

NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY

BEHOLD

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 1 • 2022

Korie Grayson, Ph.D. (B.S.'12)
STEM Diversity Advocate



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Korie Grayson, Ph.D. (B.S.'12)
STEM Diversity Advocate





From the Desk of the Vice President for University Advancement

Through this BEHOLD, you'll see that right now is our time, our mission, and our vision.

Of course, that was the theme of the inauguration of Norfolk State University's 7th President, Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston, one of our greatest recent highlights for our university community. Reminisce with us in BEHOLD (pages 14 and 15).

Another milestone was our launch of the Spartan Innovation Academy. This new initiative provided students and faculty with industry-leading technology and included specialized training so users could make the most of their new resources. Norfolk State is the first Historically Black College and University to do a campus-wide deployment of Apple products to this degree (page 3).

NSU achieved another "first" when Pharrell Williams hosted his "Elephant in the Room" business forum on our campus. Business and community leaders from across Hampton Roads were invited to hear how diversity, equity, and inclusion have become new tools in the toolbox of worldwide business in expanding markets and finding new, innovative investment opportunities (pages 4-5).

NSU faculty and students conducted research at the world's highest-powered magnet laboratory. Our Spartans studied cutting-edge science in preparation for bringing some of that same innovative technology to the campus of Norfolk State through a new grant (pages 8-9).

Our future is bright, but not just for these reasons. Fall 2021 saw an initiative begin where Old Dominion University, Norfolk State University, and Eastern Virginia Medical School (O.N.E.) agreed to work toward establishing a proposed O.N.E. School of Public Health (ONE SPH), only the third of its kind in the country (pages 12-13).

We're also looking into the future toward 2023 when the Spartan Legion Marching Band will perform in the 2023 Tournament of Roses Parade. You know our mighty Spartan Legion will make us proud, but we've got to get them there first. We're seeking support from alumni, friends and corporate sponsors to raise an estimated \$700,000 minimum so the Spartan Legion can show the world "BEHOLD, the Green and Gold" in full Spartan glory (pages 24-25).

We also remember our past with the induction of NSU basketball star Bob Dandridge into the NBA hall of fame (pages 26-27), the loss of NSU's legendary announcer Jackie Bowe (pages 22-23), and the involvement of NSU alumni in taking down the statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee in Richmond (pages 20-21).

And, of course, check out our Movers and Shakers section where we acknowledge former NSU Athletic Director and baseball coach Marty L. Miller's induction into the American Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame, among other Spartan milestones.

As always, BEHOLD...

Sincerely,



Clifford Porter

Vice President for University Advancement



NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY

BEHOLD

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 1 • 2022

A MAGAZINE WITH GLOBAL REACH

The word "Behold" is often used by those who love Norfolk State. It sums up the excellence of the University and pride felt for it. That is why when it came to naming the magazine featuring the accomplishments and progress taking place at Norfolk State, "Behold," easily came to mind.

Javaune Adams-Gaston, Ph.D.
University President

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SPARTAN INNOVATION ACADEMY PROGRAM

Provides Apple Devices to Every Student and Faculty Member



Norfolk State University launched the Spartan Innovation Academy program last fall, a new initiative that provides students, faculty and staff with access to industry-leading technology and specialized training for app development. NSU is the first Historically Black College and University to facilitate a campus-wide deployment of these Apple products to all students and faculty in a first-year program such as this one.

NSU President Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston has said that every incoming and returning student will be provided an iPad Pro with ultra-fast 5G speeds to access their studies on and off campus, as well as Apple Pencil, Apple Smart Keyboard Folio, and AirPods Pro with active noise cancellation, enabling students to access all aspects of the NSU academic enterprise and digitally engage with faculty, peers, administrators, and NSU learning platforms from any location. NSU, the largest HBCU in Virginia, was expected to distribute more than 6,000 Apple products to students, faculty and select staff members during the Fall 2021 semester. Students are able to keep the devices throughout their enrollment at the University and upon graduation, can purchase the device for a nominal fee of \$1. The devices will be provided to faculty and staff at no cost.

“The Spartan Innovation Academy program is all about giving students the tools they need to be successful in and outside of the classroom,” Adams-Gaston said. “The University is committed to access and affordability for all students. We know that providing access to powerful tools for learning will help ensure that our students will have a successful academic career while reducing the cost of obtaining a degree.

“Moreover, we know that the creativity of our students is endless. I am excited about the possibilities for coding and app development, with the help of our amazing faculty, that will be beneficial for the entire Spartan community.”

“This tremendous collaboration is all about investing in students at Norfolk State, one of Virginia’s leading universities,” said then-Governor Ralph S. Northam. “Apple’s work with Norfolk State will give students the physical tools they need to compete now — and the never-ending gift of confidence that comes with knowing they deserve a chance to succeed. The Spartan Innovation Academy program

demonstrates the tremendous value, diversity, and opportunity that these students bring to the Commonwealth.”

“At Apple, we believe that education is a powerful force for equity and opportunity, and that technology can empower all students to be creative and collaborative as they look ahead to their future careers,” said Susan Prescott, Apple’s Vice President of Education and Enterprise Marketing. “By providing every Spartan student and faculty equal access to our innovative products, Norfolk State is taking a bold step forward, and we can’t wait to see what the University community will accomplish.”

The partnership and collaboration will go beyond the NSU campus. The University will partner with K-12 systems in the region and leverage this program to create academic and professional development opportunities for NSU students and K-12 students.

“We are grateful that Apple is making an incredible investment in Norfolk State University that will also lead the way towards achievement for our students attending Norfolk Public Schools. From Pre-K to university, Norfolk ‘believes in learning’ and we congratulate NSU President Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston for her leadership in developing this innovative, collaborative effort to connect our students with resources that will help them thrive,” said Mayor of Norfolk, Kenneth Cooper Alexander.

As part of the initiative, Norfolk State will utilize a full-time Apple Professional Learning Specialist, engineering services, and project management. The university will also provide MacBook Pro notebooks to students based on their majors or courses in addition to iMac desktop computers that will be in an innovation design lab for students to learn coding and app development using Apple’s curriculum and Swift, the powerful and intuitive open-source programming language.

The Spartan Innovation Academy builds on NSU’s participation as a community coding center through HBCU C2, an Apple-supported initiative focused on coding and creativity. NSU has utilized learning outcomes from the 2020 program to create the new initiative. **B**

The following panelists
participated in the event.

Nat Zilkha @KKR_Co
Shai Zereling @Brookfield
Derrick Weatherspoon @BlackRock
Felix Zhang @ares_management
Drew Ungvasky @thisisgrow
Stephen Duval #EmpowermentIP
Latisha James @UrbanLeagueHR
Dr. Newby-Alexander and Eric Claville @Norfolkstate
Felecia Hatcher @blackambitionpz
Pusha-T @heirwavemusic
Deirdre Love @TWPTHEMOVEMENT
Shu Nyatta @OpportunityFund
Ari S Untracht #Eldridge

NSU & PHARRELL

Team Up To Present Economic Business Forum

There was a big turnout for
“The Elephant in the Room” event.



Norfolk State University hosted a business economic forum Thursday, Oct. 28, held by entertainment entrepreneur Pharrell Williams. The mogul’s “The Elephant in the Room” was a business economic panel discussion aimed at helping move the region’s economic development forward. A group of financial investors told an audience of invited businesspeople, community leaders, alumni, students and faculty that the city of Norfolk and Norfolk State University are the types of communities and institutions they invest in. “NSU, an HBCU, is actually a gold mine,” Williams said. Referring to the financial investors, Pharrell added “They’re thinking about Historically Black Colleges and Universities--like you have no idea. I just wanted people to hear it.”

He explained the purpose of the forum this way: “I want business owners from my beloved 757 to hear from some of the



world's biggest financial institutions ... that their corporate agenda is about diversity, inclusivity and equity. So, this is them having a cheat sheet to see what will make these big financial institutions want to invest money, not only in our communities but our businesses."

Pharrell estimated that together, the financial investors who appeared on the forum's panels represented about \$3 trillion. He later revised that figure

"They're thinking about Historically Black Colleges and Universities--like you have no idea. I just wanted people to hear it."

to \$9 trillion during his commencement speech to NSU's December 2021 graduating class.

"This was an amazing opportunity for Norfolk State University," said NSU President Javaune Adams-Gaston.

Pharrell Williams reached out to NSU in need of a large outdoor space for his "Elephant in the Room" business forum and, according to Adams-Gaston, "we were able to provide it."

