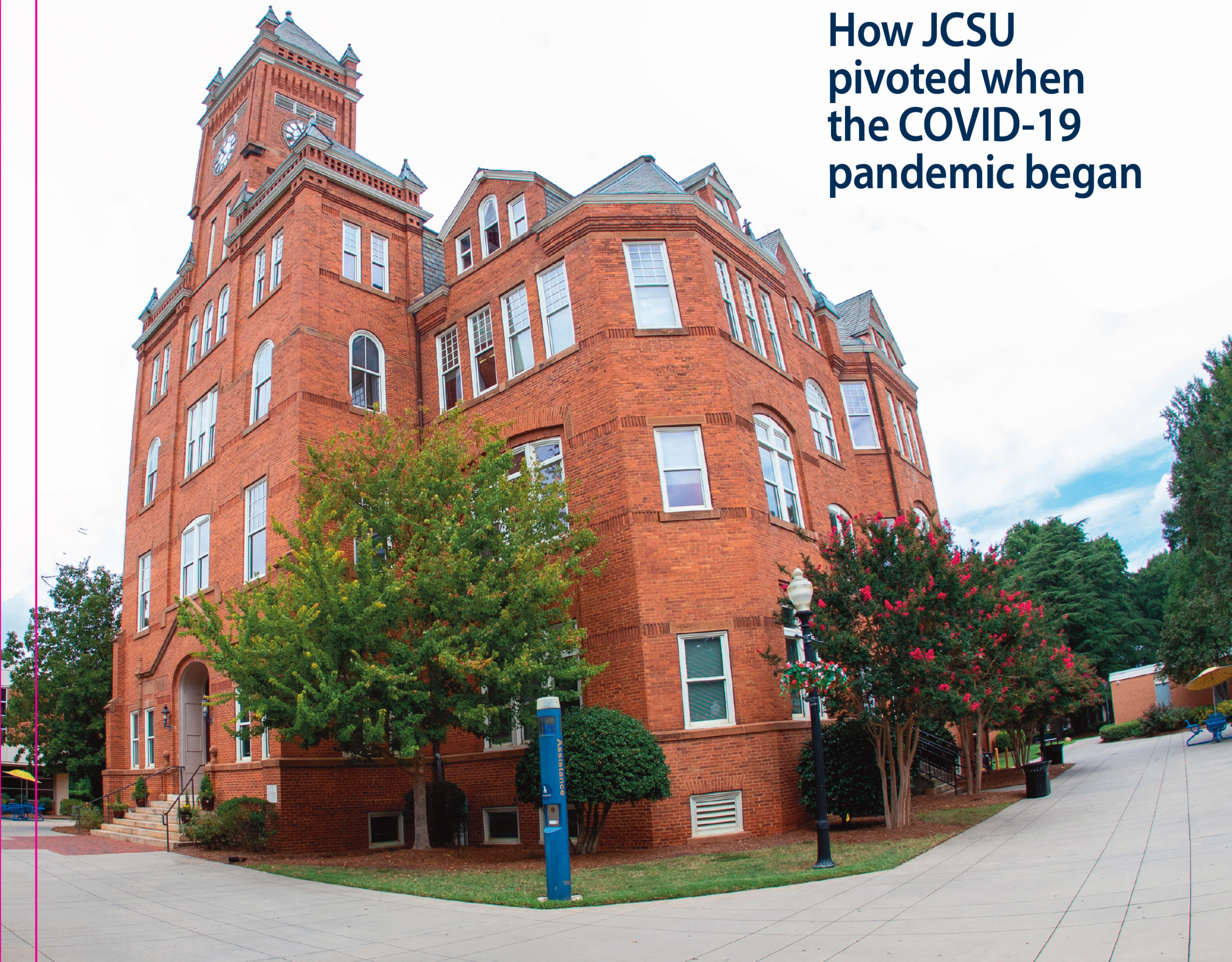


The Bulletin

A Magazine From Johnson C. Smith University | 2019 – 2020

**How JCSU
pivoted when
the COVID-19
pandemic began**



ALL IS QUIET



This is a challenging time for all of us. No one – the administration, the faculty, the staff, the alumni, or students – has ever lived through a time quite like this. There is a great deal of uncertainty about what lies ahead for us. But Johnson C. Smith University has endured since 1867. We have lived up to our motto, Sit Lux, “let there be light,” through numerous decades of growth and change. We have spent 153 years lifting people up, educating them, and facing the future together. We will uphold our legacy as we move forward, bravely and together, in this uncertain time.

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The Bulletin

A magazine from Johnson C. Smith University

2019 - 2020

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Note: This edition of the magazine covers JCSU (and the world) through June 30, 2020. The late summer and fall 2020 semester

President's Message



Johnson C. Smith University has prevailed during one of the most trying times in recent history. Our mission is to provide an affordable education accessible to all students, no matter the ZIP code of their home addresses. During the 2019-2020 academic year, achieving the mission became more difficult than ever due to the challenges brought on by the COVID-19

pandemic. With the help of our faculty, staff, alumni and community partners, we fulfilled our mission successfully during a fluid situation.

Like other higher education institutions not only in the United States but around the world, we were faced with moving quickly to online education following the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic this past March. As a result, the college experience for our students was drastically different. We are disappointed that our students lost direct contact with faculty and staff, the opportunity to gather together on "The Block" in beautiful spring weather, and the traditions of college life that are hallmarks of the experience. I am especially disappointed that we were unable to celebrate our 2020 graduates during Commencement Exercises. I was looking forward to placing their diplomas in their hands while families and friends cheered exuberantly. However, we made it through the year with our Golden Bulls spirit intact.

The efforts of our faculty, staff, students, alumni and supporters have made this process easier for me as your President. I commend our staff for moving swiftly and compassionately to help students leave campus following stay at home orders and other guidelines from federal, state and local governments. I am particularly proud of the hard work our faculty did to deliver online classes that maintained

rigor while recognizing and working through the disruption to the lives of our students. I'm equally proud of how our students demonstrated resilience, patience and perseverance as they adapted to the new normal of online classes and other services for the second half of the spring semester. And I am grateful for the hundreds of thousands of dollars donated to the University by our community partners to assist students as they continued their education remotely during a challenging time. I know adapting to the changes was not easy. Difficult challenges lie ahead, but it is my hope that we will one day unite again for the Arch of Triumph Gala, Founders' Day Convocation, Commencement Exercises, sporting events and other celebrations that mark milestones in the life of the University and the special people who make up the JCSU Family.

Although the world is undergoing massive change, understand that you will have a way forward—even if the path doesn't seem so clear right now. Our world will recover. Our economy will rebound. Our nation will do the painful, long-overdue work of confronting systemic racism. While these are uncertain times, you can be confident in knowing JCSU has a 153-year history of adjusting to both incremental and rapid change. Thinking critically, problem-solving creatively and calculating risks are what we do to overcome challenges. I hope you continue to have faith in our University, and most importantly, faith in me, as we navigate this ever-changing situation together as Golden Bulls.

Stay safe and continue to Hold High the Gold and Blue!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clarence D. Armbrister". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Clarence D. Armbrister
President



(Pictured left to right) Dr. Takeem Dean, dean of Students, and Dr. Cathy Jones, associate dean of Access and Academic Achievement Services, meet to discuss disbursement of funds to students impacted by COVID-19.

Promise kept despite COVID-19 pandemic

The challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic affected the Johnson C. Smith University community in multiple ways, just as it did other institutions and communities around the world. The unforeseen changes caused by the pandemic upended our lives, forced faculty, staff and students to adapt to a new form of education, and required our essential staff members to put their health on the line to keep the University running during one of the toughest times the world has faced.

From financial challenges, to the transition to remote learning and the cancellation of many of our annual events, the JCSU community overcame a number of obstacles during this time of uncertainty. Despite the challenges caused by the pandemic, the University kept the JCSU Promise to provide a high-quality education that prepares students for success in a rapidly changing world.

Stay at Home Order forces transition to remote learning and working

In mid-March 2020, the JCSU administration extended spring break, transitioned all courses to online instruction and made the difficult decision to remove students from on-campus housing in an effort to adhere to guidelines from federal, state and local health officials followed by the Stay at Home Order issued by North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper.

The transition was a financial strain on students who immediately needed to return home during the pandemic. In an effort to assist students, the University pooled funding resources and created the JCSU Student Relief Fund, established by the Division of Institutional Advancement. Dr. Cathy Jones, associate dean of Access and Academic Achievement Services, and Dr. Takeem Dean, dean of student, spearheaded the process of providing aid directly to students.

"This was one of the most challenging crises to manage. We had to make quick decisions as new discoveries were announced sometimes daily," said Dean.

The financial assistance given to students comprised of funds from the UNCF Emergency Retention Grant, the Emergency Aid Grant Project Success/Educational Credit Management Corporation (ECMC), and the JCSU Student Relief Fund, which received donations of more than \$20,000 from alumni and community partners.

"We have always understood the challenges many of our students face on a daily basis. However, financial support was and continues to be needed beyond the scope of existing resources," Jones added.

Monetary donations paid for incidentals, including travel, food, and storage, for students who needed assistance and provided tuition aid for qualifying students in the summer and fall semesters. Lauren Hines '22, who stayed in Charlotte during the pandemic, is one of many students who benefitted from the Student Relief Fund.

"With the help of the University, I received a grocery store gift card to purchase essential items I needed while in quarantine," she said.

Faculty and students adapt to virtual learning



Dr. Nick Desai

While students and the University faced challenges, so did faculty and staff. The transition to online courses in March created challenges for longtime professor of Economics, Dr. Nick Desai. The professor who moved from India in his 20's, and started his career at JCSU in 1969, had never taught courses online.

"In the beginning it was difficult and my daughter had to assist me," he said. Desai and other faculty members also received help with their transition from a team lead by Dr. John Bannister, instructional designer for Metropolitan College of Professional Studies, who provided training for online instruction.

Despite the challenges, the educator of more than 50 years adapted to his new normal and the response from his students

was incredible. "At first they were reluctant, but as they progressed, they loved being taught this way." Desai added that students' grades, class participation and communication improved.

Monasia Kabuya '21, double majoring in Chemistry and Biology, echoed Desai's sentiments of online learning. "Although we didn't have time to prepare for this transition, I think professors were helpful," she said. "It definitely forced me to enhance my time management skills in order to complete assignments for courses."

When the University transitioned to online classes, Monika Rhue '91, director of Library services at James B. Duke Library and her team quickly acted to ensure students had the necessary tools to work remotely. Library staff launched LibGuide, a tool selected to communicate to students, faculty and staff on how the library will operate, answered questions via the library online chat and set up a hotline.

In an effort to assist the Charlotte community and beyond, Rhue restructured her personal website, Mut Griot Production, to include an online story time. "People needed positive stories during the time of COVID-19," she added. "Stories have a way of connecting and bringing people together, especially families."

Single Stop serves students, local families despite pandemic





Richie Colon, director of Housekeeping; Greg Preyor, Post Office Clerk; Marion Jones, Health Center Director; and Jermaine Cherry, Chief of Police

On April 21, 2020, Single Stop, which includes the campus food pantry, resumed its operations in an effort to assist students during the crisis.

Operations and inventory were limited due to COVID-19. Yvonne Moore created guidelines to ensure staff members and students kept six feet of distance during distribution.

