

# BLACK COLLEGE TODAY

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# Being A Strong *African American Woman* In The United States Of America Is Not Easy.

By Dr. James B. Ewers Jr.



The landscape for Black Women has always been filled with potholes and pitfalls. They have achieved despite these impediments.

March is Women's History Month and I say this respectfully and with pride that African American women have always been trailblazers and difference-makers.

From Harriet Tubman in the past to Kamala Harris in the present, Black women have led the charge for respect and renown.

Their contributions have been widespread and have touched all corners of the world. They took the can't out and replaced it with can and took the won't out and substituted it with will.

There are moments of note when education and history cross paths. I believe this is one of those moments.

Did you know that Marie Van Brittan Brown was an early inventor? She was a resident of New York city and created a closed-circuit television security system in 1966. Her patent was approved in 1969.

So, when we see these modern versions of home security systems and networks, we should give kudos to Marie Van Brittan Brown.

As we age, our vision becomes more problematic. Some of us resort to glasses or contact lens. While some may have cataracts removed.

Dr. Patricia Bath was the first Black woman medical doctor to develop a laser cataract treatment device called a Laserphaco Probe. She received the patent in 1986. Dr. Bath was the first African American to complete a residency in ophthalmology according to reports.

And of course, we cannot forget Katherine Johnson who worked at Langley Research Center and was instrumental in NASA'S spaceflights. Watching the movie, "Hidden Figures" is a history lesson in and of itself.

Politically, we applaud vice president Kamala Harris, yet in my opinion she could not have been in the White House without Shirley Chisholm and Fannie Lou Hammer.

Shirley Chisholm was the first Black woman to serve in Congress and the first Black person to run for president in a major party.

Congresswoman Chisholm was an early champion of voting rights and civic education.

Fannie Lou Hammer is a Civil Rights icon. The Mississippi records say that she helped to register Black voters in that state only to be challenged at every turn.

In 1964, she co-founded the Mississippi Freedom Party and challenged the all-White Democratic delegation at the 1964 Democratic National Convention.

Flonzie Brown Wright, another Mississippi African American legend was the first African American female elected

official in a Mississippi bi-racial town.

I had the honor and privilege of working with her at Miami University of Ohio (Middletown campus) where she served as the student affairs scholar in residence.

There, she developed programs and events that raised the awareness of students about the Civil Rights Movement. One such program was the Mississippi Civil Rights Legends Lecture Series.

While we celebrate and honor these women in March, we must not stop there.

They deserve our admiration and recognition every day. Young girls of color, in particular, must learn about their stories and how those stories served as a bridge for their own success.

They must understand that their future achievements are inextricably bound to the achievements of the early pioneers who refused to give up and to give in.

If you have senior citizens in your community who look like me, then engage them in a conversation. Find out about life "back in the day".

What we have in America has not come without a deep and abiding commitment to justice and equality. Black women have been leaders and are still leaders as we continue down this road.

This column is dedicated to my mom, Mrs. Mildred Holland Ewers who graduated in the early 1940's from the Kate Bitting Reynolds Memorial Hospital School of Nursing in Winston-Salem NC. She was an RN (registered nurse).

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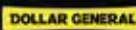
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## Morgan Students Take Second Place in AT&T HBCU Innovation Challenge, Earning \$15,000

The results are in for AT&T's second annual HBCU Innovation Challenge, and Morgan State University's student team — the MetaBears — was selected among the top prize winners for creating a smart app to address educational inequality. The EduLab app, which leverages virtual reality software to simulate physical lab experiences, impressed the competition judges, earning the team a \$15,000 prize.

For this year's challenge, 13 teams from eight Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) nationwide competed in creating a smart city solution utilizing 5G capabilities, and for the second consecutive year, a team from Morgan earned second place honors. Teams from Howard University took both first and third place in the competition.

The MetaBears team consisted of senior Makhya Wilridge (computer science) and juniors Abigail Dina (computer science/business), Dimitri Watat (finance) and Martin Adu-Boahene (information systems). Adu-Boahene is the only team member to have participated in both of Morgan's winning teams, in back-to-back years. Edward

Dillion, Ph.D., of the School of Computer, Mathematical and Natural Science's Department of Computer Science served as Morgan's faculty advisor for the challenge, while AT&T's E.J. Jackson, LaVette Gordon and Tanya Blackshear coached the Morgan team.

Consisting of three to five members each, the competing teams were challenged to develop a "Smart City" solution that focused on cities of the future while promoting economic development, improving infrastructure and digitally optimizing public assets. The core components of a Smart City are smart governance, smart economy, smart community, smart living, smart mobility and smart people. With the EduLab app, the MetaBears concentrated their efforts on the elevation of 'smart people,' by attempting to redress the unequal distribution of academic resources, including school funding, and enhance access to experienced teachers, textbooks and technology. Their solution, EduLab, pairs AT&T's 5G latency with virtual reality (VR) to create virtual lab learning environments. The effort seeks to eliminate the cost of equipment, opening the



educational process to becoming more inclusive of disenfranchised students. EduLab enables students and/or schools without readily available physical resources such as lab animals, scrap automobiles or other materials, to gain easy access to VR versions of those items using headsets and haptic gloves in simulated lab spaces. It would also enable students with dissimilar languages to communicate with their instructors and classmates with real-time language translations.