In summing up the significance of the evening, President Adams-Gaston said, "What we were able to do tonight is what we really do at Norfolk State University, which is see the future. And we see the future in each of our students, and we see the future in our partnerships with these amazing businesses. So, we thank Pharrell Williams so very much for thinking enough of Norfolk State to do this." **B**





BURWELL RECOGNIZED FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS

Dr. Cynthia B. Burwell won the American Kinesiotherapy Association's "most prestigious, competitive award given and presented for outstanding contributions in the field of Kinesiotherapy ... in the areas of Clinical Program, Research, and Advancement of Kinesiotherapy." Burwell, a professor in the Department of Health, Physical Education and Exercise Science was presented the award at the association's 2021 annual conference in San Antonio, Texas.



FAIRFAX NAMED 2021 FEMINIST SCHOLAR AWARD RECIPIENT

Dr. Colita Nichols Fairfax has been named the 2021 Feminist Scholar Award recipient by the Council on the Role and Status of Women in Social Work Education. The award was presented virtually Nov. 4, during the 2021 Annual Program Meeting.

Dr. Fairfax is a professor in the Ethelyn R. Strong School of Social Work, Robert C. Nusbaum Honors College Senior Faculty Fellow, and

inaugural faculty scholar in the Center for African American Public Policy at Norfolk State University. She has written articles, reviews, chapters, and two books. Additionally, she has edited two books.

Dr. Fairfax earned the Ph.D. and the M.A. in African American Studies from Temple University, the MSW from Rutgers University, and the B.A. in social work from Howard University.

NEW ADMINISTRATORS

After conducting nationwide searches that included the involvement of stakeholders from across the University community, and a nationally recognized search firm, the University selected the following to fill permanent and interim positions.



Don Essex: Dean of the Lyman Beecher Brooks Library

Don Essex serves as the Dean of the Lyman Beecher Brooks Library. In this position, Dean Essex leads the dedicated library staff in developing library resources, services, and technologies for the 21st century to meet the educational needs of the NSU community. He earned a B.A. in Liberal Studies with an emphasis in American History and Culture from Pacific Union College in Angwin, California; an M.L.S. in Library Science from the University of Maryland at College Park; and studied legislative

affairs at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Essex believes the purpose of an academic library is to Inform, Inspire and Impart. It should provide access to the information that students, faculty, and staff need. It should inspire them to read, learn, research and grow. Before coming to NSU, Essex was an associate professor and director of the Theofield G. Weis Library at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Maryland.

**Dr. Denelle Wallace-Alexander: Dean of the School of Education**

Dr. Denelle Wallace-Alexander has been appointed Dean of the School of Education where she will work on increasing academic success for students, expanding research and community service for faculty, and contributing to the diversification of the educator population throughout the United States. For 17 years, Dr. Wallace-Alexander served in many roles in P-12 school divisions. These experiences have served her well as a faculty member in the Department of Secondary Education and School Leadership at NSU. For more than a decade, Dr. Wallace-Alexander has been an engaged scholar and researcher while teaching and advising graduate students in the Professional School Counseling and Principal Preparation Programs. She received a Ph.D. in Urban Services with a concentration in Academic Leadership from Old Dominion University, an M.Ed. in School Counseling from Georgia State University and a B.S. in Elementary Education from Old Dominion University.

**Torian L. Lee: Director of Global Learning and International Programs**

Torian L. Lee serves as the Director of the Office of Global Learning and International Programs. In this position, he implements NSU's vision for study abroad, international student and scholar services, and all initiatives related to campus internationalization. He earned a B.A. in Political Science from Virginia State University and a J.D. from Capital University. Lee joined NSU after serving as a Magistrate for the Commonwealth of Virginia in the region covering Virginia

Beach, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Eastern Shore. Prior to his appointment as Magistrate, Lee served nearly eight years as Director of International Programs at Xavier University of Louisiana. He served three years as Director of International Programs at Elizabeth City State University where he was also a faculty member, teaching in the History and Criminal Justice departments. Lee began his career in higher education serving four years as the Director of Student and Multicultural Affairs at Capital University Law School.

**Sheryll Heard: Director of Academic Advising**

Sheryll Heard has been appointed as the Director of Academic Advising at Norfolk State University. In this new position, she will continue increasing academic success for students while collaborating with all departments to ensure that they support the continued growth, retention, graduation, and post-graduate success of students. Heard brings over 25 years of service in higher education. Prior to joining Norfolk State University, Heard served as the Director of Admissions for the Information Technology

Program at Old Dominion University from 1998-2004. She began her career with NSU in 2004 with the ACCESS Program, which later changed to the current Patricia Lynch Stith Student Success Center. Prior to this new appointment, Heard served as Interim Executive Director of the Student Success Center where she oversaw Academic Advising, Learning Assistance Programs and First- and Second-Year Programs. Additionally, Heard has coordinated the SPARC Summer Bridge for over 10 years where she has impacted the lives of many students.

**Dr. Felicia Mebane: Interim Executive Director of Public Health Initiatives**

Dr. Felicia Mebane is Interim Executive Director of Public Health Initiatives, leading and coordinating NSU's role in the new O.N.E. School of Public Health, an NSU joint partnership with Old Dominion University and Eastern Virginia Medical School. In this leadership position, Dr. Mebane will collaborate with faculty, staff, and students to enhance NSU's role as a community-inspired academic and economic engine in public health spaces. She will also help facilitate NSU's development of academic

programs, research initiatives, and community engagement to lay a strong and lasting foundation for NSU's public health impact. Dr. Mebane joined NSU as the Executive Director of the Dr. Patricia Lynch Stith Student Success Center in 2017. Dr. Mebane brings to this new position more than 10 years of experience as an assistant professor and assistant dean at the top-ranked Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**Dr. Ernestine A.W. Duncan: Interim Faculty Ombuds**

Dr. Ernestine A.W. Duncan serves as NSU's Interim Faculty Ombuds. In this role, she is an impartial and confidential resource to assist faculty, staff, and all members of the university community. As the Faculty Ombuds, Dr. Duncan provides confidential, impartial, independent, and informal conflict management assistance to the university community. She is trained as a clinical psychologist and has more than 25 years of experience in higher education. For the past 20 years, she has been an NSU faculty

member. Her tenure included serving as Discipline-Specific Honors Liaison for the College of Liberal Arts and Chair of the Psychology Department from 2012 to 2019. Dr. Duncan received an M.A. and Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Georgia State University and a B.A. in Psychology, Communications, and Black Studies from Oberlin College. She has received additional training at Harvard University, completing the Management Development Program in 2019.

PHYSICS FACULTY, STUDENTS

CONDUCT RESEARCH AT HIGHEST-POWERED
MAGNET LAB IN THE WORLD

By JORDAN GRAHAM '23
Presidential Intern



This past November, seven faculty and students from the Norfolk State University Physics Department spent time conducting research at the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory (MagLab) in Tallahassee, Florida. According to its description, the MagLab is the largest and highest-powered magnet lab in the world. Funded by the National Science Foundation and the state of Florida, the MagLab is a partnership between Florida State University, the University of Florida and Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Every year, according to its website, thousands of scientists from universities, government laboratories and private companies vie for research time at the lab to use its magnets to study three areas: materials, which could produce new technologies; energy, which could lead to improvements in its storage and delivery; and life, which could lead to better treatments for various diseases.

"... to conduct experiments there, you have to write a proposal for research which competes with proposals from around the world for magnet time," Dr. Mushtaq A. Khan, professor of mathematics and associate dean of the College of Science, Engineering and Technology, wrote in an email. "Experiment time at the facility is so valuable that it runs 24 hours a day..." Dr. Khan explained. "We were awarded five days magnet time, which is kind of a big deal for any school."

The group of seven included three faculty members — Dr. Doyle Temple, professor and chair NSU Department of Physics; Dr. Sunil Karna, research assistant and professor of physics; and Dr. Leroy Salary, assistant professor of physics; two graduate students — Orrin Clarke-Delgado, materials science and Engineering M.S. candidate; and Terence Baker, a materials science and Engineering Ph.D. candidate; and two freshman physics majors — Liam Harrigan and Kevin Allen. The first-year students worked with the 45 Tesla Magnet system during the five days while the professors and Ph.D. candidates analyzed the data in order to understand the physics of the experimental results.

Using the magnet helped Temple and the NSU Quantum Electronic Group (QEG) understand the movement of electrons through quantum material using varied magnetic strength at ultra-low temperatures. By running these experiments, they can understand the electron quantum transport properties that can be used in the quantum materials that are to be fabricated for futuristic devices. Throughout the trip, the students were able to experience research at the highest technical level and that will inspire them to achieve a higher level of research in the near future.