“We will distribute items to our students until we have depleted our inventory,” said Moore, Single Stop site coordinator.

Students received bags with pre-packaged food and toiletry items. In an effort to provide access to fresh foods, students also received gift cards – \$20 for single students and \$40 for students with families.

While Moore was grateful she could provide services to students, the pandemic limited the help she could provide to the community, especially to those in the Historic West End.

“Unfortunately, we are unable to serve community members at this time but we are working on acquiring additional resources in hopes of resuming services to them,” she said.

Despite temporarily halting access to community members, some partnerships remained.

“We have continued our partnership with SUCCEED Afterschool Program at Reid Park Academy. We’re still providing food bags to the families of the 40 students we agreed to support at the start of the academic school year.

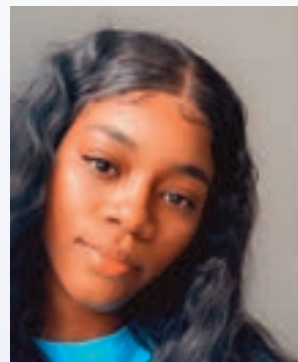
COVID-19 also halted other services like rental assistance and utilities Single Stop regularly provides.

Moore added, “To address this need we reached out to our contact at the Department of Social Services and were told that student families and community members are able to call 211

to submit an intake over the phone for Crisis Assistance Ministry services.”

JCSU student works on COVID-19 clinical research with Davidson College

A student aspiring to become a doctor received a head start this summer. Dana Battle ‘21 worked on COVID-19 clinical research during her summer internship with Davidson College.



Dana Battle '21

“I was originally supposed to do a research internship with the University of Virginia, but it was canceled due to the pandemic. Luckily, I was able to do research with Davidson virtually,” she said.

Battle was grateful for the opportunity, but admits virtual clinical research presented challenges. “It was hard in the beginning. I had to use computer software that I had

never used before, but once I learned what I was doing, I was able to excel,” Battle explained.

Using computer software, Battle researched the chemistry of the then stage 3 clinical drug Remdesivir, used to treat COVID-19 patients. “The drug works but it doesn’t work on everyone, so my job was to try and see if I could replicate a structure similar to Remdesivir and compare the two,” Battle said.

Battle credits JCSU with the foundation for her success and hopes other students have the opportunities to pursue internships despite the challenges created by the pandemic.



(Pictured left to right) Greg Petzke, chief financial officer, and Tami B. Simmons, vice president of Institutional Advancement

"Although I had not planned to do research on COVID-19, I am extremely grateful that I was given the opportunity to conduct research on a drug that could help save lives around the world."

Efforts of essential personnel help JCSU during COVID-19 pandemic

As the world continued to deal with the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, essential personnel were hard at work. At Johnson C. Smith University, faculty and a majority of staff worked remotely, but a number of essential workers remained on campus during the unprecedented time. Members of Institutional Advancement, the Health Center, Post Office, Facilities, Residence Life, Campus Police, Housekeeping and the Business Office were among the essential employees on campus during the pandemic.

"I feel that it was a great privilege to be able to serve the University during COVID-19; however, I looked forward to the time when the faculty, staff and students will be able to safely return to campus," Post Office Clerk Greg Preyor, said.

During the pandemic, Preyor maintained social distance by restricting access into the Post Office area, maintaining safe distances and handling customer service business at the student window with the recommended personal safety equipment.

Social distancing was not easy for all essential personnel. Shane Jackson, facility manager, had to take a different approach when introducing himself to contractors. "I replaced handshakes with a head nod or hello," he said. In addition, Jackson limited in-person meetings with his staff and leveraged technology.

"The Health Center was open while the majority of the campus operated remotely to make sure people on campus



have direct access to health services," said Marian Y. Jones, Health Center director.

In addition to providing services to students unable to go home, international students and students who aged out of foster care, Jones and Elizabeth Cauthen, staff nurse, kept the Health Center open to serve other essential workers. "There were essential staff on campus, and we were here to answer health-related questions, conduct health assessments and provide PPE if needed."

Staff in the Division of Institutional Advancement, which includes Alumni Relations, University Communications and Marketing, and University Development, worked tirelessly to keep the University family engaged, informed and focused on essential fundraising programs during the pandemic. "We realized quickly that we would be instrumental in keeping our constituents connected to JCSU even though many were located across the country," Tami Simmons, vice president of Institutional Advancement, said. "Despite adjusting to the demands of social distancing and the way we work, our team scaled up its operation to meet the customer/community engagement, communications, and fundraising challenges. The UCM team, led by Sherri Belfield, has worked literally

around the clock bringing the news to us which was more important than ever."

JCSU alumni and the Charlotte community responded overwhelmingly to the University's fundraising appeals to help the campus navigate COVID-19. Funds contributed by alumni – nearly \$20,000 – were used to assist students directly. Corporate and community partners have contributed nearly \$450,000, which helped purchase safety equipment like masks and hand sanitizing stations; technology to enhance online teaching and learning; and other materials such as signage and partitions needed to prepare for the anticipated return of students, faculty and staff to return in fall 2020.

Some staff worked remotely, but keeping up with incoming gifts and donations required Calvin Banks '69, donor prospects manager, and Katrina Gordon, senior analyst, to be in the office on many days.

"Katrina and Calvin were a great team throughout this time. They were our 'in-office heroes' because of their institutional knowledge about donors and essential processes," Simmons said. "They made sure our donors and internal partners felt well cared for, and they just kept things going. Their support in the office helped us increase our fundraising and solidify additional resources to navigate this unprecedented time. Their work on the back end was vital to the division's success."

Staff in the Office of Residence Life worked diligently to help students leave campus in March following the Stay at Home proclamation from Mecklenburg County Manager Dena Diorio and subsequent order from N.C. Governor Roy Cooper. After most students left campus, the Residence Life staff helped provide service to the international students and former foster care students who remained, while also ensuring the residence halls were monitored to help protect the belongings many students had to leave behind.

However, the bulk of their time was spent preparing residence halls for students to return to campus. "We were steadfast after students departed," said Terry McPherson '83, director of Residence Life. "We've adopted 'Smith Strong: Surviving Together' as our slogan. Our work involved a lot of planning and working with other departments in anticipation of students returning to campus."

McPherson said not only were he and his staff on campus daily because they were essential workers, but also because they were passionate about their jobs and the students they serve. When asked why they did it, McPherson said, "Because we care! We miss our student residents and look forward to their return."

We've heard the saying, "money makes the world go round." That proved to be true even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff in the Division of Business and Finance kept the office

open during the work from home months to continue business operations with rest of the world. University CFO Greg Petzke said many of the division's functions can be performed remotely, but some functions need to be done in the office. "The accounts payable department processes and pays the University's expenses, and the cashier takes care of daily deposits," he explained.

Not only was it important for the business office to remain open to conduct the University's daily financial business, but it was also important to help students resolve issues regarding their bills and to continue assisting students with financial clearance. "Staff in student accounts and in the financial aid office continued to work diligently, resolving problems and responding to students' questions and concerns," Petzke said. "As an institution of higher education, it's essential for us to be responsive to our students and their families. We recognize that many families have been affected by the loss of jobs and income caused by the stay at home period of the pandemic. The lack of funds to fulfill their dreams of earning a college degree is always a barrier for many of our students, and the pandemic heightened that barrier for some of them. I'm proud of the small group of staff in my division who were on campus every day to provide valuable, much-needed assistance to our students as they strive to become graduates of Johnson C. Smith University."

Campus safety remained the highest priority for campus police. Chief of Police Jermaine Cherry said new measures were implemented for visitors to ensure the campus remained safe. He also took measures to protect officers. "We were really intentional about making sure that we maintained safety in terms of their health. We made sure they had the right equipment and were practicing the CDC guidelines for social distance," he said.

Cherry used the time to speak with his officers about policing. "We concentrated on the basics of why we got into this job. Most law enforcement officers in the country, I would say, are in it for the right reasons," he emphasized.

Other departments would not have been able to work on campus, without the help of WFF Facility Services. Richie Colon, director of Housekeeping, said crews took all the necessary precautions by utilizing cleaners that kill the coronavirus on contact. "I couldn't be more proud of my staff and all the work they did during that time," he said. "They continued to make the safety of the campus a priority, and I couldn't ask for a better team of employees." Although Colon did not have to be on campus, he came to work daily to show support to his team."

While working during the height of the pandemic was not easy, University essential personnel made it look easy. The efforts of these employees kept dear old JCSU up and running. Their service was greatly appreciated.



President Armbrister greets graduates during drive-thru diploma pick-up ceremony

COVID-19 led to the cancellation of 2020 Commencement Exercises, but it did not stop President Clarence D. Armbrister from greeting students during a drive-thru diploma pick-up event on June 5, 2020.

"We thought it would be a wonderful thing to put the degrees in hands of those students who are able to come here and obtain them," said Armbrister.

The diploma pick-up was organized by University Registrar Keisha Wilson '96 after Commencement was rescheduled. As an alumna, Wilson understood the importance of this experience for students.

Lelia Lester-Jackson earned her master's degree in social work, while her daughter, Kneadee, received her bachelor's in social work.

"It was at that moment when our vehicle was next and the president walked towards us that tears just

automatically started coming down my face," Lester-Jackson said. "I did not realize the impact of what that meant to me until I actually arrived."

Of the 271 students eligible to graduate, more than 100 participated in the University's diploma pick-up.

Armbrister understands the hard work students put into their four years at JCSU and was happy he still had the opportunity to honor them.

"The greatest day of my life is to be able to give out those degrees," Armbrister added.

Diplomas were mailed to students who were unable to participate in the diploma pick-up.

In July, the University made the tough decision to cancel in-person Commencement Exercise scheduled for October 2020.





Students visit the Carolina Panthers to learn about careers in professional sports

President Clarence D. Armbrister, members of the administration and staff, and more than 60 students made the short trip to Bank of America Stadium on September 17, 2019, for the first "Making Strides in Diversity and Sports" partnership program with the Carolina Panthers.

"I never thought about working for the NFL or NBA but having them talk to us just motivated me to learn about it," said Jada Strickland '21.

Students also heard directly from NFL and NBA executives about the vast career opportunities in the field of sports and entertainment.

"I was able to learn about numerous, diverse jobs in the NFL," said Crystal Howard '21. "There are just so many careers you can explore." It's not all players and coaches.

Students also had the opportunity to network with NFL and NBA executives and learned about internship opportunities.

"Even if the 60 students who came today aren't offered internships or careers, we have established that connection with the Panthers and were able to open the doors to the next group of students who come after us," said Nygil Brown '20.

Phasing Up to New Possibilities program celebrates ten years

Phasing Up to New Possibilities, the foster care program developed at Johnson C. Smith University in 2009, celebrated 10 years of changing lives. To mark the momentous occasion, the program brought back a dozen alumni September 20, 2019, to speak on a panel about their experiences in the program.

Program director Pat Newell is excited about reaching this milestone.

"This program provided some kids, who never would have had it, an opportunity to become an adult in an environment that was safe and structured," she said.

Initially the program, which launched under the administration of former University president Ronald L. Carter, was designed to assist aged-out foster students during their time on campus. Today, the program also assists students who are homeless or facing homelessness.

Newell, who has been managing the program for the last eight years, said the program has been able to sustain for a decade because of the environment JCSU provides students.