According to AT&T, helping HBCU students develop innovative solutions to real-world problems is an important part of its commitment to creating new opportunities in Black communities. In addition, it is a part of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility team's efforts to use broadband for good to address issues facing society today.



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# Using Your Passion To Fuel Your Future



by  
*Felicia Durden*

*“If you do what you love, you’ll never work a day in your life.”*

Marc Anthony

All of us have those things that really make us excited. Our passions may include reading, playing ball or traveling. This month we will talk about how our passions can provide insights into our future paths.

### **What our talents and interests tell us:**

The things that we find come easy for us or that we can get lost doing for hours on end can play a significant role in our future career path. One of my close friends loved reading and asked lots of questions as a child. She is a now has a podcast and is an author. Her passion for reading and asking questions turned into a very rewarding career for her.

### **Think outside of the box:**

You may be thinking well I just enjoy playing video games with my friends how can that turn into a career? Stranger things have happened. Look at Bill Gates, who was a computer nerd growing up and is not a technology

giant. He was able to use his talent for computers to launch a very successful career. You can have the same story. Start by honing in on your talents.

### **Run after your passions and not money:**

When I was younger a remember seeing a book entitled, “Do What You Love and the Money Will Follow” for some reason I was intrigued by this concept. I always liked enjoying what I do. If I did not like doing something I just did not care to do it. This followed me throughout my adult life and I quite several jobs before finally finding my passion, which was teaching. I was able to spend many years teaching and I was blessed to get into administration, which is when the money begin to come in. I am a testament that if you do what you love you an make a living doing it.

I hope that the ideas I have shared will be useful for you finding your passion and possibly your future career path. Who knows you might have the next multi-million dollar company idea based on your passion.

Dr. Felicia Durden is an accomplished Educator with over sixteen years experience in Education. She holds her Doctorate of Education degree in Educational Leadership, Master’s Degree in Curriculum & Instruction and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English Literature. Dr. Durden has taught grades K-12, served as an Assistant Director of Reading and Writing and currently serves as Principal in a large Urban School District in Arizona. She has taught English Composition at the College level as an adjunct instructor for over 5 years. Dr. Durden has a passion for assisting student growth in reading and writing.

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# Morris Brown College Announces Full Accreditation



Morris Brown College (MBC) is proud to announce it has received full accreditation from the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS), a Virginia-based accreditation agency. TRACS Board of Trustees voted to grant accreditation to MBC on April 26, 2022, at its annual meeting. This monumental achievement came after nearly 20 years of effort, marking a historical achievement for the 141-year-old college.

TRACS is recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDOE) and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) as an institutional accrediting agency for Christian post-secondary institutions, colleges, universities, and seminaries. TRACS is also a member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), a worldwide association of over 200 organizations active in the theory and practice of quality assurance in higher education. Moreover, the agency is a member of the American Council on Education (ACE), with over 1,700 organizations that collectively promote, protect, and advocate for students, faculty, and administrators in higher education.

Morris Brown College earning full accreditation is a significant achievement demonstrating that it holds quality standards and is engaged in continuous improvement. Furthermore, the college has been reinstated to participate in the Federal Financial Aid Program. Financial aid is any type of college funding that does not come from family, personal savings, or earnings. It can include grants, scholarships, work-study jobs, and federal or private loan programs. Financial aid can be used to cover educational expenses such as tuition/fees, room/board, books/supplies, and transportation. Morris Brown has one of the most affordable tuition rates in Georgia at \$4,250 a semester.

Having served as chief executive for three years, President Kevin James said, “I am honored to lead this great institution. Many thought that this feat was impossible, but due to our strong faith in God, our hardworking and wonderful faculty and staff, the support of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, our dedicated alumni, and our resilient spirit, we were able to achieve full accreditation. Morris Brown offers a unique, affordable, and quality education that prepares students for success. This was truly The Hard Reset. This is just the beginning!”

Founded by formerly enslaved religious leaders at Big Bethel AME Church in 1881, MBC is the first college in Georgia to be owned and operated by African Americans. The iconic Fountain Hall and the current Morris Brown campus are where Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois wrote “The Souls of Black Folk” in 1903. Notable alumni include Alberta Williams King, mother of Martin Luther King, Jr., and James Alan McPherson, the first Black writer to win a Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

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# Are You Engaged at Work?



By Robin Kegler

## What Work Is

Before we can discuss how engaged you are at work, we must define what work is.

My acronym for work is, Where One Rules Kingdoms. Webster's says, "Work is an activity in which one exerts strength or faculty to do something." Strength speaks to what you're good at. It's a strong attribute or asset.

