, Wilson also draws from his unconventional personal background. Wilson is a foster alumnus and adoptee. He has had more than 400 foster brothers and sisters as well as 20 adopted siblings who represent numerous ethnicities. His family life instilled a sense of empathy and compassion, and Wilson says he knew at an early age that he was meant to help people who lacked resources or the ability to help themselves.

As a Syracuse University student, Wilson majored in African American studies and was a member of Omega Psi Phi fraternity and the Student Afro-American Society, but he also made time to volunteer at the Dunbar Community Center and the local Urban League.

He earned his law degree at Northeastern University School of Law, then served as a John D. O'Bryant Community Fellow at the Northeastern University Otto P. Snowden Urban Law and Public Policy Institute, before relocating to Tucson to work in the Pima County Attorney's Office community outreach and community prosecution unit.

Wilson has received numerous honors, including the NAACP Rosa Parks Living History Makers Award, the League of United Latin American Citizens Community Service Award, and the Asa Philip Randolph Institute Ida B. Wells Social Justice Award. He serves on several nonprofit boards and advises local faith-based institutions on how to create effective mentoring programs for at-risk youth.

"I'm passionate about making sure that our next generation of leaders are supported, informed, and connected to their elders," says Wilson. "There's an African word—*ubuntu*—and it means 'I am because we are.' That pretty much sums up my life's work."

Connie Morales '96

Applying the Law



Judge Connie Morales '96 was using the copy machine in the courtroom one morning before court when an attorney asked her to make a copy for him. "I wasn't wearing my robe," she says. Later, when he came before the bench to present his case, she watched his eyes widen as he registered his mistake.

Morales is just a few months into her role as a City Court judge for the City of New York. Since her election and swearing in, she's been assigned to the Bronx Criminal Court.

"We have jurisdiction over misdemeanors, anything from criminal possession to petit larceny to minor assault," she says. "I also sit arraignment, which gives me acting Supreme Court jurisdiction, so I may hear felony cases because my role is essentially whether to set bail and whether to release or remand the defendant."

Morales is a native of the South Bronx herself. She attended public schools until high school, when she won a scholarship to boarding school through the A Better Chance program, attending the Ethel Walker School in Connecticut. When it came time for college, she was looking for a school with greater diversity. Syracuse seemed the perfect fit and generous financial aid made it a feasible choice.

With an eye toward law school, Morales majored in political science and Spanish. She got involved in the Student Government Association, becoming treasurer in her junior year, and was an active member of La Lucha. And in her senior year she became a founding member of Sigma Iota Alpha, a Latino sorority. She attended Albany Law School, where she was close enough to serve as an advisor to her sorority and after earning her law degree, practiced criminal defense law for public indigent service providers, first in Harlem and, later, in the Bronx.

In 2004, Morales began working as the principal law clerk to a Supreme Court judge in Bronx County's Criminal Term, a position she held for 14 years. "That was perfect training for being a judge," she says. "I was basically an apprentice."

In 2018, the local Democratic party tapped her to run for a vacant seat for civil court judge. To her good fortune, she ran unopposed and was elected to a 10-year-term, which began in January.

As a defense attorney, she says, "you're an advocate for your client. It's very one-sided focused on your client's rights."

As a judge, "my role is to rule on the law—to listen to both sides and make a decision based on whatever is consistent with the law," she says.

It's a role she never imagined holding when she embarked on her legal career. "To be honest, I didn't really know it was possible for a Latina woman—I never saw that kind of representation. It was rare that I ever saw someone that looked or sounded like me in a courtroom."

Today, she says the Bronx Criminal Court bench is extremely diverse, something she says is appreciated by those who come before her for judgment.

"Just last week I sentenced a defendant to jail time as part of his plea agreement. I heard him say to his lawyer in Spanish, 'Tell the young lady thank you and that I'm so proud of her.' And I'd just sent him to jail," she says.



Kenneth O. Miles G'11

A Man for Others



During his 24-year career in higher education, Kenneth O. Miles G '11, has had a singular mission: serving students. Regardless of the position, Miles's goal is to provide the resources and mentorship to help students succeed, while at the same time serving as a role model for a life of service to others.

Since 2008, he's done that at Louisiana State University, where he is assistant vice chancellor of academic affairs and executive director of the Cox Communications Academic Center for Student-Athletes. Since his arrival, his goal has been to be a leader in providing transformative support systems to student athletes by creating a sustainable infrastructure to underscore the desired outcomes of The Total Team Commitment, their strategic plan.