"As an HBCU, we have a rich tradition of staying connected. Our Homecoming celebrations are well attended by our alumni and that also provides a reason for our former students to venture back onto the campus," Newell explained. "Many colleges that claim to provide support services to aged-out foster youth are only around for two to three years, at best. We stay connected with our graduates so we can help them as they move into their careers."

Dr. Melvin Herring, Master of Social Work (MSW) program director, credits Newell with the program's longevity.

"Mrs. Newell's efforts to refute negative stereotypes about these young people and to prove the larger society wrong by demonstrating that these young people are capable of more than what is generally expected of them has helped them succeed," he said.

To stay connected with students, Phasing Up to New Possibilities collaborated with the School of Social Work. Each Phasing Up student is assigned an MSW student, who communicates weekly and assists as they adjust to the rigor of college.

When speaking of the School of Social Work, Dean Helen Caldwell said, "As the school promotes the academic areas, such as the BSW and MSW programs, the Phasing Up non-academic program displays the work and value of social work as a discipline."

As successful as the program is with 14 graduates since 2011, Newell desires more growth.

"I would like to see a more formal role for our graduates to assist me with the recruitment of more scholars," Newell emphasized.

Newell is as grateful for the program as the students are to have her. While she did not launch Phasing Up to New Possibilities, she has truly incorporated it into her life. Every summer she holds a barbecue for students at her home, mentors students and regularly communicates with alumni.

"The students have impacted my life in ways too numerous to express. I have grown in every area; however, I think I would have to credit my students for my spiritual growth most significantly," Newell said.





(Pictured left to right) Shakoya Brown '20 and Emmanuel Hester '22 at the 2020 Census Bureau Collegiate Summit in Orlando, Florida

JCSU student leaders attend 2020 Census Bureau Collegiate Summit

Shakoya Brown '20 and Emmanuel Hester '22 attended the 2020 Census Bureau Collegiate Summit in Orlando, Florida, January 17-19, 2020. The purpose was to ensure Charlotte's Historic West End, where Johnson C. Smith University is located, was accurately accounted for in the 2020 U.S. Census. Joined by other student leaders nationwide, the two learned in-depth details about the census, and how they could be an asset to their communities.

"Conferences like these are important because they provide resources and tools to HBCU leaders that we can bring back to our universities and communities," Hester explained.

The U.S. Census, is a national survey which occurs every 10 years, that collects data from households to determine a number of things in communities, including congressional districts, area improvements, funding and resources provided, in addition to the nation's population.

Historically, minority communities have a low Census response rate. A Pew Research Center survey found Black and Hispanic adults, as well as those with lower income levels, were more likely not to participate in the Census.

Brown expressed, "As gentrification rapidly occurs in Charlotte's Historic West End, I felt it was important for my peers to understand an area's growth and sustainability."

In an effort to get the campus engaged, Brown and Hester encouraged students to volunteer and apply for jobs with the U.S. Census. In addition, they planned a forum to educate students, but it was canceled due to COVID-19.

Brown, who served as the 2019-20 SGA President, said she gained knowledge of how to engage with local government in Charlotte. "Post-graduation, I will continue to use the skills I learned at the conference," she emphasized.

In addition to the efforts by student leaders, Sherri Belfield, director of University Communications and Marketing, worked with MeckCounts to coordinate on-campus activations at basketball games, volunteer training sessions for students and other activities to make sure the campus community was educated on the U.S. Census.

When the University shifted to remote operations due to the pandemic, Belfield and her staff developed targeted communications to help students complete the census questionnaire before the deadline. Their innovative marketing was recognized by Mecklenburg County Manager Dena Diorio and leaders of the MeckCounts initiative.

Red Ventures guarantees jobs for JCSU students

A new cohort in Metropolitan College of Professional Studies is providing graduating seniors at Johnson C. Smith University hands-on training and full-time jobs post-graduation. Through a partnership with Red Ventures Road to Hire, students enrolled in JCSU's three-credit, two-semester Digital Marketing course are guaranteed a job with Red Ventures after completion of the course with the grade of a B or higher.

"Students have really been receptive in the classes – they have adapted and produced," said Dr. Laura Colson McLean, dean of Metropolitan College of Professional Studies.

McLean, who worked closely with Red Ventures through the development process, hand-selected students for the course and took on the role as an advisor to students enrolled in the pilot program. She is most proud that the course is not only open to the students in the college, but to students across campus.

"What we're finding is we have students with different majors that still have that passion or desire to learn more about technology," McLean added.

"As a Computer Engineering major, the course was another form of internship that I could have upon graduating," said Braxton Gambrell '20. "It excites me a lot, because at one point I did not know what the future held for me after my junior year."

Over the duration of the course, students learned professional development skills including public speaking, giving and receiving feedback in the workplace, and networking.

"This exposure is just-in-time, innovative, and unique for our students. The skills they're learning will help them in their careers post-graduation," said Dr. Lucinda Blue, chair of the Business Administration and Economics Department, and instructor of the course.

Blue collaborated with Red Ventures Digital Marketing professionals on the curriculum taught in the classroom. Marketing professionals with Red Ventures attended every class and were deeply involved in the entire process of the module – designing curriculum, instructing, observing, and creating assignments for students. While most of the lectures take place at JCSU, six classes were held at Red Ventures, along with additional hours of observation time.

"The goal of the second semester's course was for students to become more specialized in a key area while also acclimating to the Red Ventures work environment," said Khalan Boyer, executive director with Road to Hire.



Students also had the opportunity to take a deep dive into digital business topics such as search engine optimization, paid social, native advertising, and the creative process.

"I believe that students should be a jack of all trades when they graduate," said Torean Moore '20 an Interdisciplinary Studies major. "During this course, the material that I learned is invaluable; my presentation and technical skills increased thanks to the exposure I received."

Since launching in 2014, Road to Hire has impacted over 400 young adults across the Charlotte region. The program provides underserved young adults with paid professional development and technical training — opening a direct pathway into high-earning careers.

"Partnering with JCSU resonates with Red Ventures' commitment to breaking down economic barriers and promoting inclusivity in the workplace," Boyer emphasized. "This program showcases the amazing talent at Historically Black Colleges and Universities."

Nine students passed the course and were offered employment with Red Ventures summer 2020. Students offered positions include: Braxton Gambrell, Charmaine Jeff, Kiara Thompson, Korina Cunningham, Torean Moore, Zebedee Johnson, Fantasha Lawrence, Latoya Pitts and Miles Kelly. With the success of the inaugural cohort, the partnership between JCSU and Red Ventures was renewed for a second cohort.

"I would like for more of our JCSU students to get involved in this effort, integrate this learning more in their other classes, and utilize everything that this program has to offer to enhance the students' careers," Blue added.



Alumnus Malcom Graham '85 pictured with his sister Cynthia Graham Hurd

Alumni remember relatives five years after Emanuel Nine Church shooting

Gracyn Doctor '16 was enjoying the summer before beginning her senior year at JCSU when bullets from the white supremacist's gun changed her life forever. Doctor's mother, Rev. DePayne Middleton-Doctor, was one of the nine parishioners killed in the massacre at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC, on June 17, 2015.

Returning to JCSU for her senior year in August 2015 helped Doctor keep her mind off the painful event. She was a standout

volleyball student-athlete and worked as a sports information intern. Doctor was determined to graduate because she knew it was important to her mom, and the support she received on campus helped her get through the year, she said.

"Everyone came together and supported me," said Doctor. "My JCSU family really took care of me during my senior year. It definitely made it easier for me to get through that time. I'll always be grateful for my coaches and teammates, and I

appreciate everything the student body, faculty and staff did for me.”

Charlotte city councilman Malcom Graham '85 felt the same love and support from faculty, staff and alumni. Five years ago, when his sister Cynthia Graham Hurd was killed in the shooting massacre at Emanuel AME, Graham was working at the University. Co-workers and alumni provided sympathy and support as he dealt with the reality of his sister's death.

“Few people know that my mom died when I was a senior at Smith, so Cynthia became more than my sister, she was a mother figure to me,” Graham said.

Despite five years passing since the racially motivated shooting took the lives of their relatives, both Doctor and Graham know America has a long way to go before Black Americans begin to see change. “Racism, hatred and discrimination are why Cynthia died and five years later, I'm sad to say, it has gotten worse than better in our country,” Graham emphasized.

Doctor said the intense news coverage of African Americans killed recently in incidents fueled by racism has reminded her of the reason her mother was murdered.

“These last weeks leading up to June 17 have been really hard, especially this past weekend,” Doctor said. “It's painful to watch everything that's going on. It's hurtful, and it makes me angry because it brings back feelings of how I lost my mom.”

Graham established the Cynthia Graham Hurd Foundation to continue his sister's work of engaging the community through reading and civic work. Despite the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic this year, the city councilman still honored his sister's legacy. On Wednesday, June 17, 2020, the anniversary of the shooting, a 25-minute celebration of life video, featuring family, friends, Congresswoman Alma Adams and former Vice President Joe Biden, was posted to the Foundation's social media accounts.

Graham gave a keynote address at the Black Men United March & Rally at Marshall Park on June 17, 2020. The event was organized by prominent Black male leaders in Charlotte, to address racism in America.

Doctor, who plans to pursue a career in public radio, earned a master's degree in communications at Syracuse University. She took time after graduating from JCSU to process how her mother being killed had impacted her.

“After I graduated, I took a break from work and school,” Doctor said. “That's when reality set in. I had been going through the motions and phases of emotions to get through my senior year. But it became real when I had time to sit and think about it. Not having anything to take my mind off my feelings made me lose everything.”



Alumna Gracyn Doctor '16 with her mother Reverend DePayne Middleton-Doctor

Doctor remembered her mother's legacy on this year's anniversary of the mass murder in the church affectionately known as Mother Emanuel.

“What's on my mind five years later is how my family came together during that time,” said Doctor. My mom was the glue that kept our family and extended family together. I'm glad we've remained strong for her. I also remember how people in Charleston reached out to my family and showed support. I will never forget some of the stories they told me about how my mom helped them. I'm proud of the way she touched so many lives.”



JCSU Mourns the death of Dr. Wilbert Greenfield, 10th President

President Clarence D. Armbrister led tributes to Dr. Wilbert Greenfield Sr., 10th President of Johnson C. Smith University, who died on August 20, 2019. During Greenfield's tenure from 1973-1982, he strengthened the morale of the University by gaining support from multiple government agencies, developing an Honors program designed to inspire scholarly achievements and developing an Archival Center to preserve campus and community heritage. The Johnson-Seabrook Education Building was constructed under his leadership in 1977. The Board of Trustees named a newly built housing facility for approximately 200 students as Wilbert Greenfield Hall in his honor in 1984.

"I am very sad to announce the passing of Dr. Greenfield," said Armbrister. "So much of the work he did throughout the 1970s secured JCSU's position as an anchor on Charlotte's west side. His ability to garner funding from government and private sources enhanced the intellectual rigor and the facilities on campus. The University continues to benefit from his accomplishments, and I am honored to stand on his shoulders as the 14th President."

Shirley J. Hughes, Chair of the JCSU Board of Trustees, said Greenfield's vision for strengthening the university's academic enterprise serves as an inspiration to the Board. "We are ever mindful of Dr. Greenfield's leadership in a long line of former Presidents who have helped establish JCSU as one of the nation's top Historically Black Colleges and Universities," Hughes said. "The Board of Trustees is developing a strategic plan that capitalizes on Dr. Greenfield's contributions. We honor his legacy by providing for innovations in curriculum that will attract the brightest students and prepare them to be 21st century leaders."