Keep this in mind:

Your strength is not limited to physical action, endurance, or exertion. A good example would be having strength of character; being a man or woman of integrity. How many business owners, supervisors, team leaders, peers and family would benefit from someone like you who is strong in character? Another aspect of work is that it is the ability to have sustained physical or mental effort to overcome obstacles to achieve objectives or results. Most obstacles you face daily are related to your soul which is comprised of your emotions, intellect or will. Obstacles can also be related to your body, the physical things that keep you from achieving your goals. How can someone benefit from your ability to not only tap your mental and physical resources (soul and body), but also actively engage your spiritual resources too?

When you are positioned in your right place and you are functioning - doing what you do best by how you were designed, your quality of work improves. Why? Because you have confidence in what you are doing. There's a sense of liveliness, energetic and animated actions related to what you're doing. Your liveliness at work is a result of loving what you do. It's transforming. Your work becomes play.

## What Does It Mean to Be Engaged in Work?

When you are engaged in work, it means you are having an effect. Your very presence changes an atmosphere. In fact, on days you're on vacation, or out for any reason, people should recognize your absence. Things are not the same without you. Have you ever had people say that to you at work or in places you have volunteered?

## Have you heard words like:

*"I'm glad you're back. Things weren't the same without you."*  
*"You were really missed."* | *"Don't go away for so long next time."*  
*"We can't do without you."*

These are comments that let you know you're cared about and that you are being watched. More importantly, it's a sign that says others acknowledge there is something different about you. Be careful not to let the compliments go to your head and cause you to get puffed up.

Another aspect of being engaged in work is that you are preparing, developing, or completing something. You are bringing your work into its final form by a gradual process. It happens little by little.

## Here's something to think about:

I shared earlier that work is Where One Rules Kingdoms. When you are ruling something, that means you are leading and developing the activities and people associated with your work. Every day the people you encounter observe your process of work, decision making, work habits, problem solving, countenance and more. Every day you are developing and creating an opinion of who you are in the workplace. It is done little by little until someone asks to know more:

*"What makes you different?"* | *"How can you keep calm when you have a right to blow up?"* | *"How did you come up with that solution?"*

Little by little, you show those in your workplace, your compassion, integrity, ability, attitude, and unique characteristics that make you stand out as you do your work

Being engaged in your work is about having an effect in your workplace. Preparing, developing, and completing your work assignment effectively and efficiently. Your team members, staff and boss are better because of the interaction they have with you daily. It is done little by little.

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# BRIDGES, GIBSON THANKFUL FOR MENTORS, “HOME” ENVIRONMENT ON CAMPUS

By David Miller



There’s no greater feeling than showing off a new pair of shoes at school. Brand, style, color – the more style points, the better.

And if the wearer designed them? Well, that’s a rare and ultimate flex.

Customized sneakers are a unique space of fashion that greatly reflect one’s personality and often allow for creativity beyond what’s designed at the factory.

In 2016, Malcolm Bridges, then a junior at Fairfield High School in Birmingham, became the “sneaker guy” when he donned a pair of self-painted pink Nike Air Force 1s to a school awards show.

“Kids then started telling me about their own shoes they wanted me to clean and customize,” Bridges said. “I didn’t have a job, so I saw it was a way to make money.”



A young black man sits at a table during a panel discussion

*Malcolm Bridges listens during a Black Male Initiative event.*

Bridges, a junior business administration major at Stillman College, has since grown his sneaker restoration and customization enterprise from working on up to four pairs of shoes a month to taking in four-to-five new pairs each week. He credits strong relationships with customers, learning to manage time, and mentors at Stillman for helping guide his entrepreneurial path.

“You can really network at [Stillman] and find people to help you do what you want in life, even if it doesn’t classify to your major or minor,” Bridges said. “[Stillman] can teach you something about life.”

The Stillman College School of Business, Entrepreneurship, and Computational and Information Sciences has a keen focus on fostering entrepreneurship on campus, both in direct mentoring from faculty and in experiential learning opportunities. The latter includes partnerships with organizations like HBCU Wall Street, a digital financial literacy platform that provides credit, budgeting and investing solutions to help stimulate Black economies and communities.

HBCU Wall Street partnered with Stillman and Motley Fool to host “The Green Print” investing workshop on campus during Homecoming Week. There, Bridges and sophomore accounting major Kaylah Gibson each won a \$500 grant toward their respective startups. Gibson has an eye-lash application business that began in 2020.

“I’d emailed HBCU Wall Street with information about my business, my [3.3] GPA, and the goals I have,” Gibson said. “I’d planned to just go to the panel discussion to listen and learn some things, but when they came up to me and told me I’d receive the Fellow grant, I was surprised and happy.”

## Winding roads to Stillman

Unsurprisingly, Bridges found his direction via YouTube, a site that is as much an entertainment platform as it is an omnibus of tutorial videos.

His skills, along with a love for sneakers, quickly blossomed into a startup. Still, he needed structure to grow his client base, market his designs, and mature as an entrepreneur.