He also wants to turn out good citizens. "Enter to Learn. Leave to Serve" is the motto of the Cox Communications Academic Center for Student-Athletes. That's a value Miles holds dear, imprinted on him at Washington, D.C.'s Gonzaga High School, an all-male Jesuit school with the motto "Be a Man for Others," a maxim he has adopted as his own.

Miles well understands the pressures and demands of being a student-athlete at a Division I university. He was a four-year letterman on the football team at the University of Virginia, where he studied studio art (specializing in print making). Despite the time demands of school and sport, he made time to volunteer in the community, developing relationships with local youth and elderly through the Big Brother and Adopt-a-Grandparent programs.

After graduating and a short time teaching at his former high school, Miles returned to Virginia to begin his career in higher education, serving as academic and life skills coordinator to student-athletes.

In 1997, Miles joined Syracuse University as director of academic support for the football program. Under his direction, the Syracuse football program reached a 100 percent graduation rate in 2000, which led the nation and earned the American Football Coaches Association Achievement Award.

He then spent four years at the School of Information Studies, serving as assistant dean for student services and later as executive director of graduate admissions and diversity enrollment management, before returning to the athletics department as associate athletics director.

While at Syracuse, Miles completed graduate work in cultural foundations of education at the School of Education, earning a master's degree in 2011, and completing coursework toward his doctorate. His doctoral research focused on the experience of first-generation black college students at predominantly white institutions, namely Syracuse. He also created the Kenneth O. Miles Scholarship through the Our Time Has Come Scholarship Fund, with the goal of assisting a Syracuse University African American or Native American student cover the costs of a college education.

In 2008, Miles joined the LSU family as executive director of the Cox Communications Academic Center for Student-Athletes. He was named assistant vice chancellor of academic affairs in May 2012.

A big focus at LSU has been improving retention and graduation rates. LSU's athletics graduation success rate has increased from 69 percent in 2008 to 89 percent in 2018, while the football graduation success rate has improved from 54 percent to 73 percent in the same period. "Success happens by design; it is not accidental," Miles says. "Graduation is a team effort, and we are fortunate to have such a dedicated team whose priority is to graduate our young men and women."

Miles has served as president of the National Association of Academic and Student-Athlete Development Professionals and is active in community organizations such as Baton Rouge Volunteers of America, Baton Rouge Rotary Club, and 100 Black Men of Baton Rouge. "If you want to develop service and leadership, it's important to model that behavior," he says.



Felicia Collins Ocumarez
L'98, M.P.A. '98

GIVING BACK

“The commitment of Felicia Collins Ocumarez and her colleagues to the success of African American law students is strongly evident in the creation of Syracuse BLAC,” says College of Law Dean Craig M. Boise. “It joins other, growing College of Law diversity and inclusion initiatives that aim to recruit, educate and support future generations of law practitioners of color and from diverse backgrounds.”

When Felicia Collins Ocumarez L'98, M.P.A.'98 attended her 20th College of Law reunion, it was her first time back to the school since she graduated. The reunion also marked the 50th anniversary of SU's Black Law Students Association, and a highlight for Collins Ocumarez was the opportunity to interact with current law students of color.

Collins Ocumarez was disheartened to hear from students that they were disappointed by the lack of involvement in the law school by African American alumni. “Their feeling was that many of us had graduated, moved into professional careers, and never looked back,” she says.

While Collins Ocumarez couldn't argue with that, she could do something about it. Along with J. Christopher Hamilton L'99, she founded the Syracuse Black Law Alumni Collective (Syracuse BLAC) to build a bridge between alumni professionals and the next generation of African American jurists and legal practitioners.

Their first initiative is the MCMIII Movement, an endowment to help students finance their legal education. When fully funded, the \$150,000 endowment will provide need-based scholarships for African American students at the College of Law on a perpetual basis. The goal is to have the endowment fully funded by 2020.

“Syracuse BLAC bears the distinction of being the first ethnic Syracuse University College of Law alumni association and endowment to provide need-based scholarships for African American students,” says Collins Ocumarez, who has made a major gift toward the scholarship.

Responding to student needs at the College of Law was “natural” for Collins Ocumarez. “I always want to do things to feel I'm giving back to society,” she says. “I do pro bono; I'm on boards.”

Some of that stems from her background in social work, which she studied as an undergraduate at Grand Valley State University in Michigan. Collins Ocumarez came to Syracuse University because of the combined J.D./M.P.A. program between the College of Law and the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. “I knew I wanted to do legal work, but I also had a public service interest because of my social work training,” she says.

It was a challenging program. “You do the first year of law school, and then you do the second and third years of law school concurrently with the M.P.A. program,” she says. “It was a difficult thing to do.”