Greenfield was born July 8, 1933, in Seven Springs, North Carolina. He held degrees from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State College and the University of Iowa, Iowa City. Greenfield began his career in education in 1967 as professor and chairman of the Department of Biology at Jackson State College, Jackson, Mississippi.

His rich legacy will live on at Johnson C. Smith University.

New chief of Police outlines plan to increase campus safety



Jermaine Cherry, Johnson C. Smith University's new chief of Police, officially joined the University in July 2019 and quickly outlined his plan for the school year in preparation for the fall semester. With a background in campus policing at East Carolina University and North Carolina A&T State University, Cherry hopes to bring his expertise in partnerships, student engagement and traditional community policing to JCSU.

"A Chief Cherry led department will be known by the three P's: professional, proactive and prepared," he said.

While explaining his vision, Cherry also touched on the fatal shooting at UNC Charlotte that took the lives of two students in April 2019. The incident had a major impact on Charlotte, including students at JCSU.

"We are looking to roll out active shooter training for the campus. I want to be a part of preparing the campus community and

teaching strategies to use if that tragedy were to happen on our campus."

In addition to preparing students for an active shooter situation, Cherry will also roll out a number of crime prevention programs. Male and female students will have the opportunity to learn rape aggression defense (RAD), build relationships with officers through the safe program, and partner with campus police for events.

Cherry wholeheartedly believes in the community-policing motto, which will be visible throughout the school year. He said, "We have great working relationships with local law enforcement so we look to continue those relationships." He has also started fostering a relationship with Charlotte's District Attorney, Spencer B. Merriweather.

He added, "We're stronger together than we are individually," when speaking about the partnerships he hopes to form.

In speaking on his plan, Cherry emphasized, "I'm elated to have the opportunity to lead this great agency at this great institution. I believe we have a bright future ahead of us."



Veteran's Hub continues to boost academic support for those who served



Dr. Cheryl Curtis, director of Educational Enhancement Services, and coordinator of Veterans Hub

North Carolina has one of the country's largest military veteran populations. Those who choose to attend post-graduate institutions are not your typical students; they're usually older, may have more responsibilities and often require more flexibility to obtain a degree.

Johnson C. Smith University supports its veteran students through the Veteran's Hub housed in Metropolitan College.

Maurice Hanns '20, who served in the U.S. Army from 1988 to 1992, is one of 70 veterans enrolled at JCSU. Hanns originally had his eyes set on another institution, but is glad he chose JCSU.

Hanns, a transfer student from Central Piedmont Community College, especially loves the attention he receives at JCSU. He has smaller class sizes, the ability to have one-on-one moments with professors and more opportunities to do research.

"I try to get other veterans to come here," Hanns said. "There has not been one teacher I've had who hasn't helped me. It is different here because these people generally want to help." Another reason Hanns has been able to thrive at JCSU is

because of Dr. Cheryl Curtis, director of Educational Enhancement Services, who runs the Veterans Hub. Curtis not only helps veterans with their transition but she also advocates for them. As Hanns emphasized, "She's not afraid to speak on our behalf"

"As the spouse of a retired combat veteran who graduated from JCSU, this advocacy, this work, is a calling for which I have a passion to answer," Curtis exclaimed.

Under her leadership, JCSU is expected to begin accepting Joint Services Transcripts in spring 2020. JST is a synchronized transcript that includes data from the United States Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Coast Guard. The American Council on Education will consider test scores, data and experiences during their time in service for course credit.

In addition, Curtis is working with consultants and NC STRIVE (Student Transition Resource Initiative for Veteran's Education) to ensure the University will be able to offer Military/Veteran Student cultural competency trainings. She is also in the process of completing the application to offer military work-study opportunities for veterans and military students enrolled at the University.

"To graduate students with additional work experience is exciting to me," Curtis said.

Curtis' efforts don't stop there. She is also an elected member of the Piedmont Veterans Coalition (PVC).

"If the veteran or their family has a need, no matter whether that need is successful transition from military service to higher education, combating food insecurity, homelessness, connection with on-campus or off-campus supports, I serve as a liaison to provide the information or services to them," she explained.

Metropolitan College, in partnership with the Division of Government Sponsored Programs and Research, honored veterans during the week of November 11, 2019. Dr. Laura Colson McLean, dean of Metropolitan College, hand delivered and distributed thank you bags to veterans on campus. The bags included JCSU paraphernalia and a note of thanks for their service and for choosing JCSU.

Hanns feels supported at JCSU but would like to see more campus events to bring veterans together. He plans to use his degree in computer information systems to design apps following graduation in May 2020.



Johnson C. Smith University earns three HBCUgrow LEAD Awards at annual conference, highlights Road to Hire partnership

Johnson C. Smith University received three awards at the 2020 HBCUgrow LEAD Conference on April 7, 2020. Dr. Laura Colson McLean, dean of Metropolitan College of Professional Studies, and two JCSU students participated in the virtual conference and shared their involvement with Road to Hire, a partnership with Red Ventures and winner of the Platinum Choice LEAD Innovation Award.

“The award was unexpected because our partnership with Red Ventures is in the initial year of inception,” said McLean.

During the conference, McLean, Khalan Boyer, executive director for Road to Hire, Kiaira Thompson '20 and Braxton Gambrell '20 discussed how the partnership was developed and the ways in which it has benefited students at JCSU.

“The shared focus of Red Ventures CEO Ric Elias and JCSU President Clarence D. Armbrister on preparing high-performing students for the workforce aligned naturally with Road to Hire’s mission of opening career pathways for under-served youth,” Boyer said.

Students enrolled in JCSU’s three-credit, two-semester Digital Marketing course are guaranteed a job with Red Ventures after completion of the course with the grade of a B or higher.

McLean served as a keynote speaker during the virtual

conference. She emphasized the importance of partnerships like this, which provide students the opportunity to learn professional development skills including public speaking, giving and receiving feedback in the workplace, and networking.

Thompson, a business administration major, admitted the course was challenging, but felt it prepared her for her career.

“This course has forced me to become comfortable with being uncomfortable. I appreciate the growth and the ways in which I have been able to excel,” Thompson said.

The program’s success is evident and a second cohort is currently being developed.

Boyer added, “The partnership with Road to Hire supports economic and upward mobility in Charlotte, and creates a diverse talent pool for companies.”

In addition to LEAD Innovation, JCSU also won the Platinum Choice LEAD Marketing Award for raising awareness of the 50th Anniversary of the University’s first CIAA football championship in 1969 and that team’s \$100,000 fundraising campaign; and the Platinum Choice LEAD Military-Friendly Award for the Veteran’s Hub on campus that provides resources to students who are military veterans.



(Pictured left to right) Author Minda Harts with Dr. Terza Lima-Neves, associate professor of political science

Author and women's advocate shares powerful message

Minda Harts sat in front of a packed room Wednesday, October 4, 2019, reading from her new book, "The Memo." Her message: how women of color can gain a seat at the table.

"I wish I had received this book when I entered the workplace. I thought about all the students of color who could benefit from having career advice geared toward them," she said.

Black and brown women are far less likely to have a voice in workplace decision-making. In 2018, the Women in the Workplace survey, found women of color are not only significantly underrepresented, they are far less likely than others to be promoted to manager, more likely to face everyday discrimination and less likely to receive support from their managers in the workplace.

Dr. Terza Lima-Neves, associate professor of political science and advocate for women of color, said Harts' message was right on time.

"It's so important to equip our Black and brown female students with the tools to succeed in their lives beyond JCSU's gates," she said.

According to Harts, there's increasing evidence that corporations are in need of Black voices. However, not enough information is provided to women of color explaining how they can break barriers in white America.

She explained, "Not every woman experiences the workplace the same way. In order to have an equitable workforce, we need to talk about the systems that have held certain groups of women back."

It's the motivating factor behind Harts' efforts for this movement. "As a woman of color and a Black woman living in America, I see my work as part of my responsibility. I advocate so that I don't leave the workplace how I experienced it, but instead leave it better."

Overall Harts hopes her book helps women, especially the next generation.

"I want minority women to learn to advocate for themselves, take control over their careers, and know they don't have to accept being mistreated at work. Find the rooms and tables that make you better. You worked too hard to lean out now," Harts said.

Davis selected as a panelist for annual Women’s Symposium on Black Maternal Health

Rachel Davis, program director of Johnson C. Smith University’s Lactation Consultant Training Program, was a panelist for U.S. Congresswoman Alma Adams’ fifth annual Women’s Symposium on Black Maternal Health. Adams represents North Carolina’s 12th congressional district, which includes JCSU. The panel, which featured appearances from U.S. Senator Cory Booker and U.S. Senator Kamala Harris, was held April 16, 2020, during Black Maternal Health Week.

“Being a panelist allowed me the opportunity to educate a larger number of people and share the biases women of color face daily,” Davis said. “It is shocking to see that these inequities still exist today, but these symposiums also bring about opportunities for people to get involved right where they are and make a difference – even if it is for only one life,” Davis emphasized.

Black women are nearly three times more likely than white women – and more than twice as likely as women of other races – to die from preventable, pregnancy-related complications. Additionally, Black women are twice as likely to lose an infant to premature death.

Davis knows too well about the disparities plaguing expectant minority mothers. It’s the sole reason she helped to develop the LCTP at an HBCU. 2019-20 was the inaugural year for JCSU’s Pathway 2 Training Program, which partners with Novant Health. It is the only program of its kind at an HBCU.

“The program is the result of a six-year endeavor with key players from several health organizations that regularly work with Black

mothers coming together to catapult this program forward,” she said.

The primary goal of JCSU’s LCTP, is to help diversify the field of lactation to include more people of color, positively impact health outcomes, help address breastfeeding and health disparities and inequities, and provide more culturally relevant skilled lactation care.

In addition to symposiums, Davis feels stories of professional tennis champion Serena Williams and of Shalon Irving have helped to bring awareness to the disparities and biases women of color face when pregnant. Following the birth of her daughter, Williams experienced a pulmonary embolism, a sudden blockage of an artery in the lung by a blood clot. According to Williams, she had to insist a doctor give her a CT scan after a nurse refused to take her concerns seriously. Irving, an epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was not as lucky. She collapsed and died three weeks after giving birth from complications of high blood pressure.

“It is imperative that expectant mothers attend events like this, read and learn about what is happening in society,” Davis elaborated.

Now in its fifth year, Adams’ symposium continues to prove its relevance, reporting record attendance despite challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The symposium was held virtually with nearly 800 participants on Zoom and 2,500 views on Facebook.





Single Stop partners with CMS, expands reach across Mecklenburg County

Single Stop, a non-profit organization which includes the food pantry on the campus of Johnson C. Smith University, expanded its services across Mecklenburg County. The program received the green light for a second-year deal with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

“It’s a pilot study that started with an elementary school, middle school and high school. We serviced 100 plus families, not including the students we were still servicing on campus, said Dr. Melvin Herring, Master of Social Work program director.

Bruns Academy Elementary, Marie G. Davis Middle and Garinger High schools participated in the pilot program.

Single Stop offers food, toiletries and even referral assistance to families and students in need.

“We have a partnership with the Mecklenburg County Bar Association and we have one pro bono attorney. We hope to get some more who will come on board to meet with our clients and give them one free consultation,” Single Stop Coordinator Yvonne Moore explained.