A collage of sneakers



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*Bridges' custom sneaker designs.*

Bridges would enroll at the University of Montevallo, where he would learn how to manage his time “down to the second” to balance classwork and keep his enterprise afloat.

But while Montevallo was “small like Stillman,” he sought a more tight-knit college community. After two years at Montevallo, Bridges transferred to Stillman, which “felt like home.”

“The people” at Stillman appealed the most during his visit and have influenced every aspect of his growth as a student, leader and entrepreneur, he said. He credits Demarcus Hopson, executive director of the Williams Institute for Leadership at Stillman, as a key mentor, and Michael Hubbard, senior director of technology at Stillman and his work-study supervisor, for “being like a dad.”

“Back at Montevallo, I didn’t have a job ... it was just canned food or no food,” Bridges said. “But when I got to Stillman, Mr. Hubbard helped get me a work-study position with IT, and I got a feel for it and picked it up as a minor. He’s teaching me and showing me the ropes on technology at Stillman and how people in the workforce operate.”

Similarly, Gibson, a native of Patterson, New Jersey, transferred to Stillman in search of “home.” Her cousin, Walik Gibson, a Stillman student and enrollment management specialist, pitched Stillman as a “great place to grow.”

Kaylah transferred from William Patterson University in fall 2021 and enrolled at Stillman, a “more friendly” environment that’s been key to helping her blossom into an outgoing and engaging person. She’s since joined The Pulse, a campus activities and service organization.

“From being more introverted, I wasn’t really promoting my business like I should,” Kaylah said. “But through The Pulse and seeing everybody at Stillman chasing their dreams, it gives me motivation.”



*Kaylah Gibson, left, supports cousin and fellow Stillman student entrepreneur Walik Gibson during Black Wall Street, a campus shopping expo featuring Black business owners.*

Scaling up Gibson started her eyelash business during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. To that point, she’d never bought or applied eyelash extensions – a billion-dollar fashion industry – but it “fit” what she wanted to do. So, she watched others apply lashes, took a class, and become certified as a lash technician.

Now, Gibson sees roughly four clients a week. Each session can last up to three hours, which can create scheduling challenges with schoolwork and studying. But Kaylah is researching other revenue streams in the cosmetology sector that won’t require as much time, such as “strip” lashes.

“Some people want strip lashes because it’s quicker and easier for the same style,” she said. “I don’t really see it shifting that way, but I’ve sewn some strip lashes just to see how it would go.

“I’m also thinking about selling clothes and lip gloss.”

Bridges is targeting a storefront to grow “MBKicks” in either the Tuscaloosa or Birmingham areas once he graduates.

“There are a lot of sneaker shops in Birmingham, and I’m trying to be like those guys – learn from them and be better,” Bridges said. “I’m a one-man army right now, and I do this for the money and the service – a love for people.

“But as one of my professors, Dr. [Floran Syler] Woods, says, ‘there’s a language to business, and to be great, you have to speak it.’ I’m still learning that.”



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[UNCF Scholarships-uncf.org](http://uncf.org)

[The Development Fund for Black Students In Science and Technology-dfbsstscholarship.org](http://dfbsstscholarship.org)

[AWG Minority Scholarship Program For Women-awg.org/awards](http://awg.org/awards)

[NSBE-National Association for Black Engineers](http://nsbe.org)

[The George Foreman Tribute Scholarship-rdna/content/George\\_foreman\\_tribute](http://rdna/content/George_foreman_tribute)

[Diabetes Scholar Fundation Scholarships-diabetesscholars.org](http://diabetesscholars.org)

[Family Dollar Scholarship-scholarshipsamerica.org](http://scholarshipsamerica.org)

[Gateway to US Government Grants students.gov](http://students.gov)

[NACME Scholarship Program-nacme.org](http://nacme.org)

[Congressional Black Caucus Spouse Heineken USA Performing Arts Scholarship-cbcfinc.org/scholarships](http://cbcfinc.org/scholarships)

[Questbridge College Prep Scholarships questbridge.org](http://questbridge.org)

[Black College Dollars-blackcollegedollars.org](http://blackcollegedollars.org)

[Ameri-Corps Education Award-amerikorps.org](http://americorps.org)

[United States Peace Corp-peacecorp.org](http://peacecorp.org)

[Baptist Scholarships-free-4u.com](http://free-4u.com)

[Jay-Z Scholarship-seancarterf.com](http://seancarterf.com)

[Google Scholarships-google.com](http://google.com)

[American Academy of Chefs Scholarship](http://americanacademyofchefs.org)

[Presidential Freedom Scholarships-scholarships4students](http://scholarships4students.com)

[NFIB Young Entrepreneur Foundation Scholarship-www.NFIB.com/YEA \(students running their own business\)](http://www.NFIB.com/YEA)

[Anne Ford Scholarship-www.nclcd\(students with disabilities\)](http://www.nclcd.org)

[Internationalscholarships.com](http://internationalscholarships.com)

[College Internships](http://collegeinternships.com)