Collins Ocumarez began her career working for a rating agency in New York City's financial district as a legal analyst doing bond work. “I was working in the public finance structures section so it tied my two degrees together,” she says.

Eventually, Collins Ocumarez decided she'd prefer to be a lawyer who did analytics as opposed to an analyst who did legal work, and has since worked in roles as a private sector lawyer doing public sector work. For the last 10 years, she's worked for the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation—the agency that regulates banks—currently serving as in-house counsel for the agency.

“I'm involved with all of the legal operations of the corporation,” she says. “And because of my social work and public administration background, I'm also the steward of our union.”

So when she heard the concerns from current law students while at reunion, she says her immediate reaction was, “We can fix that. Let's do this,” she recalls.

In addition to raising money for scholarships, she hopes the organization will sponsor programs and panels, become a networking bridge for students to alumni. “But because the financial need is so great, we thought we'd start there,” she says.



Vanessa Williams '85 Dazzles at OTHC Benefit Concert

It was an evening for the memory books April 24 at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem when Vanessa Williams '85 performed for an enthusiastic audience of Syracuse University alumni and friends at the Langston Hughes Auditorium.

Williams was clearly performing for family, who came out not only to support one of their own, but for a greater cause. The concert, sponsored by SU's Office of Multicultural Advancement, was a benefit for the Our Time Has Come Scholarship program with proceeds creating the Vanessa Williams Scholarship Fund supporting African American and Latino students in SU's College of Visual and Performing Arts.

"This is something near and dear to my heart," says Williams. "My parents were both teachers and education was a top priority in my family. Being able to help provide educational opportunities for young people and to open up doors to their future careers is of the utmost importance to me."

Williams studied musical theater at SU, catapulting to fame when she was named Miss America in 1984, the first African American woman to receive the crown. Today she is one of the most respected and multifaceted performers in entertainment, having conquered the music charts, Broadway, television, and motion pictures. Williams has earned four Emmy nominations, 11 Grammy nominations, a Tony nomination, three SAG Award nominations, seven NAACP Image Awards, and three Satellite Awards.

In 2007, Williams achieved a career pinnacle with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for her accomplishments as a performer. In 2010, the International Foreign Press Academy named her the recipient of the Mary Pickford Award for Outstanding Artistic Contribution to the Entertainment Industry. And in 2012, Williams and her mother, Helen, landed on *The New York Times* bestseller list with their memoir *You Have No Idea: A Famous Daughter, Her No-Nonsense Mother and How They Survived Pageants, Hollywood, Love, Loss (and Each Other)*, a personal journey of Vanessa's life—told for the first time from her own perspective and with the added wisdom and frankness of her mother.

"The University was thrilled to have Vanessa's support and involvement in raising money for Our Time Has Come," says Miko Horn '95, director of alumni events. "She and her team were lovely to work with, and it meant a lot to her fellow alumni for her to perform this special concert specifically for them."

After the concert, Williams attended a reception with VIP patrons in the lobby at the Schomburg, allowing more time for a personal connection.

"This fundraiser was a great way to showcase the world-class talent that comes out of Syracuse University, to engage our amazing alumni, and to support students of color with an unmet financial need," says Rachel Vassel '91, assistant vice president for multicultural advancement. "It's a win-win for everyone."

ALUMNI EVENTS

L.A. Recap: Inclusion and Diversity in Entertainment

Nearly 200 Los Angeles-area alumni, parents, and students turned out for a reception and panel discussion on inclusion and diversity in the entertainment history, held January 9 at the Harmony Gold Theater.

Alumni panelists representing a range of careers in the industry discussed their careers, the challenges they have faced as minority professionals, and lessons they have learned along the way. “We wanted a range of participants so that students attending could identify with someone on the panel, which happened,” says Joan Adler G’76, assistant vice president of regional programs/Los Angeles.

Indeed, half of those in attendance were current students. The event was held during the orientation week for the Syracuse University Los Angeles Semester (SULA) and during immersion week programs for graduate students studying audio arts, and television, radio, and film at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. It was co-sponsored by SULA and the Office of Multicultural Advancement.

After an opening reception, the panel discussion was moderated by filmmaker Frank Dawson G’76. Panelists included screenwriter Rob Edwards ’85; blogger and content creator Carmen De La Paz ’88; J. Christopher Hamilton G’99, L’99, chief operating officer and president of The Black Group, a portfolio of digital media companies; Jamie Kapili ’12, creative development executive at Illumination Entertainment; Daniel Pares ’03, manager of feature post production at Warner Brothers; and actress Lyric Lewis ’07.

“This was the first in a series of events exploring issues related to inclusion and diversity in entertainment,” says Adler. “Future events may focus on more specific areas of the industry or on other areas of inclusion, such as ageism or physical disability,” she says.