In addition to the legal consultation, Single Stop collaborates with Self-Help Credit Union to provide financial literacy workshops, assistance with credit scores and housing qualification. The program also partners with Food Lion, Loaves and Fishes, and receives donations from sororities and fraternities to assist people in need.

Single Stop launched in New York as an anti-poverty initiative through the Robin Hood Foundation in 2001. It did not exist in North Carolina until 2015, when it expanded its services to the

state through a grant from the John M. Belk Endowment. In 2016, Single Stop became a part of JCSU’s Metropolitan College with funding from the Knight Foundation; making it the first four-year institution and first Historically Black College and University to be included in the Single Stop initiative in North Carolina.

In 2018, Single Stop moved to the School of Social Work to provide hands on experience to students.

“We get to really have an impact on the community,” Herring emphasized. Adding, “It provides us with internships for our undergraduate and graduate students.”

Graduate students are required to complete 900 volunteer hours before graduating. As Herring explained, he hopes the formula for teaching strengthens the partnership with CMS.

“The idea is if we scale this beyond the three schools to all of the schools we have within CMS, you actually have positions that need to be filled by social workers to do this work, so it would create a pipeline for our students to graduate and move right into some of the work they’re already doing,” he said.

The pathway could also assist with the Queen City initiative to increase upward mobility – a priority high for University President Clarence D. Armbrister.

Single Stop is making its mark in the Charlotte region. According to Moore, since its partnership began with JCSU three years ago, more than 500 families have benefited. In the future, she hopes JCSU will be able to provide funding to the program and help assist more families.

Black Ink Monks celebrates 25 years

The Black Ink Monks, Johnson C. Smith University's oldest non-greek organization, celebrated 25 years. Dr. Cindy Kistenberg, advisor, credits the longevity of the organization to students, who she says have to prove their worthiness, beyond their talent.

"They use their talent to make a difference in the world by giving freely of their time and talent to teach others and share important truths," Kistenberg added.

In January 2019, the organization returned to the American Hebrew Academy (AHA) in Greensboro, N.C. Their annual trip

educates AHA students about spoken word, while using oratory skills for self-expression, anger management, and education.

Kistenberg said the organization has had a great impact in the community and an even greater impact on her.

"I have learned so much from them—far more than they could possibly learn from me—and I treasure the relationships I have developed with individual members over the last seven and a half years," she said.



Five Charlotte colleges and universities unite to support racial healing and transformation

Five Charlotte universities are banding together to support racial healing and transformation. Johnson C. Smith University, UNC Charlotte, Queens University, Johnson and Wales and Central Piedmont Community College make up the Charlotte Racial Justice Consortium. The group will collaborate to listen to Charlotte's many racial truths, encourage a community that understands its history of race and racism, and develop student, university, and community leaders who work across our region towards truth, racial healing, and equity.

The effort officially began spring 2020 and is supported by the Consortium's selection as a Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT) Campus Center by the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U). AAC&U created the initiative to prepare the next generation of strategic leaders to dismantle the belief in a hierarchy of human value.

"JCSU is the only HBCU included in this year's cohort of 13 awardees (23 to date), and our Consortium is the only TRHT Campus Center to include multiple universities with distinct student populations. Together, we more accurately represent the greater Charlotte community. Thus, we believe it is imperative to have students play a primary role in this initiative," said Dr. Cindy Kistenberg, associate professor of communication and theatre at Johnson C. Smith University.

The consortium was originally comprised of JCSU, UNC Charlotte and Queens. As word about the group began to spread locally, Johnson & Wales reached out to JCSU and expressed interest in late January 2020. The consortium then invited CPCC.

"Given the growing divisions in our country, the launch of [these additional] TRHT Campus Centers reminds us of the possibilities for healing and unity in our society. We must focus our efforts on preparing the next generation of leaders to dismantle the misguided beliefs and actions that promote a hierarchy of human value," said Tia Brown McNair, AAC&U vice president for Diversity, Equity, and Student Success and executive director for the TRHT Campus Centers.

Recent events of police brutality are expected to be a big part of the Charlotte group's conversations.

"We all agree it is impossible to address issues of racial healing and transformation without discussing issues regarding police brutality," said Kistenberg. "In fact, the Consortium was created in 2017 as a direct response to the local fatal police involved shootings of Jonathan Ferrell and Keith Lamont Scott.

Unfortunately, police brutality continues to have a resounding social impact on communities of color throughout the nation."

The Consortium is launching the Charlotte Racial Equity Leadership Fellows program. Six students from each campus will be selected to participate in a year-long reflection of Charlotte's history of racism and its connection to each university, while exploring racial equity and developing leadership skills. The fellowship will culminate in unique, student-led projects on the campuses designed to foster truth, racial healing, and transformation.



AAC&U Strategic Initiative

TRUTH, RACIAL HEALING & TRANSFORMATION (TRHT) CAMPUS CENTERS

Preparing the Next Generation of Leaders to Advance Justice and Build Equitable Communities

Supported by Newman's Own Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and The Papa John's Foundation

JCSU recognizes employees for service and excellence, thanks employees for resilience during a difficult year

The University and the Office of Human Resources recognized faculty and staff for years of service, exceptional teaching and research, and for distinguished service during a virtual program in fall 2020. Even though we could not have the traditional spring luncheon to present the awards and thank all faculty and staff for another successful year, the COVID-19 pandemic did not prevent us from celebrating those who kept the JCSU Promise in an extraordinary way during the 2019-2020 academic year.



Cato Par Excellence Teaching Award

Dr. Karen Butler

JCSU Par Excellence Teaching Award

Dr. Leslie Gutierrez

Sit Lux Award

Dr. Alexa von Dohlen

Mott University Professorship

Dr. Erin DiCesare

Sara Stewart Distinguished Service Award

Ms. Keisha Wilson

Moses S. Belton Distinguished Service Award

Mr. Calvin Banks

Lonnie T. Parker Pinnacle Service Award for Servant Leadership

Mr. Trevelyan Owen

Lonnie T. Parker Pinnacle Service Award for Quality

Dr. John Bannister

Lonnie T. Parker Pinnacle Service Award for Innovation

Dr. BerNadette Lawson-Williams

Lonnie T. Parker Pinnacle Service Award for Caring

Mr. Adrian Stowe

Trench Worker Distinguished Service Award Winners

Ms. Sherri Belfield

Ms. Aisha Bryant

Ms. Wanda Foy-Burroughs

Dr. Takeem Dean

Mr. Frank Dorsey

Dr. Leslie Gutierrez

Dr. Tiffanie Turner-Henderson

Dr. Laura McLean

Mr. Josh Nypaver

Dr. Keri Petersen

JCSU SERVICE AND RETIREE AWARDS

5 Year

Dr. John Bannister

Mr. Kermit Blount

Mr. George Buggs, III

Dr. Cheryl Curtis

Mr. Jose Gutierrez

Ms. Sandra Harris

Mr. Eliu Iraheta

Dr. Jennifer Lee

Dr. Melita Mitchell

Mr. Malachi Muhammad

Ms. Teri Taylor

Mr. Terik Tidwell

10 Year

Dr. Mario Bahena Uriostegui

Ms. Denise Ball

Ms. Valerie Black

Dr. Robert Edwards

Dr. Thomas Fleming

Dr. Gary Guffey

Dr. Terza Lima-Neves

Dr. Laurie Porter

Dr. Shawn-Allyce White

15 Year

Ms. Elizabeth Cauthen

Dr. Indhumathi Gopal

Dr. Leslie Gutierrez

Dr. Brendan Kern

Dr. Laura McLean

Dr. Antonia Mead

20 Year

Dr. Cathy Jones

30 Year

Dr. Jeffrey Ford

35 Year

Dr. Sunday Ndoh

Mr. Perumal Thirumurthy

Retiree

Dr. Sunday Ndoh



College Consensus ranks Johnson C. Smith University among nation’s top HBCUs

Johnson C. Smith University took top honors in rankings among Historically Black Colleges and Universities. With more than 100 HBCUs nationwide, JCSU is ranked as one of the country’s best, according to the College Consensus list of Best HBCUs. According to the site, JCSU is also listed as:

- Top 5 HBCU in North Carolina
- Top 10 HBCU in the Carolinas
- Top ranked private HBCU in North Carolina
- Top 3 ranked private HBCU in the Carolinas
- One of only three institutions in the Carolinas recognized for providing its students free laptops or iPads

College Consensus is a comprehensive meta-ranking, which pulls together data from numerous college ranking sites, including U.S. News & World Report, WalletHub, the Wall Street Journal, and others. They combine those results with the most reputable student reviews from sites, including Niche, My Plan, and Unigo, creating a Publisher Rating and a Student Review Rating.

“The College Consensus method allows every institution, from the richest and best-known university to the smallest and hardest-working regional college, to demonstrate what they do best,” according to the article.

JCSU mourns the loss of Floyd D. Young, President of FDY, Inc.

Floyd D. Young, founder and president of FDY, Inc., passed in November 2019. Young's food service company provided service to students, faculty, staff and guests at JCSU for 30 years.

"The Johnson C. Smith University family is deeply saddened by the passing of Mr. Floyd Young," said JCSU President Clarence D. Armbrister. "On behalf of the University, I send condolences to the Young family, his friends, the employees of FDY, Inc., and all whose lives were touched by his generosity and leadership. Mr. Young made many tangible and intangible contributions to JCSU. Not only was he dedicated to providing high-quality food and customer service to nourish students' bodies, but he was also dedicated to nourishing their minds and their souls."

Young provided financial assistance to more than 100 students through the Floyd and Norma Young Annual Scholarship. He was inducted into the Biddle Society, JCSU's highest giving society, as a result of his steadfast financial support. In addition, he employed numerous students to help them pay for their education and mentored countless students who valued his sound advice and wise counsel.

Young was a trailblazing businessman in Charlotte and paved the way for many minority entrepreneurs in the city. Currently, Young's company employs more than 300 people and is listed as one of the largest minority-owned companies in Mecklenburg County by the Charlotte Business Journal.

Young will be missed, but his contributions to JCSU and to the city of Charlotte will endure.



JOHNSON C. SMITH UNIVERSITY APPOINTS NEW ADMINISTRATORS

After conducting six extensive national searches, President Clarence D. Armbrister announced new senior administrators and directors to provide leadership in specific areas as the University is restructured for success in the changing higher education landscape. The search to attract the best minds in the field of higher education began at the start of the 2019-2020 academic year before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Karen D. Morgan appointed senior vice president of Academic Affairs



After an extensive national search, Johnson C. Smith University announced the appointment of Dr. Karen D. Morgan as senior vice president for Academic Affairs (SVPAA). As SVPAA, she serves as the chief academic officer and is responsible for all academic programs and personnel. Morgan came to JCSU after serving as the interim assistant provost for Undergraduate Experience, interim director of the Lee Hagan

Africana Studies Center, and associate professor of Mathematics at New Jersey City University (NJCU). She began her tenure at Johnson C. Smith University on July 1, 2020.

With over 25 years of experience in higher education, Morgan has achieved recognition for her leadership efforts in enhancing student success, implementing innovative pedagogical approaches to teaching, stimulating students intellectually, promoting research in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), and providing outstanding service to students.