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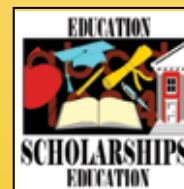
[Internships.org](http://internships.org)

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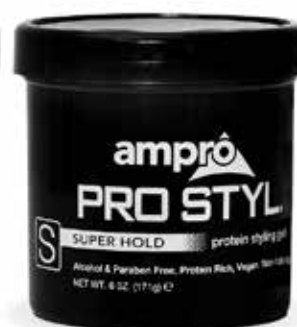
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# UAPB Junior Completes National Society of Minorities in Hospitality Leadership Program

Will Hehemann | School of Agriculture, Fisheries and Human Sciences

*Dr. Suzzette Goldmon and Trenay Hayes*



Trenay Hayes, a junior majoring in foodservice and restaurant management/hospitality at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) Department of Human Sciences, recently completed a six-month leadership program by the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality (NSMH). She was one of 15 students from six historically Black colleges and universities selected for the program.

“Thanks to the program, I learned some skills that we don’t really get to work on during regular college instruction,” she said. “For example, a lot of the training had to do with resume preparation. The instructors really walked us through that process and explained how to tailor your resume based on what employers in the hospitality industry are looking for.”

Hayes said she learned how best to prepare for job interviews and developed new networking skills.

“We learned how to make ‘elevator pitches’ and promote yourself and your

skills in a short amount of time,” she said. “I also learned the importance of doing research ahead of time about the companies you apply for jobs at. If you familiarize yourself with the company’s mission and vision, you are better able to explain why your particular skill set is the right fit for the job.”

Program participants received professional mentorship from Sharonda Bishop, NSMH consortium member and facilitator of the program. Over the course of the program, Bishop conducted regular group and individual career counseling sessions during which participants learned about different types of career opportunities and could discuss their goals and dreams.

Hayes has long dreamed of owning a restaurant or working in a managerial position at a restaurant chain. However, in the past year, she began to wonder whether her career goals were realistic.

“I started thinking about the fact that I’m just a college junior and have limited work experience – this made me wonder whether my dreams were

attainable,” Hayes said. “I was able to discuss these issues with Ms. Bishop. She told me not to worry and just to stay the course. She reassured me that realizing your goals just takes time, patience and dedication.”

Dr. Suzzette Goldmon, assistant professor of hospitality and tourism at UAPB and NSMH advisor, said she is proud of Hayes for enthusiastically applying for and participating in the program.

“Trenay is a young leader that has great potential to excel in any segment of the hospitality industry she chooses,” Dr. Goldmon said. “Her dynamic personality and amazing organizational skills will sustain her for an amazingly successful career.”

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# Voorhees College students learning beyond the classroom



Voorhees College students Lauren Adams and Bernyla Sparks, are maximizing learning opportunities beyond the classroom. Adams, a mass communications major, will participate in the Disney College Program, which gives students work experience in their discipline. Sparks, a computer science major, is participating in a Gumbo University Program, where she is enhancing her leadership skills.

Adams, who will be earned her bachelor's degree this past spring, said she is excited to be in the Disney College Program, beginning in July.

"I have wanted to be a part of this program since I was a freshman," she said. "Only 20 percent of people get accepted. When I was accepted, I was so proud of myself and what I had accomplished."

Beyond the work experience, Adams will be developing connections to make her workforce ready. She said, "Not only will I be making connections, but I'll also be working in my major at the happiest place on earth."

Adams currently serves as Miss Senior, a student ambassador and a member of the Voorhees Media Team.

She credits Voorhees with helping her build confidence and giving her the tools she needs to reach her goals.

Sparks, who will be earning her bachelor's degree in the spring of 2025, said participants in the Gumbo

University Program have learned many leadership lessons. "One of the lessons that has stuck with me is 'Speed is Nothing Without Direction.' I'm so grateful to even have the opportunity to be chosen out of thousands of students who applied to participate in this program."

Sparks is learning how to be a more transitional leader and gaining leadership lessons that will be valuable in any position. The program is inspired by Marc Morial, who is currently president and CEO of the National Urban League, and the leadership lessons from his first book, *The Gumbo Coalition*. Morial is also a former mayor of New Orleans. Sparks started the program on January 13 and will complete it on March 31.

"I have met multiple college students as far away as New York and Louisiana," Sparks said. "I even got the opportunity to meet the man himself, Mr. Marc Morial, along with other iconic people like Ralph McDaniel. It's been an amazing experience thus far."

Sparks said that Terrianna McCullough, an academic excellence coach at Voorhees, encouraged her to apply. "Ms. McCullough told me that she felt like I had a chance to win the scholarship. I applied, waited to see if I was accepted, and I was. I was so happy," she said.

Sparks is a class secretary and plans to become more involved in other organizations next semester. She said that Voorhees has prepared her for leadership by surrounding her with an encouraging support system.



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# WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY

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## WSSU STUDENT, ENTREPRENEUR, AND FILMMAKER EARL ROBINSON SELECTED FOR MCDONALD'S BLACK AND POSITIVELY GOLDEN SCHOLARSHIP



Earl Robinson is living, smiling, shining proof that life often travels in a full circle.