Although their trip to the MagLab is over, the research on quantum materials has not ended. In fact, the QEG members have just received a grant from the National Science Foundation Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) to create a high magnetic field/ultra-low temperature quantum materials and devices measurement laboratory Norfolk State. Once the laboratory is installed, NSU will be the first, and only, non-Research 1 university that can conduct this type of advanced quantum materials research. **B**



NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY Achieves Level II Authority

The restructured higher education financial and administrative act of 2005 allows for public colleges and universities to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Governor and respective cabinet Secretaries to receive additional authority in three areas, capital outlay, information technology, and procurement.

Norfolk State University sought out to obtain additional authority in two of the three areas, information technology and procurement. The new level of authority was granted in December 2021.

After months of hard work and dedication to the University's mission, the divisions, on behalf of the university seeking additional authority to conduct business in accordance with the memorandum of understanding signed by the secretariat, the University was granted Level II authority in both information technology and procurement under the restructured higher education financial and administrative act and has joined other colleges and universities that have been granted this authority.

The authority granted to Norfolk State University allows in exchange for a renewed commitment to the institution's mission more operational and administrative autonomy to procure goods and services to include IT procurements at the University level. The requirements that got us to Level II consisted of but were not limited to some of the following:

Proved that the University met the requirements and had the ability to manage successfully the administrative and financial operations of the institution without jeopardizing the financial integrity and stability of the institution.

Proved that at least an absolute two-thirds of the institution's governing board has voted in the affirmative for a resolution in support of a request for restructured operational authority under a management agreement.

The university submitted to the Governor a written request for his approval of the management agreement that contains evidence that (i) the institution possesses the necessary administrative infrastructure, experience, and expertise to perform successfully its public educational mission; (ii) the institution is financially able to operate without jeopardizing the financial integrity and stability of the institution; (iii) the institution consistently meets the standard of the agreement. **B**

Initiative Promotes Equitable Access to **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY EDUCATION**

By SUSAN SMIGIELSKI ACKER

Intellectual property needs to be protected yet students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are often not taught the process of how to do so. Dr. Kevin C. Santiago, assistant professor of engineering at Norfolk State, plans to change that with the help of a \$25,000 Michelson grant. The grant will enable Dr. Santiago to create curriculum that will teach students the ins and outs of protecting their intellectual property.

Intellectual property is any product that can be licensed and sold for distribution, according to Santiago.

The Michelson Institute for Intellectual Property (Michelson IP) is also partnering with several other HBCUs to offer intellectual property education to help future creators, innovators, and entrepreneurs. In addition to the cash award, Michelson IP is providing digital curricula and other resources.

Colleges such as Stanford University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology have long been instructing students how to protect their intellectual property, Dr. Santiago said.

However, that has not been the case at HBCUs. There have been multiple studies, including one by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office that show overwhelming, systemic barriers facing underrepresented inventors. This has occurred despite the amount of intellectual property developed at HBCUs since 2010. “There’s been a knowledge gap. We have to ask ourselves what’s happened and how does this translate into dollars?” he said.

Intellectual property is fundamental to our economy, where an organization’s or a person’s most valuable assets are with their patents, copyrights, trademarks, and trade secrets, Santiago said.

“If you don’t have the resources to protect your intellectual property, you are at a big disadvantage,” he said.

To launch the program, Dr. Santiago said there will be bi-weekly online meetings with nearby Hampton University and Clark Atlanta University, in Georgia, to review education modules and discuss the best practices for teaching. Plans are to infuse the intellectual property modules into several undergraduate

courses to encourage student innovation and entrepreneurship.

Dr. Santiago said teaching about intellectual property fosters creativity in students.

“It is my favorite thing, to see that light bulb go off in a student’s head,” he said.

“I enjoy giving them the opportunity to learn and pursue a career,” he added.

A Norfolk State alumnus, he was the first to earn a B.S. and Ph.D. in Materials Science from NSU. He is also a first-generation college graduate.

Besides Norfolk State, the inaugural program includes Bethune-Cookman University, Hampton University, Morehouse College, South Carolina State University, Tuskegee University and Xavier University of Louisiana.

“Our nation’s HBCUs are a wellspring of creativity and ingenuity,” said Gary K. Michelson, M.D., founder and co-chair of the Michelson 20MM Foundation.

“The collaborative will further uplift these students in identifying and securing their valuable IP for the benefit of generations to come,” he added. **B**



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A LEGACY OF SERVICE



On Friday, Dec. 10, 2021, Julian Darnell Exum '21 continued a tradition that has been in his family for decades. That day, Julian, wearing a U.S. Army dress uniform, raised his right hand and took an oath to defend his country from all enemies—foreign and domestic. By Saturday afternoon, he would become the fourth member of his family to be a commissioned graduate of Norfolk State University and the sixth generation to serve in the U.S. military.

Among the audience of well-wishers on the day of the commissioning were Julian's parents, Darnell B. Exum '84 and Rosalyn T. Exum '86, and his uncle and father's twin, Larnell B. Exum '85, all were members of Norfolk State's ROTC and commissioned at the University. Their names are engraved on a plaque in Joseph G. Echols Memorial Hall, where the ROTC office is located.

It's a legacy of service that Julian is proud to be part of.

"I joined ROTC at Norfolk State because I wanted to expand my career options, and I also wanted to join and serve in the United States Military and commission from Norfolk State like my family."

"It was a very proud moment," Darnell B. Exum said of the commissioning and the moment when he and his wife Rosalyn T. Exum pinned the gold bars on their son. It was a very, very proud moment."

Julian understood the gravity of it as well.


"Being a part of the NSU ROTC program was outstanding. I am really glad that I attended an HBCU (Historically Black College and University) for my undergraduate degree," he said. "It provided me an excellent foundation to be successful anywhere in the world. Going forward, I feel as though, I can accomplish and complete any mission that will be assigned to me as a brand-new officer in the Army."

It was a powerful moment that would become more poignant by the end of the weekend as Julian's twin brother, Darian, who is enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard, graduated from Virginia State University and is expected to be commissioned in May 2022 after finishing Officer Candidate School.


"We thank God for making the Exum military legacy possible," said Rosalyn Exum. And the latest generation of Exum brothers, Julian and Darian, have built upon the legacy and a mantra that their father learned from his mother: "Good, Better, Best. Never let it rest. Until your good becomes your better, and your better becomes your best." **B**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★


SIX GENERATIONS



Grandfather: Edward R. Exum, who joined the Navy and fought in World War II, convinced his brothers to join too. Four served as soldiers.



Uncle: Herven P. Exum, another of Edward's brothers, was a famed Tuskegee Airman.



Grandfather: Walter Thomas, U.S. Air Force, Retired Rosalyn's Father



Mother: 1st Lieutenant Rosalyn T. Exum, U.S. Army Four years of service

Father: (Top Photo, 3rd in line) Lieutenant Colonel Darnell B. Exum, U.S. Army, Retired

Brother: (Top Photo, 2nd in line) Darian Exum, Officer Candidate, U.S. Coast Guard

Uncle: (Top Photo, 4th in line) Lieutenant Colonel Larnell B. Exum, U.S. Army, Retired

First Cousin: Lieutenant Tyler Exum (Larnell Exum's son), U.S. Coast Guard Graduate

Uncle (Godfather): (Top Photo, 5th in line) Col. Alexander C. Williams, U.S. Army, Retired

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



PROPOSED O.N.E. SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

By GAIL KENT

to Provide More Resources, Professionals to Address Regional Health Inequities

Staying healthy is far more complicated than what first meets the eye. A community's health is a basket filled with complex influences such as the environment, genetics, politics, culture and racism.

That's why Old Dominion University, Norfolk State University and Eastern Virginia Medical School (O.N.E.) agreed in August to work toward establishing Virginia's first school of public health. The proposed O.N.E. School of Public Health (ONE SPH) would be only the third collaborative of its kind in the country.

"Collectively, our institutions produce many health care professionals who go on to work for hospital systems, government agencies, nonprofits and private companies in the area and across the Commonwealth," says NSU

President Javaune Adams-Gaston, Ph.D. "The students who attend the ONE School of Public Health will not only gain public health knowledge, skills and competencies, they will also learn about health equity, cultural competency and other best practices for disease prevention, health promotion, leadership and more. This will give the region a well-rounded and well-prepared workforce for years to come."

Hampton Roads has significant health disparities in its urban areas. Average life expectancy is lower than the state's and nation's, especially in underserved communities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Black Americans are more likely to face health disparities and, as a result, suffer from diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes and stroke. They are also more likely to die younger from all causes.