JCSU President Clarence D. Armbrister said Morgan's commitment to excellence in every aspect of the academy makes her the ideal administrator to lead academics at JCSU. "Dr. Morgan is an accomplished leader in higher education, and I am delighted to welcome her as our new senior vice president," Armbrister said. "Her passion for STEM disciplines, social sciences, the liberal arts and business will take us to the next level of providing a relevant, well-rounded education and producing marketable graduates, who demonstrate excellence in their fields. I am confident Dr. Morgan's leadership will place JCSU at the forefront of innovation in teaching, learning and research."

Through her lens as an academic executive, mathematician, educator and poet, Morgan has presented and published on various leadership and academic topics, including the connection between quantitative literacy and creative literacy.

Morgan has received numerous honors and awards throughout her career, including her selections as a Network of Mathematical Sciences Mathematically Gifted & Black Honoree, a Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Summer Institute on Undergraduate Education Scholar at Harvard University, a National Academies Education Fellow in the Sciences, and an American Campus Communities Champion of Student Success.

Morgan is a member of the 2018-2019 cohort of the American Council on Education (ACE) Fellows Program, the nation's premier higher education leadership development program. She completed her ACE Fellowship at UNC Charlotte, where she was mentored by Chancellor Philip L. DuBois. She currently serves a member of the ACE Council of Fellows (COF) Board and is the Chair of the COF Finance and Development Committee and an ACE ENGAGE Founding Advisor.

Morgan is a member of the New Jersey State Higher Education Plan Student Success Working Group and was president-elect and treasurer of the New Jersey Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators.

Morgan joined the NJCU faculty in 2005 and taught mathematics to both undergraduate and graduate students. Her philosophical perspective of teaching centers on one ideological focus—to marry mathematics, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and pedagogy to create alternate means of assessment that are effective and produce measurable learning outcomes.

Morgan earned her bachelor of arts degree in mathematics, master of science degree in mathematics and Ph.D. in higher education/mathematics education from the University of Mississippi.



Dr. Morgan addresses students and parents during JCSU's virtual freshmen convocation

Morgan steps into new role as senior vice president of Academic Affairs

Dr. Karen Morgan is hard at work in her new role as senior vice president of Academic Affairs. As SVPAA, she serves as the chief academic officer and is responsible for all academic programs and personnel for the University.

"I jumped at the opportunity to work at a historically Black university with a student population for which I am very passionate," Morgan said. "I am not an HBCU graduate, but I am an HBCU advocate. As a Black woman who grew up (mostly) in Mississippi, this was an opportunity to come back home if you will and continue to give to this part of the country that has already given so much to me."

With over 25 years of experience in higher education, Morgan has achieved recognition for her leadership efforts in enhancing student success, implementing innovative pedagogical approaches to teaching, stimulating students intellectually,

promoting research in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), and providing outstanding service to students.

Inspired by Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole, former president of Spelman College, Morgan always had dreams to make a difference in higher education. "I can't stress to you how honored I am to be the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs at Johnson C. Smith University," she said. "It is a lot of work, but it's not too much." While she is living out her dreams and achieving her goals, she hopes her position also inspires students and provides representation of what they can be one day.

"We have an opportunity to anticipate and proactively correct, what I would call, systemic issues that impact retention progression and graduation of our students. I plan to review data, to help provide ways for us to find patterns of success and opportunities for enhancements and growth," she said when speaking on plans she will implement as SVPAA.

In addition, Morgan hopes to create schedules that are student centric, which she says will minimize scheduling conflicts and put students on a path to timely graduation with minimal debt, as well as fortify the Institutional Planning, Assessment, Effectiveness and Research (IPAER) department and the Center for Career and Professional Development. This will ensure that students graduate from JCSU with at least one experiential learning or internship opportunity and increase their chances of landing a job upon graduation.

Because Morgan started her role during the COVID-19 pandemic, she has faced a number of additional challenges. One of them is limited interaction with students and faculty, but that has not stopped her from fostering relationships with faculty and staff. "Although we're virtual, I have had an opportunity to visit each of the college meetings, where the deans have introduced me to the faculty and staff within their colleges. I have found various ways to be engaged with the faculty in a virtual setting during this time," she said.

Morgan has also announced virtual office hours to foster relationships with faculty and staff, and plans to send out a virtual survey to get feedback on the changes that need to be made for student success.

While she has been able to navigate this new normal in her new role, she added, "I look forward to the day when I can actually greet faculty, staff and students, even if it's with us wearing a mask."

She hopes that faculty, staff and students know that she is not just here for them during this unprecedented time, but at any time. "I hope if they ever would need it, they would take an opportunity to speak with me, because they're not going through this alone. There is a community who is here to support them in any way that we can."

Dr. Davida L. Haywood named vice president of Student Affairs



Dr. Davida Loren Haywood was announced as vice president for Student Affairs (VPSA) on April 15, 2020. Haywood is a 1998 graduate of Johnson C. Smith University. As VPSA, she is the chief officer responsible for developing a comprehensive program of services for traditional, non-traditional and graduate students in areas including housing and residential life, student

engagement, counseling, leadership development, health, and student conduct. Prior to her new appointment at JCSU, Haywood served as vice president for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management at Alabama State University, a medium-sized HBCU in Montgomery, Ala., offering undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs. She began her tenure at JCSU in July 2020.

Haywood has nearly 22 years of administrative experience in the areas of admissions and recruitment, enrollment management, student activities, multicultural affairs, and student affairs. In addition, she has taught undergraduate and graduate courses on leadership and service-learning, diversity and case studies in higher education. Her research interests, papers and presentations often focus on women of color and their participation in higher education; organizational, administrative and executive leadership; critical race feminism; racial and gender identity development; and service-learning.

JCSU President Clarence D. Armbrister said Haywood's commitment to creating a holistic, relevant and transformative student experience made her the ideal administrator to lead student affairs at JCSU. "Dr. Haywood brings extensive experience as a leader in higher education,

and I am excited to welcome her home to her alma mater as our new vice president for Student Affairs," Armbrister said. "She has demonstrated a passion for students and has a strong track record of fostering an environment that allows students to grow intellectually, socially, culturally and spiritually so they reach their highest potential. I look forward to Dr. Haywood bringing her expertise and enthusiasm to JCSU as she works with her team and her colleagues to enhance the experience of all students at JCSU, including our non-traditional and graduate students. I'm confident her leadership, innovation and dedication will raise the bar and result in a vibrant campus experience that is among the best at historically Black universities."

In 2016, Haywood was selected as a Program Fellow by the Higher Education Leadership Foundation. Similarly, she received certificates in Leadership and Advocacy (Advancing to the Presidency-American Council on Education) and Executive Leadership (On the Road to the Presidency-Hampton University), in fall 2017. She is an inaugural cohort member of the Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) Aspiring Leaders program sponsored by the Rutgers Center for Minority Serving Institutions.

Haywood earned a bachelor of science degree in Business Administration (summa cum laude) from Johnson C. Smith University as well as a master of arts degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs and a Ph.D. in Educational Administration and Higher Education from The Ohio State University. Her dissertation, "(Re)inventing in the 'dark': African American women and presidential leadership," won the William E. Loadman Most Outstanding Dissertation Award from the School of Educational Policy and Leadership in 2010.

When not meeting the needs of her students, she is just "Mommy," to two very energetic sons: Kenneth, Jr. and Kole Culbreth.

Haywood reflects on her return to her alma mater as vice president of Student Affairs

"When I think about who I am today, it is because of Johnson C. Smith University," Dr. Davida Haywood '98 said with gratitude. Haywood, who once walked the campus of JCSU as a student, is experiencing a full circle moment as the vice president of Student Affairs at her alma mater.

"Sometimes it is overwhelming because as a student, I admired many of the administrators here at the institution," she said. This is not the first time Haywood has returned home. After graduating she worked in the admissions office as a recruiter and came back a few years later as the assistant director of admissions.



Coming from a family of educators and HBCU graduates, Haywood knew she wanted to continue the tradition

of attending an HBCU. Originally, she had her eyes set on Howard University, attended by

her great-aunt, but changed her mind after attending a college fair at North Carolina State University.

"I will never forget Kim Jones sitting at a table with the most glorious tablecloth of Gold and Blue, it was like the angels were singing around her compared to all the other schools," Haywood said. "I went to all the HBCU tables, but something was different about her."

Haywood received a full scholarship to JCSU, something she was extremely grateful for, especially since she lost her father during student orientation. The oldest of three children, it was important that she did not burden her mother financially or move far from her family in Raleigh.

"I'm not even sure I would be sitting here with you today had I gone to Howard, and that's no slight to Howard. What is for us is for us; and it was meant for me to drive from Raleigh to Charlotte. I wouldn't change that for anything."

While Haywood is still adjusting to her new role, the nostalgia of being on campus is something she just can't shake. "It's very surreal sometimes. When I'm walking around campus I get déjà vu. I can literally see myself at different moments and different places and spaces on this campus. I recall my mom and my grandparents dropping me off at Duke Hall. I remember the fire in Carter Hall my first year. I can even remember the clothes I was wearing some days. That's just how deep it runs," Haywood said.

During her time as a student, Haywood was heavily involved on campus. The former Miss JCSU 1997-98, was also a member of the marching band, Gamma Lambda chapter of Delta Sigma

Theta Sorority, Inc., and Student Government Association. She plans to use her experience as a Smithite to connect with students and make their experience at the University a memorable one. "I believe right now is a good opportunity for us to do some things differently, and get it right," she emphasized. "I will supplement what's happening in the classroom and complement it through programming. In our residence halls we will create a true living and learning experience so you're creating memories. We will do the same thing with the type of activities and events that are developed by Student Leadership and Engagement. In addition, we will equip students with the tools they need to succeed when they leave. We're going to treat them as if they are our babies, if you will, and make sure we support them along this journey to graduation."

While Haywood is ecstatic to be home, right now her only communication with students is virtual. Starting her new role without students on campus has created challenges, but she is working diligently to overcome those challenges.

"Colleges and universities feed off of the presence of their students. I think COVID has taught us we aren't in control, but it also has made us have to step up. At the beginning of the year, many universities were only dabbling in online learning, but when COVID-19 struck, everybody had to go online in two weeks. I'm sure there were some who thought we would never be able to do that, but we did! I think going forward, COVID-19 will redefine college offerings and the college experience."

Haywood looks forward to the day students return to campus so she can share her memories, and most importantly, guidance with students.

"I most appreciate that this University taught me the spectrum of Blackness. That a student from California, may have a very different lived experience than a student from D.C., but what unites us is our Blackness and being Golden Bulls."



New Science Center

Dr. Vijaya L. Gompa appointed as dean of the College of STEM



Dr. Vijaya L. Gompa began her tenure as dean of the College of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics on June 1, 2020. She previously served as professor of Mathematics and head of the Department of Mathematical, Computing and Information Sciences at Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville, Ala.

Gompa has extensive experience in mathematics education and computing and information science. She has served in higher education leadership positions for more than 10 years. Her leadership experience includes serving as director of a Math, Science and Technology Leadership Academy and coordinator of a Master of Science in Teaching program. Gompa is very passionate about STEM education and has directed many outreach programs for middle and high school students to ignite interest in STEM careers, while providing professional development for K-12 teachers.