Save the Date

Martha’s Vineyard:

August 11-13, 2019

CBT: Martha’s Vineyard

It’s a summertime Coming Back Together reunion on the Vineyard! Join us for an island tour, clambake, alumni reception and more. Event registration is now open.

South Africa:

October 8-20, 2019

Alumni Trip to South Africa

Join fellow SU alums for a trip of a lifetime! Trip itinerary and details available soon. For more information please go to urbanaintl.com/trips

Fort Lauderdale:

November 4, 2019

Our Time Has Come Charity Golf Tournament Hosted by Sherman Douglas ’89

12:30 p.m. shotgun

Jacaranda Golf Club, Plantation, FL

Mark your calendars and pack your bags for a sunny weekend in Florida. Participants can sign up by foursome or as individual golfers.

Atlanta:

November 16, 2019

Our Time Has Come Benefit Gospel Concert Featuring the Rev. Kurt Carr and BCCE

6-9 p.m.

Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta

Rev. Kurt Carr will join Syracuse University’s iconic Black Celestial Choral Ensemble for a concert in Atlanta to benefit the OTHC BCCE Endowed Scholarship Fund.

For more details or ticket information on any of these events, please visit alumni-of-color.syr.edu/events/ or contact Miko Horn at fmhorn@syr.edu.

Newhouse Dean Loses Battle With Cancer



Commemorative orange ribbons were tied to trees outside of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications to honor the life and impact of Dean Lorraine Branham, who died April 2 from cancer.

Among her many contributions to Syracuse University, Branham spearheaded an \$18 million fundraising campaign for the renovation of Newhouse 2 and the creation of the Newhouse Studio and Innovation Center. She oversaw the creation of the Center for Digital Media Entrepreneurship, the Peter A. Horvitz Endowed Chair in Journalism Innovation, and the W2O Group Center for Social Commerce.

Branham's focus on students was always evident, particularly in her championing of the student-produced, web-based news magazine, *The NewsHouse*. Under her leadership, the Newhouse School created its sports communications emphasis and the Newhouse Sports Media Center. Hundreds of students have benefited from her advocacy of the satellite campus programs Newhouse in New York and Syracuse University Los Angeles Semester.

"Growing up poor, there was always something in me wanting to level the playing field, to create more of a sense of fairness and a sense of, everybody gets an opportunity to do the things they want to do and have a better life," Branham said in a 2017 interview.

Branham, who grew up in Southwest Philadelphia, received a bachelor's degree from Temple University

and had a 25-year career in newspapers as an editor, editorial writer, and reporter in positions at the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *Tallahassee Democrat*, *Baltimore Sun*, and *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Branham became a full-time journalism professor in 2002 and, later, dean of the journalism school at University of Texas at Austin. She became dean of the Newhouse School in 2008, replacing David Rubin. She was the first African American woman to lead a major communications school.

"I don't mind being the first, but I don't want to be the last," Branham said at the time.

"Dean Branham was the personification of what it means to be a trailblazer and on the cutting edge of the industry," says Sarah Glover '96, president of the National Association of Black Journalists. "She emphasized to budding journalists the importance of building strong networks, being an innovator, and having an entrepreneurial spirit. And above all, she was caring and believed in uplifting and molding the next generation. Her life and work served as an example for many as she forged many paths and overcame many barriers."

In a statement, Chancellor Kent Syverud remembered Branham as "a pillar of the Syracuse University community and beyond, an icon in the media industry, an academic innovator, a mentor, an educator, an inspiration, and a friend."

John Charles “Chuck” Harmon ’64



John Charles “Chuck” Harmon ’64, of Syracuse, died February 11. Harmon was born in 1942 in Braddock, Pennsylvania, and grew up in Dallas, Pittsburgh, and Kansas City before his family settled in Philadelphia.

At age 8, he was admitted into the renowned William Penn Charter School on a scholarship, where he learned, played and excelled in football, baseball, and basketball. Harmon attended Syracuse University on a football scholarship and won a letter in football in 1963. During this time, he fell in love with Syracuse, its people, and its abundant outdoor life. Upon graduation, he played semiprofessional football for the Mohawk Valley Falcons in the Atlantic Coast Football League.

Shortly after his football career, Harmon returned to Syracuse and took a job at Hillbrook Detention Facility as a youth counselor, where he stayed for 40 years before retiring as the superintendent of Hillbrook. He then took a job as an early intervention mentor for first- and second-graders at Edward Smith School.