"The ONE SPH will support multidisciplinary and interprofessional teams needed to address complex problems," says Felicia Mebane, Ph.D., interim executive director of public health initiatives at NSU. "This new school will be more than the sum of various public health degrees and programs. It will create a culture of collaboration and interconnected infrastructure and resources that contribute to our communities in ways that individual programs can't do."

“The community wants action, and this initiative shows that we are taking steps toward working for and with our community.”

The creation of the school has received strong support from then-Governor Ralph Northam and the Virginia General Assembly, which fully funded a request of \$5 million to be divided equally between NSU and ODU. Along with EVMS, the universities are preparing for accreditation – targeted for 2024 – from the Council on Education for Public Health. In addition, Sentara Healthcare, a key ally and financial supporter, contributed \$4 million to support the accreditation process.

“The vision of EVMS is to be recognized as the most community-oriented school of medicine and health professions in the United States,” says Brian C. Martin, Ph.D., associate dean for administration at EVMS School of Health Professions. “The ONE SPH will allow EVMS to leverage relationships with ODU and NSU to make substantial progress toward this vision.”

Bonnie Van Lunen, Ph.D., dean of ODU's College of Health Sciences, says partnerships are also important to ODU, noting that joining with the other organizations will allow all of them to become more effective. “The community wants action, and this initiative shows that we are taking steps toward working for and with our community.”

Under the agreement, ODU will serve as the lead institution, with NSU and EVMS directors, faculty and staff also engaged in key levels of decision making. While the school's administration will be housed on the ODU campus, all institutions will serve equally on a curriculum committee. The school will have its own dean.

The ONE SPH will have three major goals, to provide education, research and service. It will educate future public health experts by offering collaborative undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees and workforce development opportunities.

Currently, each participating university offers public health programs, some of which are the same



and others unique. Both ODU and EVMS offer the Master of Public Health degree, for example, and Norfolk State is in the process of developing one. The envisioned school of public health will allow students to apply to a single school with access to classes and programs at all three institutions.

Mildred Fuller, Ph.D., interim chair of NSU's Department of Nursing and Allied Health, says the ONE SPH will complement the health sciences programs offered by the university, noting that NSU's MPH program would be housed in her department. The ONE SPH will also bring “a new cadre of academics to this region and new levels of research, community engagement and continuing education provided by all three institutions.”

“Our joint partnership shows the importance of regionalism and collaboration, and is a great example of how, when we all work together, we can find solutions to address major problems that impact individuals on every level,” says Adams-Gaston. **B**



Presidential Inauguration

Our Time. Our Mission. Our Vision.

Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston,
Seventh President
Thursday, September 16, 2021

*"We're not resting on our successes.
We are determined to do more...
We will continue to move forward
because this is our time, this is
our mission and together this is
our vision."*



ALUMNA DEFIES STEREOTYPES

to Become Accomplished
Black Scientist and Role Model

By Gail Kent

Photographs courtesy of Dr. Korie Grayson

Even though the popular film “Hidden Figures” featured smart, strong Black women blazing trails a generation ago at NASA’s Hampton, Virginia, facility, today’s image of a scientist is still likely to be one of an “old white guy” in a lab coat. And that’s what Korie Grayson, Ph.D., (B.S. ’12), biomedical engineer and chemical engineering researcher, wants to change. The attractive 31-year-old Black woman, who listens to R&B and Afrobeat music and describes herself as a foodie, a wine enthusiast and a workout junkie, is just one example of what a scientist is today.

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CONTINUED FROM PG. 16

“I’m helping to redefine the image of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) by showing what the average scientist looks like and where she comes from,” she says. “I want to be a disrupting force. Just knowing that I can have that impact in my community allows the next person or the next generation to see that they can do it, too.”

While they have made great contributions in STEM fields, women — especially women of color — are still underrepresented. According to the National Science Board, women today comprise 47% of the workforce but only 28% of the science and engineering workforce. Of this percentage, only 5% are women of color. Scientific American says that 45% of women in STEM leave their positions because they feel underpaid and underrepresented.

A first-generation college student, Grayson, a “military brat” who grew up all over the country, graduated from Maury High School in Norfolk. She was accepted into all 14 universities to which she applied, but Norfolk State offered her a full-ride scholarship into the Dozoretz National Institute for Mathematics and Applied Sciences (DNIMAS) program.

“When I went on a tour with Dr. (Alicia) McClain, the DNIMAS program director, my mom felt good about sending me where somebody would not only be a kind of parental figure, but also keep me on track with my grades.”

Norfolk State was the right choice for her. “I was surrounded by people who looked like me and could relate to me as a first-generation college student and the child in a single-parent household. You’re surrounded by professors — even the custodial staff — who are cheering you on. It gave me the confidence that I could succeed.”

And succeed she has. After graduating with her chemistry/pre-med degree, she worked for two years plotting her next step after deciding that medical school was not for her. She eventually landed a job at a biomedical device company assembling a product for dialysis patients. Because of her experience there she decided that she wanted to pursue graduate studies and was accepted into Cornell University’s Biomedical Engineering doctoral program.

At Cornell, she became the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

GRAYSON’S MEMBERSHIPS

- Chair, University of Michigan Postdoctoral Association Black Postdoc Circle
- Diversity Chair, Women Doing Science
- Planning Council Member, STEMNoire
- Director of Finances, BlackInCancer
- Affiliated with STEM Avengers and successful STEM Success Virtual Conference
- Member, Biomedical Engineering Society
- Member, National Society of Black Engineers
- Member, Society of Women Engineers
- Member, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Outstanding Postdoctoral Fellow Award (2021)
- List of Influential African American Business and Corporate Women
- Cell Press 1000 Inspiring Black Scientists in America (2020)
- Edward A. Bouchet Graduate Honor Society (2020)
- Cornell Diversity Programs in Engineering (DPE)
- Graduate Student of the Year (2017)
- Cornell DPE Robert Mozia Graduate
- National Science Foundation Graduate
- Alfred P. Sloan Fellowship (2014)



Graduate Coordinator in the Diversity Programs in Engineering (DPE) Department, a job supporting the recruitment and retention of underrepresented students. She was also a graduate resident fellow, living and working with undergraduates in student housing to foster a diverse community.

In 2020 Grayson successfully defended her doctoral dissertation that evaluated cancer drug resistance in late-stage prostate cancer. She is now a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Michigan in the Department of Chemical Engineering. Her research focuses on evaluating novel nano- and microparticles for therapy in acute inflammatory disease and cancer. The aim of her research is to develop treatments that more effectively target and kill harmful cells without damaging good cells.

But Grayson's work doesn't stop in the lab. She is a leader in many professional associations and has received a long list of honors and awards. Additionally, she speaks to elementary, high school, college and graduate students, as well as to nonprofits, Fortune 500 companies and public institutions about her STEM journey, research, science communication and self-advocacy.

"Self-advocacy is one of my favorite talks, because I do it for women in positions where they are the minority and experiencing things they shouldn't have to deal with," she says. She was inspired to pursue this topic by a lab partner in grad school who often didn't stand up for herself. "I thought, there's



got to be a way to relay to women that they can be assertive without coming off as aggressive."

She says there are three pillars for self-advocacy: Knowing yourself, knowing your needs and values, and knowing how to get your needs met. "I try to give people the skills and tools to build their confidence and to learn to negotiate in a job or for a raise."

Her robust online presence includes a comprehensive website that details her accomplishments, research and speaking topics. Her social media activities have included a dance on TikTok that went viral and was aired on BET. She says making herself visible online is one of her strategies for promoting diversity in STEM.

"Being on social media posting about my life and presenting different images inside and outside of the lab shows that scientists have lives. We've got tattoos. We've got piercings. We travel. We like wine . . . we're other things than just our jobs." **B**

CONFEDERATE STATUE REMOVAL

A Long time coming

By SUSAN SMIGIELSKI ACKER

When the Robert E. Lee statue was about to be erected over 130 years ago, John Mitchell Jr., (1893-1929), an esteemed Black Richmond journalist and later city council member, wrote, “Black men will put this statue up, and when the time comes they will take it down.”

That prophecy came true. In 2021, the Black man who took down the Lee statue was Norfolk State alumnus and Rector of the Board of Visitors Devon Henry.

Henry is owner of Team Henry Enterprises, a Newport News based commercial construction and renovation company. He was tasked with removing the Confederate General’s statue on Richmond’s famed Monument Avenue last September.

Henry was not the only Norfolk State alumnus involved. Then-Secretary of Administration Grindly Johnson’s office oversaw the project.

Henry’s company’s involvement began in June 2020 with a call from then-Governor Ralph Northam’s Chief of Staff Clark Mercer.