JCSU President Clarence D. Armbrister said Gompa's varied experiences in mathematics and computing and information systems, combined with her unbridled enthusiasm to promote

STEM education among students make her a great choice to lead JCSU's College of STEM at this time. "Dr. Gompa has demonstrated success in mathematics education and in other STEM disciplines," Armbrister said. "Her expertise in curriculum development, faculty leadership and recruitment, student recruitment and working with accrediting bodies such as ABET will advance the level of teaching and learning in STEM College. Her passion for igniting a love of STEM in middle and high school students is an added bonus as JCSU strengthens our partnerships with public schools to build a pipeline of students who aspire to attend JCSU and earn STEM degrees. I am confident her leadership will accelerate our STEM innovation programs and move JCSU to the forefront of STEM education, research and entrepreneurship among HBCUs."

Gompa has served on editorial boards for research journals and published many research articles on mathematics and mathematics education. She has also presented at national conferences on both subjects.

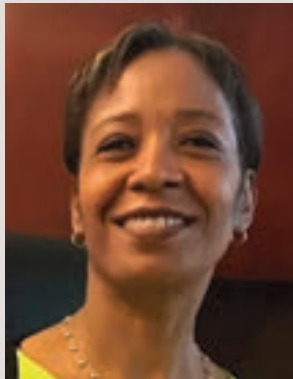
Gompa received her Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics with minors in physics and chemistry as well as her Master of Science degree in mathematics from Andhra University in Waltair, India. She earned a Master of Arts degree and a Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Toledo (Ohio).



Historic Biddle Hall

Dr. Rhonda Moses appointed associate vice president for Enrollment Management

On May 12, 2020, Johnson C. Smith University announced the appointment of Dr. Rhonda Moses as associate vice president for Enrollment Management. Moses began her tenure at JCSU on July 1 and is responsible for developing a comprehensive program for recruitment and retention and for managing the areas of admissions, financial aid and registrar's office. Before joining the administration at JCSU, she served as dean of Enrollment Management at Huston-Tillotson University, a small HBCU in Austin, Texas.



Moses has considerable experience in creating, managing and evaluating enrollment management and retention programs and services in higher education. She has served at institutions across the spectrum, including HBCUs, Hispanic Serving Institutions and Predominantly White Institutions in public, private, liberal arts, research and faith-based settings. Moses has reimagined enrollment processes and restructured organizations to enhance the student experience from inquiry to graduation. Her work at Huston-Tillotson increased enrollment nearly 19 percent in four years.

JCSU President Clarence D. Armbrister said Moses' extensive background in enrollment management and her experience

with students like those enrolled at JCSU were key factors in her selection for this new associate vice president role. "Dr. Moses brings demonstrated success in developing programs that improve customer service and increase enrollment," Armbrister said. "She understands the needs of our students and knows how to maximize resources to help students attain their dream of a college education. I look forward to her innovation as she creates an enrollment management program that inspires students to matriculate at JCSU and retains them until they graduate from this institution. I am confident that her leadership will increase JCSU's enrollment."

Moses belongs to several organizations for enrollment management professionals and is a highly respected speaker. She earned credentials in data analytics through Campus Labs, presented at numerous national and regional conferences on retention and persistence in higher education (i.e. NACADA – National Academic Advising Association, Council for Opportunity in Education, Southwest Association of Student Assistance Programs) and chaired the Western Association of Educational Opportunity Personnel's conference.

Moses earned her bachelor's degree in Business Administration, her master's degree in Education Administration and completed doctoral studies in Education Administration at State University of New York at Buffalo. She received her post-master's certification in Enrollment Management and her Ph.D. in Higher Education from Capella University.

Rochelle D. King named as director of Financial Aid

Johnson C. Smith University announced the appointment of Rochelle D. King as director of Financial Aid on March 23, 2020. King assumed her new role at JCSU on April 1 after serving as assistant director of Financial Aid at Livingstone College where she was responsible for budgetary compliance, program disbursements, and staff training.

JCSU President Clarence D. Armbrister praised King's broad knowledge of financial aid and said her skills will help strengthen JCSU's program. "I am thrilled to welcome Ms. King," said Armbrister. "Her demonstrated experience and knowledge



of federal and state regulations governing financial aid programs and the disbursement of Title IV and state funds will ensure the strategic direction we have set for JCSU's Financial Aid Department will continue without interruption. We will gain momentum under her leadership as we move forward."

Prior to her four years at Livingstone College, King spent 9 years at Shaw University as director of Financial Aid. King has valuable experience serving Historically Black Colleges and Universities and understands our student population, academic programs, and the relevance of the HBCU experience.

Erna Perkins-Jones named as director of Facilities



Johnson C. Smith University announces the appointment of Erna D. Perkins-Jones as director of Facilities. Perkins-Jones came to JCSU from Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont in Charlotte and began her tenure in July 2020.

Perkins-Jones has built a strong reputation as a visionary leader in her field with 30 years of experience in facilities

management, built environments, master planning and program management. She has spent 20 years mastering the built environments and construction industry where she has excelled at comprehensive compliance effort administration with quality assurance programs and methods, long-range planning, project improvement, and maintenance systems. She is an expert at guiding collaborations between internal and external stakeholders to align departmental strategies with the high-level goals of an organization.

President Clarence D. Armbrister said Perkins-Jones was selected for this new role because her broad experience will be an asset as the University sharpens its focus on developing and maintaining the optimal physical environment for our students, faculty and staff.

“She arrives at an important time in the life of the University as we complete the latest update to our master plan; develop strategies to address deferred maintenance; and look to preserve our wonderful campus in the Historic West End of Charlotte,” Armbrister said. “The timing of her arrival is perfect as the area immediately surrounding JCSU is changing rapidly with construction of the streetcar rails for the CityLYNX Gold Line in the final phase and the city of Charlotte beginning construction of the new plaza at Five Points. Mrs. Perkins-Jones has the knowledge and leadership skills to ensure JCSU is a valued partner with developers, city officials and neighborhood organizations as the Historic West End becomes one of Charlotte’s most desirable places to live and learn.”

In her previous role as director of Facilities Services for Goodwill’s Opportunity Campus, she oversaw campus assets and real estate, collaborative space design, long-range planning, construction management, facility maintenance and staff development. As a member of the Corporate Leadership Team, she engendered a collaborative spirit through driving community partnership development and fostering a synergetic work environment. Her capital project expertise was

instrumental in developing the corporate strategic plan for departmental and organizational expansion.

Before joining Goodwill in November 2016, Perkins-Jones was the Midwestern and Northeastern Regional Director of Facilities for SSC Service Solutions - Compass Group, NA. Her span of responsibility comprised various educational, private and public organizations in New England, the Heartland and the South, including Tuskegee University, Becker College (Worcester, Massachusetts), Howard University, Chicago Public School System, and the District of Columbia Public Libraries and Schools.

As an urban planner and a business owner, Perkins-Jones served in multiple capacities across the Washington, D.C., and Maryland region. She was accountable for a multi-annual government-funded program that synchronized the Department of Labor strategies for Job Corps campuses nationwide as senior planner with P.B. Dewberry Engineering. She also served as a lead planner for Charles County, Maryland’s Architectural Review Committee with responsibility for the drafting and adoption of the county’s 1997 Comprehensive Plan - Architectural and Site Design Guidelines and Standards.

Perkins-Jones earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Architectural Design from the University of South Carolina, a Master of Science degree in City and Regional Planning from Morgan State University and is currently pursuing Certified Facility Manager® (CFM) credentials. She is a member of the Charlotte Chapter of the International Facility Management Association (IFMA), Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Habitat for Humanity of Charlotte volunteer, YMCA of Greater Charlotte volunteer and an avid gardener.



Campus Briefs

C-SPAN brings politics, media and a big bus

C-SPAN brought its Battleground States Tour to Johnson C. Smith University, highlighting the pivotal role North Carolina will play in the 2020 presidential election. As such, it was only right for the tour to stop at Charlotte's only HBCU.

On November 1, 2019, students, faculty and staff boarded C-SPAN's interactive bus parked on campus. Visitors explored interactive kiosks and learned about C-SPAN's in-depth coverage of the American political process, Campaign 2020 programming, and comprehensive online educational resources. Some students also participated in the "Voices from the Road" project, which allowed them to video record their thoughts on issues they want presidential candidates to address during the campaign.

Stopping at an institution of higher education provided C-SPAN an opportunity to help students relate what they are learning to the real world of work. Doug Hemmig, C-SPAN community relations representative, lectured Valerie Black's communication



Miss North Carolina visits Johnson C. Smith University



(pictured left to right) Miss Piedmont 2019 Jessica Lanier, the 93rd Miss JCSU Janiya Miller '20, Miss North Carolina 2019 Alexandra Badgett

Miss North Carolina, Alexandra Badgett, met with students at Johnson C. Smith University August 21, 2019, during a college tour in conjunction with Miss Taste of Charlotte. Badgett, a Charlotte native, hoped to recruit more African American women for pageants.

As Badgett emphasized, the benefits of participating in pageants are endless. Miss America is the number one leading organization of scholarships for women.

"I am 22 and debt free, so that is just a blessing within itself," she explained. Badgett received a \$22,000 scholarship from the Miss America North Carolina Scholarship Organization.

In addition to the financial impact that is afforded to pageant winners, there is also an opportunity for community engagement. As Miss North Carolina, Badgett is positioned to create two initiatives during her term.

"It's so much more than the sash and the crown; it's about the person within and what you want to do with your community."

Dorsey lands on 2020 HBCU Buzz Top 30 Under 30 List

Frank D. Dorsey II, associate director of Student Engagement, was named to HBCU Buzz's Top 30 Under 30.

"It's an overwhelming feeling of love," Dorsey said.

Dorsey is responsible for coordinating comprehensive engagement programs that create intentional opportunities for students to identify and enhance their leadership potential. In addition, he has made it his mission to create a more inclusive campus through policies and programs.

"I am thankful that Johnson C. Smith University provided me the space and freedom to be a creative advisor, mentor, and coach. After it was announced, my peers and former students reminded me of my contributions to their college experience," he added.

This is sixth consecutive year HBCU Buzz recognized the significant achievement of alumni from HBCUs.



Professors collaborate on Mellon Think Tank to address human rights issues

Dr. Karen Butler, Dr. Terza Lima-Neves and Dr. Jasleen Kohli collaborated on the Mellon Think Tank to address human rights in multiple disciplines. The Andrew J. Mellon grant for the Teaching, Learning, and Solving Problems in the Interdisciplinary Humanities supports a summer institute and yearly Think Tanks. The Think Tanks support discussions of "real-world" problems in our community through the lens of big-picture questions and allows participants to apply the skills developed during summer institutes.

The Think Tanks contextualize the foundation of the aligned courses (whether they be pre-existing courses, IDS Special Topics courses, or permanent additions to the curriculum) and allow those involved to connect with faculty across campus to develop learning outcomes and goals that can be co-taught by humanities faculty. Ultimately, this produces a uniquely interdisciplinary experience for JCSU's faculty and students in order to foster a culture of humanities-based, interdisciplinary teaching and research around campus.



Campus Briefs



Anna Smith, director of Education at Pensole, with Dr. Jemayne King, instructor of Sole Food: Digestible Sneaker Culture and English professor

Sneaker design company visits campus to recruit students in an effort to diversify the industry

Johnson C. Smith University was the first stop for Pensole Design Academy's inaugural L.E.A.D. (Leaders Emerge After Direction) by Design Seminar, which traveled to HBCUs across the country to recruit minority students interested in product creation.