When Robinson, a 19-year-old sophomore at Winston-Salem State University, was 11 years old he convinced his two best friends to make a short film with him, a 30-minute, amateur movie about three brothers who were also part-time superheroes called “Super Bros.”

Fast forward a few years and Robinson is standing on a soundstage in Hollywood, soaking in the experience of being in front of the camera for the shooting of another video, a national commercial for McDonalds.

“Shooting the commercial put me in the mind of being 11 again. Filming, writing scripts and directing my friends for seven months felt like a real production back then, but this here was the real deal,” said Robinson.

It was that short, childhood film, though, that was the impetus for not only the McDonald’s video, but his college journey to WSSU, his plans for a behind-the-camera career in videography or television and his desire to help other young students begin their own journeys.

“Over the years I’ve been able to see the errors and overall mess of a film that ‘Super Bros’ was, but I treasure it, nonetheless. It’s my foundation. It’s a time capsule of my favorite summer and the infant stages of a long-standing passion,” said Robinson, a Richmond, Virginia native.

After making that video and posting in on YouTube, Robinson knew he wanted a career in video. Not long after that he discovered Historically Black College and Universities and quickly understood one of those storied schools would be in his future.

“By the time I was in the ninth grade, I knew I wanted to go to an HBCU,” recalled Robinson. “There are so many great HBCU options in North Carolina. When we visited Winston-Salem State, I really appreciated that it was a smaller university and their family-like environment.”

It didn’t hurt, either, that WSSU has a strong mass communications program with an impressive television and film production curriculum. Those things rolled together made it a fairly easy decision for Robinson when it came time to select a college.

Robinson is involved in RAMS-TV, a student media group which offers WSSU students information, news, educational, and entertainment programming. It is his initial big step outside of the classroom to get first-hand experience in the behind-the-scenes aspect of television.

“RAMS-TV is a great organization. We specialize in interviews and creating content that specializes in showcasing student athletes, Greek organizations, everyday students, essentially anything that’s happening on campus will be covered by us,” said Robinson. “I’m always willing to learn a new skill, whatever I’m asked to do, I’ll try. I appreciate how it takes you out of your comfort zone.”

Robinson’s Hollywood trip and further exposure to creating television content was serendipitous, the product of being in the right place at the right time melding with his near legendary work to find scholarships and other funding for his college education.

Researching possible scholarships, Robinson was on the Thurgood Marshall College Fund website when he ran across the McDonald’s Black and Positively Golden Scholarship, a \$15,000 grant that would be awarded to 35 HCBU students across the nation.

“I did the application, wrote an essay, and put together a short video, and thank God, a few of months later I found out I got it. It was \$15,000, enough to fund an entire school semester,” said Robinson, who has created a digital business, ERScholars LLC, to assist other minority students in their search for scholarship opportunities.

But after receiving the scholarship, Robinson was in for a shock. There was going to be more than a monetary boost to his college career.

“The financial award was a blessing and greatly appreciated, but I couldn’t have expected the opportunity that came with it,” said Robinson.

Robinson was one of seven of the 35 scholarship winners selected to be part of a McDonald’s television commercial to run during February, coinciding with Black History Month.

“They flew us out to Hollywood in early December, all expenses paid, first class seats. It was an awesome experience,” said Robinson, who said he believed he was selected for the trip at least partly because he was an aspiring film student. “Hollywood was amazing, everything you would expect it to be. It embodied what I envisioned Hollywood to be like.”

Even though Robinson had an acting role in the commercial, the behind-the-scenes action was educational and eye-opening.

“To see the time and effort it takes to make something like this and then get to see the final product, gave me an appreciation of this field and a direct sneak-peek of what I wanted to do with my life. It was inspiring. There was a young Black male as the director and to see him fully in his element and making sure his vision came to life, was the inspiration and representation I needed.”

The 30-second commercial aired nationally during February, and although Robinson hasn’t had a chance to see it on television, he has watched it several times online. While Robinson took the brief bit of fame in stride, his younger brother was a little more excited.

“My five-year-old brother was so excited when he could see it on TV. What other five-year-old right now in their Pre-K class can say their older brother is on a McDonald’s commercial?”

With the excitement behind him, Robinson has settled back into his routine at Winston-Salem State University, attending classes, making videos, working with RAMS-TV, and doing his very best to make sure he’s on track to keep that 11-year-old’s dream alive.

“I want to pursue a career in television and film production one day,” said Robinson. “I want to create my own catalogue of Black representative television shows and films that shed a light on our complexity and diversity.”

And that success will shed great light on the power of 11-year-olds and their dreams.

Watch Earl Robinson discussing his journey and how McDonalds helped him on his mission.