“He asked me if I would be willing to remove it. He said all other contractors said no,” Henry said.

According to Mercer, many contractors’ rejections came with expletives.

“I heard a lot of colorful comments,” Mercer said.

Removing the statue was a long time coming. The other Confederate statues of Gen. “Jeb” Stuart, Confederate President Jefferson Davis, Gen. Stonewall Jackson and Confederate Navy chief Matthew Fontaine Maury were removed last summer. Notably those statues were all erected after the Lee statue.

Northam’s administration began looking into removing the statue early in his tenure.

“We dubbed it Project Lee’s Traveler (the name of the horse),” Mercer said.

Once it was announced, there were legal challenges, including one from a group of residents from Monument Avenue. Mercer said they were confident they would prevail.

Removing the statue was not just because the political tide was (and still is) changing due to the murder of George Floyd, Henry said. There were also safety concerns.

People in other parts of the South were trying to remove Confederate statues without proper equipment and expertise causing injuries. In June



2020, a man was severely injured when he and a crowd attempted to remove the confederate soldier statue in Downtown Portsmouth.

Because of the violence in Charlottesville, when the city council voted to remove the Robert E. Lee statue, Henry knew there would be security issues. Henry decided before his company could take the job, he needed to consult with important people — his family which includes his wife and teenage son and daughter.

“My son said, ‘yea Dad, do it.’ I didn’t do it to be a hero. But I had to show my kids that we need to face adversity,” he said.

During the process, Henry said his daughter, a high school senior at the time, “was on pins and needles.”

The Henry family live in a cul-de-sac. Whenever a strange car would enter, she would become nervous, he said.

And true to his company’s name of Team Henry, he consulted with his staff to make sure they were comfortable with performing the job.

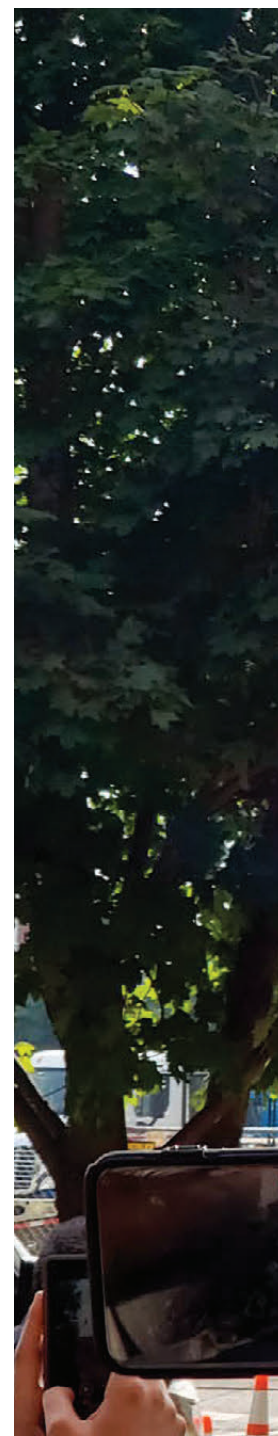
Henry’s first step was to find a subcontractor to supply a crane. That proved to be a challenge.

“I didn’t hear ‘no’ I heard ‘hell no.’ People said if you do it, you will face serious consequences,” he said.

“I even heard ‘why don’t you take down the MLK statue while you are at it.’”

Henry did finally find a crane operator out of the city. Henry said the crane operator is also African American.

The process was two-fold, one was the actual removal, the other was security. Johnson said planning was key.





“We had to plan for everything,” she said.

Johnson credits Dena Potter, director of communications for the Department of General Services, as an essential team member.

“There was so much security, the FBI, Henrico Sheriff’s Office, The Capitol Police, it was crazy. But we had to stay on task,” Henry said. Secretary Johnson said Homeland Security, along with fire and rescue units, were involved as well.

The Lee Statue was erected in 1890, a generation after the Civil War. It was seen as a way to reinforce white supremacy in Southern states. The campaign to erect it was spearheaded by Lee’s nephew.

Henry’s team had no drawings to give them an idea where the connection points were located.

“There was a lot of exploratory work,” he said.

Mercer said drones and apple pickers were used too as part of their research. In addition, it weighs 12 tons and is 61 feet tall, making it one of the

largest Confederate statues in the country.

“The thing is huge,” Mercer added.

They discovered the statue was made up of nine pieces with nine pins.

The day of the removal, both Mercer and Henry said the energy was high. Henry was pleasantly surprised at the large number of supporters and the lack of demonstrators. Northam also was there that day.

Despite its massive size, it was lifted from its pedestal in one piece and placed in an undisclosed location.

“It came down without a hitch, very quickly and perfectly,” Johnson said.

“It is in an undisclosed location for various reasons, but people are people,” she added.

“It was the most amazing feeling to see all the different emotions. Some people cried, some were jumping, some were singing. It was unbelievable,” Henry said.

“I felt a sense of relief and joy. It was a good day,” Johnson said. **B**



The Passing of a Titan Announcer:
JACKIE BOWE
– A Life Well-Lived

By SHARON RIDDICK HOGGARD (M.A.'04)

If you've been a fan of Norfolk State University football or basketball over the decades, you well remember the sports announcer with The Voice. Everyone recognized that voice, but few recognized his name or face. But that voice . . . a voice that could captivate an audience or work them up to a fever pitch of spirited cheering for the home team . . . was the voice of Jackie Harold Bowe. The voice is now silent.

Jackie Bowe, NSU alumnus and sports announcer extraordinaire at the University for nearly 50 years, passed away November 2, 2021. Friends described him as a man with the gift of gab and a heart of gold. One of his closest and oldest friends, Robert Randall said, "He was a fixture at Norfolk State University and totally devoted to the University. People recognized the voice, but there are four things people didn't know about Jackie Bowe. One, he was married. Two, he was married for 40 years. Three, he had a 40-year-old daughter and four, he had grandchildren — a granddaughter 20, and a grandson who is eight years old."

Randall, also an NSU alumnus that remains a mainstay at the University, speaks with reverence, respect and humor when talking about his friend. Bowe had a special talent — creating jingles, catchphrases, and giving football and basketball players catchy nicknames. He was so adept at developing nicknames for the players that the players' real names were dropped in favor of the nickname. "When Jackie spoke, the floor rumbled," Randall uttered.

Bowe found his passion for public speaking while in high school where he announced the school's news, information, and special events. Later he began announcing the high school sporting events. He also participated in the debate team at the Princess Anne Training School/ Union Kempsville High School. Bowe graduated from high school in 1968 and enrolled in NSU that same year. "You know, he announced NSU's

last game of the season the Saturday before he died. We played South Carolina State University. I talked to him on that Sunday, and he died on Tuesday," Randall recalled. When asked about his emotions upon finding out his long-time friend had died, Randall choked up and softly said, "It hurt. It hurt a lot."

Randall remembered that he met Bowe back in 1972 or '73. Randall recounts the story of how he and Clarence Smith aka Juicy were members of a social service organization called MOAC — Men of Achievement and Culture. It was through their association with MOAC that the two men met Bowe. When the young men found families in the immediate neighborhood, or students on campus

"When Jackie spoke, the floor rumbled."

that needed help, they eagerly helped whoever needed assistance including buying food, chopping wood, or whatever was required. "This was what attracted Jackie Bowe — an organization where he could help people."

He loved the game, and he loved being prepared for the game. He was diligent and steadfast in his work. "Jackie was always on time . . . before time." Randall recollects a time while they were still in college that Bowe became a disc jockey (DJ). He

traveled to different college campuses with his crew in tow. "We used to roll with him when he was a DJ." Bowe DJ'd at Virginia State University, Livingstone, etc., and then began announcing on commercial radio stations including WOWI — now 103JAMZ.

The man with the gift for gab also once held announcing gigs for the NCAA, CIAA and MEAC games. After every one of his games, Bowe would call Randall for a critique of that evening's work. "Did I enunciate everything correctly," he would ask Randall. "Yeah, Jackie you did great tonight. He relished being correct. He was one of the best readers I've ever seen or heard," Randall added.

It's not often that human beings develop rare friendship bonds such as the tight-knit bond Randall and Bowe had. "We were friends for the longest time. Tell you something else about him— Jackie loved to dress, and he loved jewelry. When he traveled, he usually carried six to 12 watches and five to seven suits. He would begin rehearsing at 6 a.m. for a 7 p.m. game. He was frugal — didn't spend a lot of money," Randall shared. The big man loved fishing, hunting, and announcing games and probably not in that order.