Harmon’s life was full, and his hobbies included flying, fishing, golfing, hunting, sailing, skiing, motocross, model airplanes, boating, camping, cooking, baking, gardening, canning, music, films and theater, photography, scuba diving, and snowmobiling. He was also a lover of fine whiskey and a cigar aficionado.

Harmon was also active in the community, involved with the Juvenile Detention Association of New York State, Labrador Mountain Ski Club, Stockbridge Valley Flying Club, Elbridge Rod and Gun Club, Syracuse University Black Alumni, and New York State Division for Youth, and was inducted into the inaugural class of the William Penn Charter Athletic Honor Society. Harmon is survived by former wives Donna Crichton and Michalle Harmon; co-parent Detria Watson; daughters Anneliese Harmon and Chyleigh Harmon; sister Josephine Harmon Williams; brother Allen Sherman Harmon; Kurtria Hunter; a host of nieces and nephews, godchildren, other relatives; and his beloved pets Jabba and Ziva.

Michael Singletary ’72



Michael Singletary ’72, of New York City, an accomplished painter whose work represented the African American male experience in contemporary America, died January 30.

His work was included in more than 200 exhibitions, including shows at The Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia, The Studio Museum in Harlem, the Whitney Counterweight, the Hudson River Museum, the Neuberger Museum of Art, and at Syracuse University’s Lubin House and Community Folk Art Center. He was the official artist for the New York City Basketball Hall of Fame, and his work has been featured in the films *Mo’ Better Blues* and *Jungle Fever*, as well as on television shows *The Cosby Show* and *227*. Works from *The Jazz Series* were featured on albums by jazz musicians Don Pullen, Bobby

Watson, and Bill Saxton.

Singletary received a bachelor of fine arts degree from the College of Visual and Performing Arts. He was also trained at a joint program of the Art Students League of New York and Vermont Academy; the Rhode Island School of Design; the University of Ghana, West Africa; the University of Guadalajara, Mexico; and the Fontainebleau Music and Fine Arts Conservatoire in France. He was a recipient of a 2000 New York Foundation for the Arts grant in painting.

In lieu of a funeral, Singletary requested a final art exhibit of his work. “Instead of people talking about him, he wanted people to see his paintings, because his artworks speak for themselves,” says longtime friend Jose Cruz ’99.

Cruz is seeking a museum or gallery space to exhibit Singletary’s work.

“If you are interested in purchasing his work or have a museum, gallery, or exhibition space that could hold a final show, please reach out to m.singletaryart@gmail.com,” he says.

Robert Isaac “Bob” Lewis II G’73



Robert Isaac “Bob” Lewis II G’73, of Granger, Indiana, a life-long educator, died January 10.

After high school, Lewis served in the Air Force from 1961 to 1965. He earned a bachelor’s degree from Pennsylvania State University in 1972, followed by a master’s degree from Syracuse University in 1973.

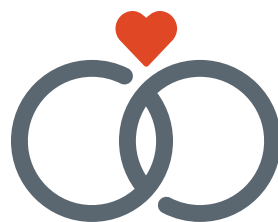
Lewis held executive administration posts at Norfolk State University, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and Talladega College. His career in higher education culminated with a position as associate director for the National Center for Graduate Education for Minorities (GEM), housed at the University of Notre Dame, which he held for seven years, retiring in 1997. He served as executive director of the

Elkhart County Council on Aging from 2002 to 2008.

Lewis was a devoted member of various churches and answered the call to ministry in 1997. He served as pastor of Coleman Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Elkhart, Indiana, from 1997 to 1999; was ordained as a Baptist minister in 2000; and served as an associate minister for Greater St. John Missionary Baptist Church from 2000 to 2004. His final ministerial post was as associate pastor at First United Methodist Church in South Bend, Indiana, from 2011 to 2013.

He served the community of South Bend in numerous capacities, including volunteering with the CASA program at the St. Joseph County Probate Court, as a member of the 100 Black Men of Greater South Bend, and as a mentor with South Bend Community School Corporation. He served on the executive board of the LaSalle Council, Boy Scouts of America, and as president of the Knute Rockne Memorial Kiwanis Club of Granger. Lewis was also a proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, serving as president of the Theta Xi Lambda Chapter in 2011.

He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Margaret; his daughter, Cherai Marie Lewis; two sons, Brian Robert Lewis and Jeffrey Robert Lewis; four grandchildren; and a host of relatives, friends, and fraternity brothers.



Alumni Milestones



Josssette A. Burgos ’09 is engaged to marry Walwyn Jackson.



Ana Gabriel Urizar ’13 is engaged to marry Michael Bethoney.



Anthony McGriff ’17 married **Nialeka Camara ’17** on April 21, 2019.

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