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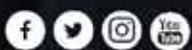




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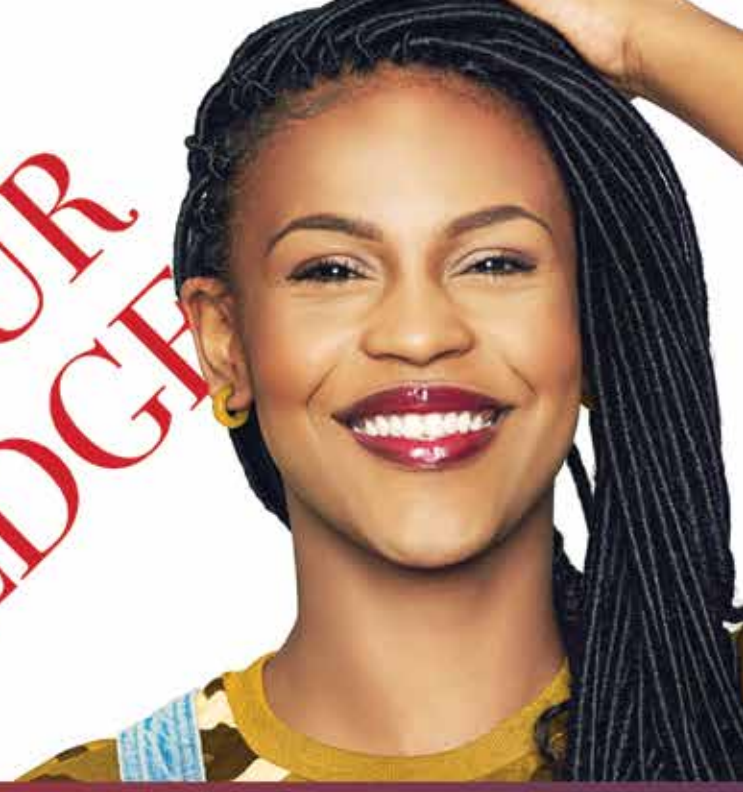


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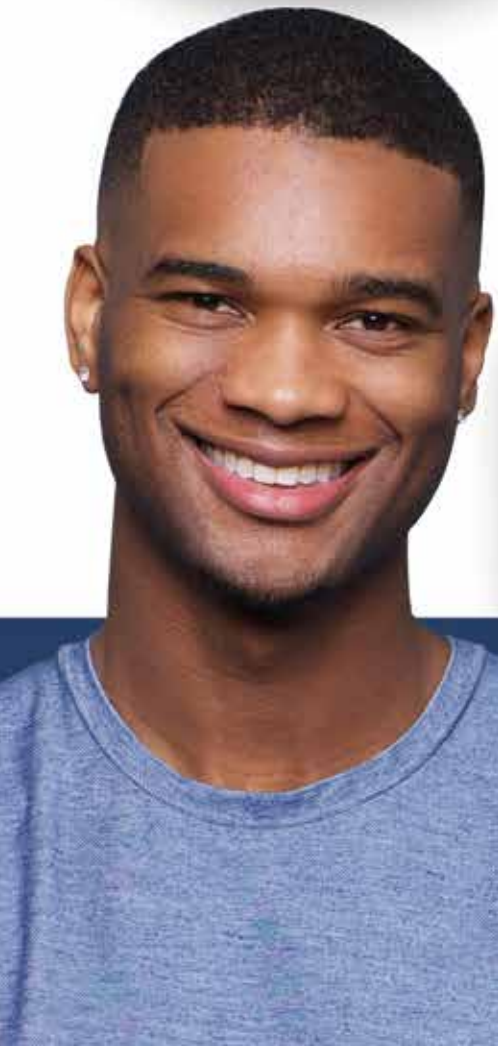
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## HEALTH 101: Mental Health Matters

by *Jesica Miller*

### What is mental health?

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act as we cope with life. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. In society, this is something we often overlook or don't take seriously.

### Why is mental health important?

Mental health is important because it can help you to:

- Cope with the stresses of life
- Be physically healthy
- Have good relationships
- Make meaningful contributions to your community
- Work productively
- Realize your full potential

### How can I improve my mental health?

There are many different things you can do to improve your mental health, including:

- Staying positive. It's important to try to have a positive outlook; some ways to do that include
- Finding balance between positive and negative emotions. Staying positive doesn't mean that you never feel negative emotions, such as sadness or anger. You need to feel them so that you can move through difficult situations. They can help you to respond to a problem. But you don't want those emotions to take over. For example, it's not helpful to keep thinking about bad things that happened in the past or worry too much about the future.
- Trying to hold on to the positive emotions when you have them
- Taking a break from negative information. Know when to stop watching or reading the news. Use social media to reach out for support and feel connected to others but be careful. Don't fall for rumors, get into arguments, or negatively compare your life to others.