Randall is now committed to ensuring Jackie Bowe's legacy is not forgotten. He has started the process of nominating Bowe for the NSU Athletics Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame was

established to preserve the contributions of teams, individuals, traditions, and accomplishments of the NSU athletic department while honoring generations of student-athletes, coaches, administrators, and humanitarians who had a significant impact on the success of the institution.

Jackie Bowe's life was well-lived. He touched so many lives and will always be remembered for his time on this earth. "I think about him all the time," Randall said. "Indeed, we had a special bond." **B**



SPARTAN LEGION MARCHING BAND

Heading to the Tournament of Roses Parade

By SHARON RIDDICK HOGGARD (M.A.'04)

On an ordinary day in the life of Norfolk State University, assistant band director Stephanie Sanders handed an application to band director William Beathea. He studied it and thought, yeah, we should do this. He spent a solid week collecting the necessary documentation to complete the application. Two weeks before the public announcement was made, the band director knew the outcome of the application process. Instructed to keep the news under wraps, Beathea kept his lip buttoned. At the 2021 homecoming football game, a video booming from the jumbotron at the William “Dick” Price Stadium announced that the Spartan Legion Marching Band, the jewel of Hampton Roads, had been selected to participate in the 2023 Tournament of Roses Parade (also known as The Rose Parade). And the crowd went wild.

Michelle Hill, executive director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving, said she had also received the news two weeks before the public announcement. Beathea had contacted her to give her a heads up. “The video announcement was the first time the band members heard the announcement,” Hill recalled. “Spectators erupted into cheers, applause, and laughter.” Regarding her own reaction, Hill exclaimed, “I was screaming! I’m so unbelievably proud.”

“It’s pretty much all I think about now,” Beathea uttered as an after-thought. “Hundreds of millions of people watch the Tournament of Roses Parade. This is a big deal for university marketing, recruitment, and exposure. Only nine bands, from every corner of the globe, are chosen each year for this parade. The Legion’s performance in The Rose Parade will shine a bright spotlight on NSU, HBCUs, the region and the state.”

After a pregnant pause in the conversation, the band director added, “It’s kind of overwhelming mentally.”

Now, the work begins. First, Norfolk State University must raise an estimated \$700,000 minimum to transport, house, feed and provide incidentals for the band and staff to journey to Pasadena, California. Hill initially stated that she was a bit intimidated by the fundraising goal amount, but later countered, “We have 10 months. I want to have enough time to do it properly — so that we can support this endeavor and this great university accomplishment.”

Hill’s next step — calling for a meeting of the minds . . . involving all the major parties that will be involved in the fundraising and logistical efforts. Vice President for University Advancement Clifford Porter said, “We will seek support from alumni, friends and corporate sponsors.” Hill and team will plan a series of special fundraising initiatives designed to engage the University’s diverse audiences. Although Hill wouldn’t divulge what the exact fundraising game plan would entail, she did provide a few highlights. “We created a map that will incorporate this initiative into the fundraising strategy we already have in place. We’ll do a faculty-staff campaign, a phone-a-thon, email, and personal solicitations asking people to support the appeals. What we want to do, in addition to our fundraising, is ensure that we’re out and about talking about this accomplishment and what it means to our students, to the University, the region, and the Commonwealth of Virginia.” She went on to say they plan to shout the news from every mountain they can. “We’ll talk about this as a once-in-a-lifetime experience that will provide our students and staff with the recognition they deserve.”



Onward to The Rose Parade 2023

While the fundraising machine cranks up, across campus Beathia and the band staff will start the other challenging effort — getting the Spartan Legion Marching Band in tip-top shape. “What do I need to do to get these kids prepared? What equipment will we need, what recruiting efforts, etc.,” he ticked off his list. “What do we need to do to build stamina? Our normal training and conditioning will keep the band members in good physical condition. We’ll just have to be more intense. The Rose Parade comes at the end of our season, so we’ll already be in shape.”

Currently, there are about 210 members in the Legion. “The numbers change throughout the season due to a variety of reasons. We’ll get back to recruiting, but the band can’t be more than 20% larger than what we put on the application. We can be as big as 260 members,” added Beathia. Soon, he will get in his car, map out a marching route on campus that reflects the number of miles in The Rose Parade (six miles), and get the Legion to marching . . . a lot. “They’ll be ready.”

Porter and Hill will implement the fundraising strategy. In addition to the University’s traditional fundraising methods, Hill said, “We’ll visit our faith-based partners in the Hampton Roads region, and we’ll ask our corporate and business partners throughout the Commonwealth to support this initiative. Together, we can get it done.” **B**

Join the wave to send the Spartan Legion Marching Band to the Tournament of Roses Parade in 2023. Visit www.nsu.edu/roseparade, or call the Office of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving at 757-823-8135.



AT LONG LAST

Basketball Great is Pro Ball Hall of Famer

By Matt Michalec



Some 40 years after he hung up his high-tops, one of the best players in Spartan history and one of the most versatile, accomplished NBA forwards of his time received the ultimate recognition this past fall when he was inducted into the basketball hall of fame.

A nominee from the veterans committee, Robert "Bob" Dandridge was enshrined alongside some of the greats of the game in a class that included the likes of Bill Russell (inducted as the NBA's first Black head coach), Paul Pierce, Chris Webber and fellow HBCU alumnus Ben Wallace (Virginia Union).

Dandridge competed for the Spartans from 1965-69 before enjoying a 13-year professional career in the NBA. A 6-foot-6 forward, he led Norfolk State to the 1968 CIAA regular season and tournament titles, finishing 24-2 overall and 17-1 in the league. Dandridge led the Spartans to an NCAA Regional berth as a junior in 1968 and again his senior year in 1969. He was named All-CIAA and to the CIAA All-Tournament Team both years.

In 1969, he was the CIAA Tournament MVP despite NSU finishing as runner-up. He set the tournament record that year by scoring 50 points in a first-round win over Virginia Union. He still holds the record for most points in a CIAA Tournament with 114 that year.

A native of Richmond, Dandridge was also named AP honorable mention All-America as a senior in 1968-69 after scoring 32.3 points per game, a school record that still stands today. He led the Spartans to an 87-16 record during his four seasons, 63-7 in the CIAA.

After being selected by the Milwaukee Bucks with the 45th overall pick in the 1969 NBA Draft, Dandridge played in more than 800 games during his NBA career. He was a four-time All-Star and competed in the playoffs eight times with both the Bucks and the Washington Bullets. He competed in the NBA Finals four times and won two NBA Championships, with the Bucks in 1971 and the Bullets in 1978.