- Practicing gratitude It's helpful to do this every day, either by thinking about what you are grateful for or writing it down in a journal. These can be big things, such as the support you have from loved ones, or little things, such as enjoying a nice meal. It's important to allow yourself a moment to enjoy the positive experience. Practicing gratitude can help you to see your life differently. For example, when you are stressed, you may not notice that there are also moments when you have some positive emotions. Gratitude can help you to recognize them.
- Taking care of your physical health, since your physical and mental health are connected. Some ways to take care of your physical health include
- Being physically active. Exercise can reduce feelings of stress and depression and improve your mood.
- Getting enough sleep. Sleep affects your mood. If you don't get a good sleep, you may become more easily annoyed and angry. Over the long term, a lack of quality sleep can make you more likely to become depressed. So it's important to make sure that you have a regular sleep schedule and get enough quality sleep every night.
- Healthy eating. Good nutrition will help you feel better physically but could also improve your mood and decrease anxiety and stress. Also, not having enough of certain nutrients may contribute to some mental illnesses. For example, there may be a link between low levels of vitamin B12 and depression. Eating a well-balanced diet can help you to get enough of the nutrients you need.
- Connecting with others. Humans are social creatures, and it's important to have strong, healthy relationships with others. Having good social support may help protect you against the harms of stress. It is also good to have different types of connections. Besides connecting with family and friends, you could find ways to get involved with your community or neighborhood. For example, you could volunteer for a local organization or join a

- group that is focused on a hobby you enjoy.
- Developing a sense of meaning and purpose in life. This could be through your job, volunteering, learning new skills, or exploring your spirituality.
- Developing coping skills, which are methods you use to deal with stressful situations. They may help you face a problem, take action, be flexible, and not easily give up in solving it.
- Meditation, which is a mind and body practice where you learn to focus your attention and awareness. There are many types, including mindfulness meditation and transcendental meditation. Meditation usually involves
  - A quiet location with as few distractions as possible
  - A specific, comfortable posture. This could be sitting, lying down, walking, or another position.
  - A focus of attention, such as a specially chosen word or set of words, an object, or your breathing
  - An open attitude, where you try to let distractions come and go naturally without judging them.

- Relaxation techniques are practices you do to produce your body's natural relaxation response. This slows down your breathing, lowers your blood pressure, and reduces muscle tension and stress. Types of relaxation techniques include
  - Progressive relaxation, where you tighten and relax different muscle groups, sometimes while using mental imagery or breathing exercises
  - Guided imagery, where you learn to focus on positive images in your mind, to help you feel more relaxed and focused
  - Deep breathing exercises, which involve focusing on taking slow, deep, even breaths

Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood and aging. It's also important to recognize when you need to get help. Talk therapy and/or medicines can treat mental disorders. If you don't know where to get treatment, start by contacting your primary care provider. Reclaim! Believe! Rise!



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# WHAT'S HOT ON THE NET!

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! WELCOME BACK TO BCT'S WHAT'S HOT ON THE NET!!! WE'RE BRINGING YOU THE LATEST NEWS ON CELEBRITIES ACROSS THE WORLD SO LET'S GET INTO IT!!!**

**Lebron James** is coming through in a major way! After Jackie is the documentary that will be airing on the **History Channel**. It was produced by Lebron's production company, **Uninterrupted**. After Jackie focuses on professionally black baseball players who played after **Jackie Robinson** broke the color barrier. This two-hour documentary is a much watch! We really think that you will enjoy it!!!

According to reports, it looks like tennis icon, **Serena Williams**, is open to a sequel to **King Richard!** Serena believes there is plenty more to their story! We would love to see more of **Venus' and Serena's** individual stories on the big screen! We are definitely here for it!

Shout out to **Ludacris!** Luda is going to receive an honorary bachelor's degree in music management from **Georgia State University!!!**

Ludacris is a former Georgia State University student who left college as his career began to take off. Since 2019, Ludacris has been mentoring students at Georgia State University! You love to see it! Congratulations to Ludacris for this honor!

More than just an actress, **Taraji P. Henson** is also an entrepreneur! She recently launched her skincare line, **Body by TPH!** This is addition to **TPH by Taraji** which is her haircare line that debuted two years ago. Body by TPH is for everyone and all skin types! It is sold exclusively in **Walmart** so pick it up!

**Muni Long** continues to make her name known as her star is shining brightly!!! Coming off of last year's EP, **Public Displays of Affection** and the hit single from it, **Hrs and Hrs**, Muni is back with her latest song, **Another**.

Another is currently doing very well but please do not think Muni Long is new to the scene. She's a celebrated song writer who has written songs for **Rihanna, Fifth Harmony and Ariana Grande** to name a few!!! Muni Long has been **Grammy-nominated** and she is the CEO of her own record label, **SuperGiant Records**. Muni recently signed a partnership with **Def Jam!** We're looking forward to see what's next for Muni Long!!!

As far as other new music goes, here's what we're listening to!

**Coi Leray - Trendsetter**

**Dreamvile & DJ Drama - D-Day**

**Ella Mai - Heart On My Sleeve**

**Fivio Foreign - B.I.B.L.E.**

**Jack Harlow - Come Home The Kids Miss You**

**THAT'S IT FOR THIS EDITION OF WHAT'S HOT ON THE NET!!! BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR MORE CELEBRITY NEWS NEXT TIME IN BCT!!!**

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