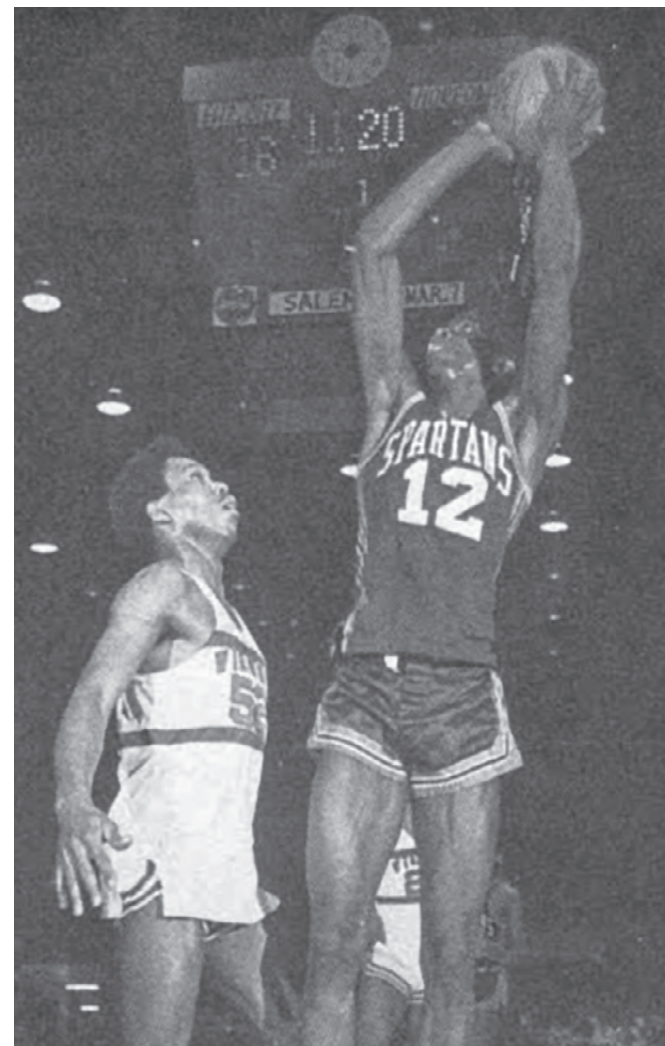
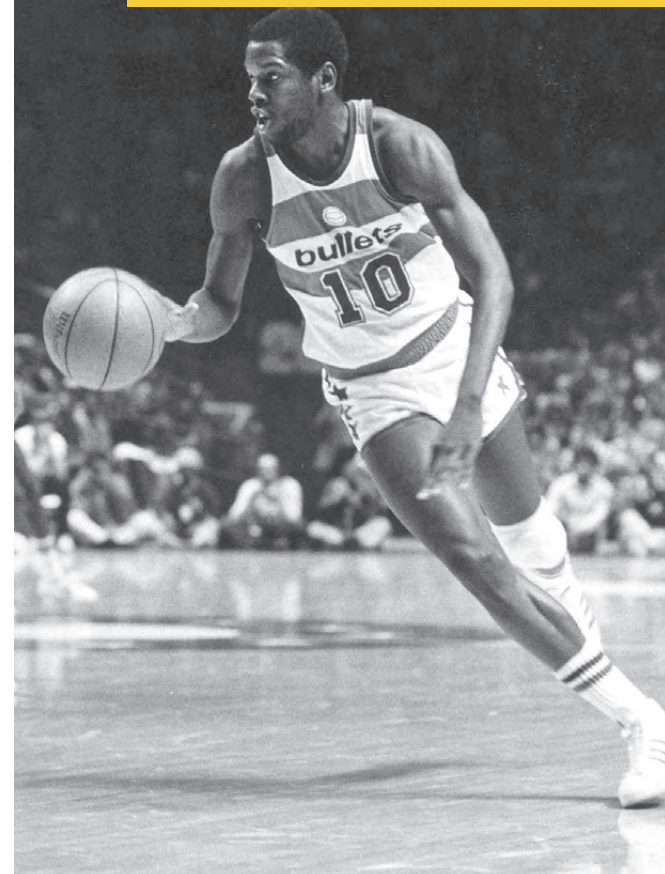
He averaged 18.5 points, 6.8 rebounds and 3.4 assists during his NBA career, including 20.1 points in those eight playoff appearances. He was named to the NBA All-Rookie First Team in 1970 and both the All-NBA Second Team and the NBA All-Defensive First Team in 1979. His No. 10 was retired by the Bucks.

Even after a lengthy, acclaimed professional career, Dandridge never forgot his roots and Norfolk State's role in his development.

"I grew up during a time when sports were not integrated. We were fortunate enough to have HBCUs," Dandridge said during his induction speech. "But my experience with HBCUs was not limited to basketball. The skills that NSU provided me with went so much further than just basketball. I saw what having class was like. I witnessed dignity and a sense of belonging."

While many of his contemporaries have already been inducted into the Hall of Fame, Dandridge said the wait was worth it.

"Being a Hall of Famer is not about basketball," Dandridge said. "I've had to wait a little while, but there's been so much growth inside of me that I'm real grateful for the wait. I've had a chance to become a better father, a better person." **B**



LESSONS LEARNED HELP SHAPE CAREER

Dr. Gary Todd Vanek (B.A.'01) learned a lot about the world in the U.S. Navy and while a student at Norfolk State. Vanek, a psychology major at NSU, is now director of the Engineering and Technology Management program at Washington State University. The lessons he learned from his experiences at Norfolk State have shaped and inspired him.

While stationed in Norfolk, Vanek enrolled at Norfolk State after several of his shipmates spoke highly of the University. "Although I grew up with little to no diversity in my childhood, when I joined the Navy at 18, I was quickly exposed to a wide array of cultures and belief systems," Vanek explained. "I can't definitively say that is why I chose Norfolk State University, but I am so glad that I chose a Historically Black College/University. It allowed me to learn more about African American culture."

His memories of NSU are both serious and funny. Vanek especially remembers Dr. William Ward, who was his history professor and the mayor of the city of Chesapeake, Virginia, at the time. What stands out the most to Vanek is that Ward would encourage his students to learn more about their culture and the

culture of others. Vanek has taken Ward's words to heart and has embarked on a lifelong commitment to learn as much as he can about other cultures including African American history and culture.

Recently he took a community and equity certificate program at Washington State as a part of that commitment. "I am proud that I have learned so much about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, but I know now that I need to be an advocate and do all I can to help our society be better in those areas." He realizes that there are limitations to what he can truly "know." "I know I still have a lot to learn and that I can never fully understand someone else's life experience because I didn't live it, but I can respect others' lived experiences."

One of his most memorable moments at NSU was when serving as vice president of the Psychology Club. "The group chose me to be 'Mr. Psychology' for the homecoming parade," he said. The group made a float and Vanek and Ms. Psychology rode on it. "When I saw the pictures later, my sash read 'Mr. Psycho' because the 'logy' was folded under. We all laughed about it," said Vanek. "It was a fun and memorable time because I was truly humbled that my classmates chose me to represent the club."

Vanek has built his career on his experiences in education, continuous improvement and leadership beginning with his Navy service. In his current position as director of the online master and graduate certificate Engineering and Technology Management program, he teaches and manages the program. Vanek stresses to the students the importance of having a vision and offers that advice to current Norfolk State students as well.

"Have a vision for your life! Set your sights on where you want to go. What do you want to do 5, 10, 25 years from now?" he says. "Is your current path directed toward that vision? But also, be flexible with that vision, just make sure you are in control of it. Get all you can out of the college experience to get you firmly on the path toward that vision."

There is one thing that Vanek wishes he could change. "I do regret that I didn't keep in touch with my classmates. I moved West after graduating and kind of left the 'East' in the rear-view mirror. I would like to try and reconnect with some of my classmates." **B**



ALUMNA USES PASSION TO HELP OTHERS TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY NEEDS

Ernecia House '11 constantly thinks about what she can do to uplift the community. That thinking led her to start a few nonprofits to address community needs.

“While attending Norfolk State University, I discovered my purpose in life, which is uplifting others and helping entrepreneurs to achieve greatness,” she said. That passion for serving the community was instilled in her by her mother Jan House who took 5-year-old Ernecia with her to community meetings.

House, who earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration, started a child learning center about seven years ago. “Groomed for Greatness Learning Center started in 2015, without any experience in childcare. I jumped out on faith and immediately started to put together my business plan for the school,” said House. “I was fortunate enough to have one of my NSU classmates, who already owned a daycare for a few years, assist me in the process. Once, I created the blueprint for childcare centers, I was able to duplicate the process and open schools in other cities.” At this time, House has two locations — one in Norfolk and one in Virginia Beach.

Once the pandemic started, House realized that once again she could help the community.

“Our community has been affected by COVID-19 since the beginning. As a business owner, I began to immediately take action,” House said. “Myself and my business partner, Traci Hansley, an NSU nursing graduate, got together and created Groomed for Greatness Vaccine Clinic.”

Her hope is that through G4G Vaccination, they can educate as many people as possible about COVID-19 and help decrease health disparities in Hampton Roads. “We go into the community and service the homebound population, host vaccination clinics all over Hampton Roads and have a physical clinic located in Norfolk — 1711 Church St., Suite C, Norfolk, VA 23504.”

Through these two entities as well as a therapeutic foster care agency — Connecting Family — House plans to continue serving the community where she can do the most good.

She believes that Norfolk State provided her with the foundation to effectively operate a business but that it also provided her with lasting relationships. “I have classmates that turned into business partners. Classmates that have become friends, and even classmates who are current customers and clients.”

She wants current Norfolk State students to know that they should follow their dreams and turn them into reality as well as love themselves first and motivate others around them. “We all have greatness inside,” House said. “Find out what it takes to keep your light shining.” **B**





NSUAA HONORS

Recognizing the Achievements of our Members

On Thursday, October 14, 2021 the NSU Alumni Association Inc., publicly recognized and honored members, and chapters of the alumni association who have supported its mission and goals.

Rhonda L. Allen '83 received the NSUAA's Alumnus of the Year Award. The Chapter Service Award was awarded to a diverse group of alumni who have proudly represented the association in their community. John Baskin '80, Frances Chavous, Deborah S. Foreman-Speller '76, Dwight Hendricks '81, La'Toya Hines '00,'02 & '19, Stephanie Humphries '87, Timothy L. Jones '07, Tracie Knight '88, Alveeta Nelson '75, Evita Perkins '11 and William Rainey '71 were recipients of this award.

The NSUAA also honored two regional groups with its Chapter of the Year Award. The recipients have consistently supported the mission and goals of the alumni association and donated their time and treasure to Norfolk State University. The Richmond Alumni Chapter received the 2021 Chapter of the Year Award for the 35 and under membership category. While the Military Alumni Chapter Foundation received the award for 36+ membership category

The final recognition of the evening was the crowning of Ms. Alumni 2021-22, April McDaniels '01, vice president of Detroit Alumni Chapter-NSUAA. **B**





CHAPTER
OF THE YEAR
AWARD
RECIPIENT

Membership Size (36+)

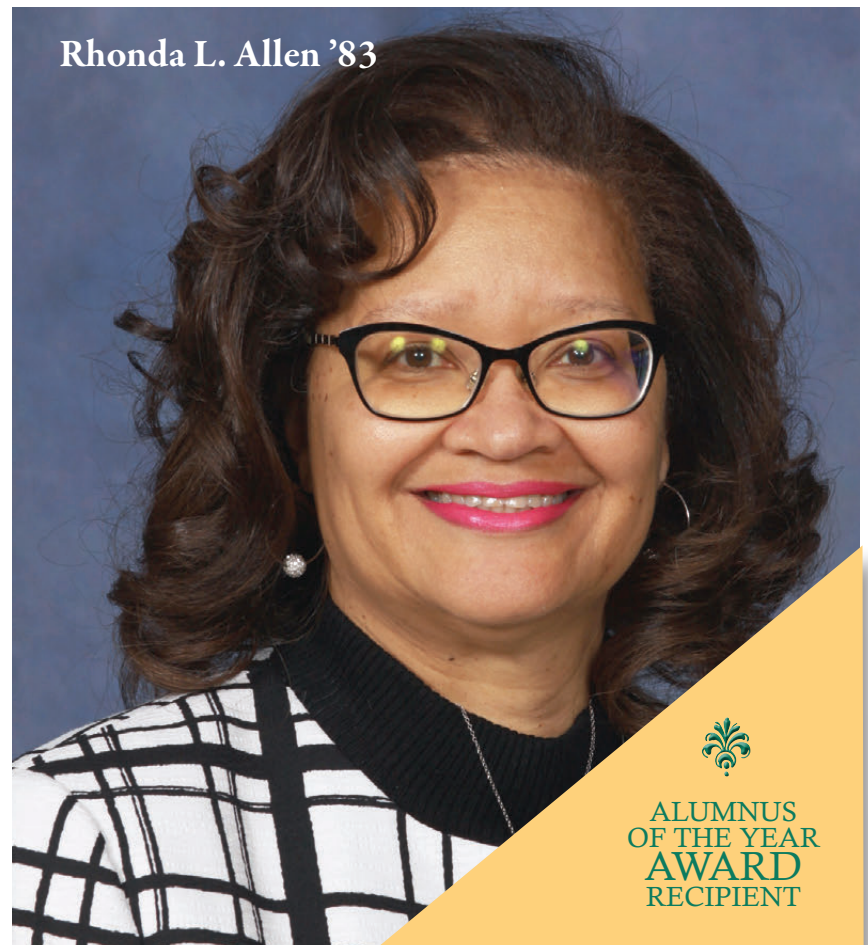
Military Alumni Chapter



CHAPTER
OF THE YEAR
AWARD
RECIPIENT
Membership Size (36+)

Ms. Alumni 2021-22

Rhonda L. Allen '83



ALUMNUS
OF THE YEAR
AWARD
RECIPIENT

NSU ALUMNI MOVERS AND SHAKERS

BRENDA CARDEN '01 was recently hired at WABC in New York City, the No.1 news market in America as a news producer. Brenda's first job was news producer at WVEC in Norfolk. She's humble, hardworking and a great mentor. As an Emmy Award-winning producer, Ms. Carden has worked at big market stations in California, Texas, Philadelphia.



Anne Arundel County School Health program since August of 2018 when she was assigned as the School Health Nurse for Germantown Elementary School and West Annapolis Elementary School.

PEGGY CRUZ '04 was appointed chair of the Joint Commission on the Opportunity Gap for Anne Arundel County (MD) Public Schools. Currently, Ms. Cruz is the current Anne Arundel County Department of Health Bureau of School Health and Support Program Supervisor for the Old Mill/Northeast Clusters. In this position, she works to support the health room staff in implementing comprehensive health care services for students. She has been with the



media and the public. She was charged with issuing multi-modal

DOLLINE HATCHETT '89 has been named Principal Deputy Managing Director for Management and Operations at the National Transportation Safety Board. Previously, Ms. Hatchett was the director of the Office of Safety Recommendations and Communications, where she led a multidisciplinary team responsible for shaping and promoting how the agency responds and coordinates with Congress, the

safety recommendations for aviation, marine, highway, rail, pipeline and hazardous materials. From 2018-2019, Hatchett oversaw the agency's Transportation Disaster Assistance Division, which coordinates assistance for those families impacted by transportation disasters with local, state, federal and non-governmental agencies, and transportation operators.

DR. JOSEPH L. JEFFERSON (BMUS '07) was recently selected the Jazz Education Network's 2022 Ellis Marsalis Jr. Jazz Educator of the Year. The award is named after legendary jazz educator and pianist Ellis Marsalis Jr. It recognizes an outstanding collegiate jazz educator who represents the highest standards of teaching and whose results in the classroom have brought distinction to their institution and their students. Jefferson, director of Jazz Studies and an assistant professor at Southeast Missouri State University, received the award January 6, 2022, at the 13th Annual Jazz Education Network Conference held in Dallas January 5-8.



received resolutions from the Senate and House of Delegates for his induction into the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame and career accomplishments. In 2019, he was named the recipient of the Old Dominion University Bud Metheny Award, an award given annually to an individual who has made significant contributions to the game of baseball in Hampton Roads.

Former NSU Athletic Director and baseball coach **MARTY L. MILLER '68**, was inducted into the American Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame. A member of the class of 2022, Miller is just the fourth HBCU coach to ever earn this honor. Throughout his career, Miller has been recognized as an inductee into multiple Halls of Fame and in 2014, he was honored at the Virginia State Capitol and

SAIC has named two-time Wash100 Award winner **VERNON SAUNDERS '92** as the senior vice president of national intelligence. Saunders is a certified Project Management Professional with over two decades of experience in information technology and business management and over six years of service in the U.S. Air Force. Throughout his career, Saunders has obtained deep expertise in shaping strategies, building and leading global high-performance teams and executing technology initiatives for private and public sector organizations.



ADALAY WILSON (MSW '85) won a national award from CCAI and is part of the nonpartisan group's drive to raise awareness about the many children and teenagers in need of permanent and safe homes in the United States. Wilson was among 75 Angels recognized in 40 states in 2021. Ms. Wilson, a licensed clinical social worker, is chief program officer at UMFS, a statewide nonprofit involved in foster care, adoption and therapeutic services. This fall, she was named an Angels in Adoption Honoree by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute for her long career supporting families. **B**



Navy Commander, **DESMOND WALKER '05**, was selected for the "Career Achievement in Government Award" for the 2022 Black Engineer of the Year Award (BEYA) STEM conference. Over the span of four decades, the BEYA Conference has exposed 100,000 American students to role models in STEM careers. Hosted by US Black Engineer magazine, the Council of Engineering Deans of America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and Lockheed Martin Corporation, the 36th annual BEYA STEM Conference will take place February 17-19. The 2022 conference theme is "BEYA STEM 365: Engineering Our STEM World to Engage, Learn, Evolve, Advance, and Thrive."

A photograph of a smiling Black man with glasses holding a young girl with curly hair. They are outdoors in a grassy field.

YOUR GIFTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

AND GIVING CAN STILL BENEFIT YOU!

there are still many ways you can make a gift to support our cause and make a difference.

1

IRA Rollover Gift
If you are 70 1/2 or older you can make a gift to us from your IRA

2

Gift of Securities
Give us your old stock (with a low basis) that has appreciated in the rising market and avoid capital gains tax

3

Life Insurance Gift
Eliminate an old or unneeded life insurance policy by making a gift of the cash balance to support our work

4

Life Income Gift
Make a gift for a gift annuity or charitable remainder trust and receive lifetime payments. Ask us for a free illustration with your benefits

5

Charitable Bequest
Make a gift to support our work that costs you nothing today. Provide for your loved ones first and then our cause with a bequest made in your will or trust

Contact us to learn more about ways you can support NSU

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Phone: 757-823-2207

The logo for Norfolk State University, featuring a stylized tower and the text "NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY".

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During the December 2021 Commencement Ceremony, Pharrell became an honorary member of the Spartan Legion. Congratulations Graduates!