Anna Smith, director of Education at Pensole, spoke to 30 students during Jemayne King's Sneaker Digest course January 17, 2020.

"I am excited and honored that Pensole reached out to me to recruit at Johnson C. Smith University—and several other CIAA member institutions—for employment opportunities. As the industry looks to become more inclusive, there is no better

place to procure talent than a Historically Black College and University," King said.

Since its first class in 2010, Pensole has championed classes of diverse individuals in a wide variety of majors and disciplines.

Because of the visit, Smith and King hope students gained a broader knowledge base, attainable goals, and understand that it takes stepping outside of your comfort zone to elevate to new heights.

According to Pensole's website, the company has worked with and placed over 475 students at major brands such as Adidas, New Balance and Nike.

Christmas Vespers Service

President Clarence D. Armbrister, First Lady Denise McGregor Armbrister, faculty, staff, students, alumni and the community gathered in Jane M. Smith Memorial Church for the annual Christmas Vespers service November 24, 2019. Under the

direction of Dr. Shawn-Allyce White, the choir filled the sanctuary with the soul-soothing sounds of the holidays. For the second consecutive year, the concert featured voices of the Johnson C. Smith University Concert Choir and the JCSU Alumni Choir.



The JCSU University Concert Choir and Alumni Choir during the Christmas Vespers



Participants of JCSU's BE Hackathon team: Deben Peterson '22, Jordan Green '22, Winstongabriel Douglas '20, Adrien Simmons '21

JCSU places second in Black Enterprise's 2019 BE Smart Hackathon

Johnson C. Smith University earned its highest finish ever during Black Enterprise's fifth annual BE Smart Hackathon September 13- 16, 2019, in Texas.

JCSU picked up a second place finish.

Deben Peterson '22, Jordan Green '21, Adrien Simmons '21 and Winstongabriel Simmons '20 competed against students from 11 other Historically Black Colleges and Universities at the event hosted by American Airlines.

Students spent 24 hours coding and programming an app for the airline that would improve the customer service experience and make travel easier for children, senior citizens and/or visually impaired customers.

"My experience at this hackathon was one of the toughest but the best growth I have seen within a day," Peterson emphasized.

Earning second place did not discourage the team of talented computer science and computer engineering majors, who said this was a great moment and an honor.

"We were one of the smaller schools to participate, so being placed against some of the biggest HBCUs in the country was a good learning experience," Green said.

All 48 participants received prizes, including scholarship funds, free miles from American Airlines as well as prizes from sponsors such as Prudential Financial, PayPal, Electronic Arts, and Dell Technologies.

JCSU students participated in corporate tours to learn the technical and professional requirements for working at tech companies.

Peterson added, "In our eyes, JCSU has some of the best talent in computer science, and it felt great to show that in front of companies and other top HBCUs."

Terik Tidwell, JCSU's director of STEM Innovation, agrees. Tidwell is proud of what his students accomplished and is eager to take top honors next year.

"We are so proud of our four students who conquered this competition. They were able to overcome the challenge as a team, open their eyes to all things required to create an app and look forward to future career opportunities," he said.

Sport Management program receives state and national ranking

Johnson C. Smith University's Sport Management program ranks #17 on the 2020 Best Colleges for Sports Management in America list, according to Niche. JCSU is listed as the second best Sport Management Program in North Carolina. The University is the only HBCU in the top 20 of 299 schools.

"This ranking is a result of the commitment and dedication to expert faculty and investment of community partners," said Dr. Laura McLean, dean of Metropolitan College of Professional Studies. "Sport

management is one of the growing majors on our campus, and JCSU's faculty have worked hard to establish and nurture partnerships for our students with professional teams and organizations throughout Charlotte and the country," she added.

Niche ranking is based on rigorous analysis of academic, admissions, financial, and student life data from the U.S. Department of Education along with reviews from students and alumni.





Lima-Neves challenges students to design course syllabus for Black women and hip-hop

Dr. Terza Lima-Neves, associate professor of Political Science, took a different approach to teaching her hip-hop class, POL 491: Seminar on Black Women and Hip-Hop Music. The course, intended to be a collaborative effort between students and the professor, is the first of its kind at JCSU.

"The students were grateful and humbled by how much they learned and it showed," she said.

For the fall 2019 semester, students had just one assignment – to create the course syllabus. Paired in five groups, students explored the history, culture and significance of Black women in hip-hop and presented their research in front of an engaged audience of students, faculty and staff at James B. Duke Memorial Library November 21, 2019.

"I chose this pedagogical approach because of my philosophy as a student-centered professor," she explained.

While happy with the results of student presentations, this particular method of teaching was somewhat of a challenge for Lima-Neves.

"Sometimes I felt like I was in over my head," she said. "It's important for the students to know that as a professor, I didn't have everything figured out and that I was also committed to being flexible and learning from them."

The process allowed students to connect with hip-hop, learn about historical foundations of the culture and the significant contributions made by Black women in the U.S., Caribbean, Europe and Africa.

Lima-Neves, who is originally from Cabo Verde, used hip-hop as a way to connect to African American culture when she moved to

the U.S. in 1989. She thought it was important for students to know the impact hip-hop has globally.

"As an African immigrant I didn't know I was Black until I arrived in the U.S.," she said. "It inspired me to always be connected to the people, to be proud of myself as a Black woman and now as a scholar activist."

In addition, Lima-Neves connected students with North Carolina A&T State University professor and hip hop expert, Dr. Antonia Randolph, who served as a powerful tool for research during the course.

Lima-Neves hopes that students take away a deeper appreciation for professors in the way they curate and design an entire semester of work, become more open to academic critique, as well as learning the complex and multilayered ways of conducting research beyond a simple Google search.

"I wanted them to go through the journey of appreciating how much effort goes into designing and selecting the materials that go into a syllabus so that they could learn about the academic process from a different perspective."

Lima-Neves is committed to including non-traditional methods of teaching and learning in the classrooms, particularly through the work and words of hip-hop artists who initiated the conversation about race, gender and feminism long before academia did.

Lima-Neves emphasized, "My favorite part of the presentations was watching my students bring all of the knowledge together and surrender themselves to this amazing culture that is called hip-hop, regardless of what they thought they knew about it."

King featured in ESPN documentary



Jemayne King, who teaches Sole Food: Digestible Sneaker Culture at Johnson C. Smith University, knows all too well the value sneakers have on trends. King's class is the only one of its kind taught on a collegiate campus in the world. His niche has gained him global media coverage, most recently with ESPN's docuseries, SneakerCenter.

"People call me Sole Food by name," King said.

Bobbito Garcia, the world's most renowned sneaker historian, personally asked King to appear in the docuseries.

"When he contacted me with the invitation, I was floored," King said. "Having his respect means more to me than I am able to eloquently convey."

Sneaker culture has become so popular, brands like Adidas, Puma and Nike have turned to influencers, singers and rappers to drive sales and stay current. Students in King's course learn everything from the economic value of sneaker culture, the history of shoes, to the impact shoes have on hip-hop culture.

In the docuseries, King lectures students about the impact of the black dollar in America and its relation to sneaker culture.

"The African American consumer is the taste maker, the early adopter who validates products," he emphasized to students. Teaching a one-of-a-kind lecture has been gratifying for King, but it's even more enjoyable because his course is taught at an HBCU.

"History proves that HBCUs have always been at the forefront of innovation. This still is true," King said. "Johnson C. Smith University is the innovation kitchen that fosters 21st century pedagogy, while other institutions—riddled with constrictive traditions—are stuck in the 19th century."

King's ability to connect with students is something of which he's also proud.

"I've been told countless instances that Sole Food is a course students wished was offered at their respective universities," he said.

King has been able to maintain those same connections outside the classroom with students. He hopes his lecture and mentorship helps students realize their full potential.

"I hope my students are inspired to think outside of the staunch traditions of the academy," he said.



Professor King lectures students on sneaker culture as ESPN cameras roll

Students participate in Food Lion Scholars Day



Ten business administration students along with instructor Jacqueline Robinson and Dr. Tiffanie Turner-Henderson participated in the annual Food Lion Scholars Day, November 13, 2019.

The daylong event provided students with the opportunity to learn about internship and job opportunities in the retail

industry, network with Food Lion employees, participate in mock interviews and discuss personal branding.

“As a senior preparing for graduation, I found the entire day to be beneficial. They taught me a method called STAR (situation, task, action, result), which I heard of before, but didn’t think to use during the interview process. Going forward it is definitely something I will practice and implement,” Calvin Hill ’20 said.

Winston-Salem State University, North Carolina A&T State University, Livingstone College, Claflin University and Elizabeth City State University also participated in Scholars Day. During the tour, students from all universities fellowshiped and participated in games that challenged their learning skills.

Hill recommends JCSU students take advantage of opportunities like this one which allow students to network with leaders at local corporations.

“A lot of students have this slight misconception that they don’t want to work at Food Lion because they only think of the retailer as a grocery store, but they have many corporate opportunities and they’re located just outside of Charlotte,” Hill added.

Dr. Helen Caldwell: social worker, educator, leader



Dr. Helen Caldwell is credited with creating what is now known as the School of Social Work, serving as the inaugural dean. As a social worker of nearly 40 years, she prides herself on her work, and the impact she’s made on faculty and students at the University.

“God sent me to Johnson C. Smith University, and I have unknowingly impacted a lot of students beyond the classroom, and for that I am

really blessed,” Caldwell said.

When she first began her journey in social work, she never imagined she’d become the dean of the School of Social Work, let alone work in higher education.

“I wanted to have a contribution to civil rights,” she said. Caldwell, a graduate of Jackson State University in Mississippi, experienced overt racism in the Deep South. It was during her time in college that she realized her calling for social work.

“Students were very active in the social movement during that time.”

Prior to her tenure in higher education, she spent a number of years working in foster care. Her goal was to inflict change, tackle discrimination and help those who could not help themselves. Today, that goal remains.

“My desire to change the levels of discrimination and racial impacts of policies is even more important today than when I was in school,” she explained.

As dean of the School of Social Work, Caldwell continues to be a change agent. She still teaches in the classroom and serves as a mentor to her faculty members, something she truly enjoys.

"I think that my greatest accomplishment in social work has been actually teaching it," she elaborated.

Under her leadership, students learn all forms of social work, but most importantly, they learn social work is a part of our everyday lives.

"It's important that we know how broad social work is and is becoming. It's not just foster care. It includes the corporate world, higher education, politics and so much more," Caldwell said.

In the future, she hopes to expand the program to include partial hybrid courses, which will allow students to take courses online.

She hopes her students remember the impact they can make on this world and that they never forget, "Professionalism and integrity will take you a long way."

Mead raises awareness of stem cell donation, helps save a life



November is recognized as National Marrow Awareness Month, which honors the people who donate stem cells and bone marrow to help give others a second chance at life. In 2019, Dr. Antonia Mead, professor of Health Education, donated her stem cells to a blood cancer patient.

Mead was added to the Be the Match registry during the inaugural blood drive on campus in 2010. The drive has turned into an annual event in collaboration with Project Life Movement and the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) to help break the stigma of bone marrow donation for minorities.

"Interesting enough, when I was doing the stem cell treatment, there was a white guy who came in before me and a white guy who came after me. So that's the challenge they talk about," Mead shared.

According to Be the Match, African Americans or Blacks have a 23 percent chance of finding a matched adult donor compared to 41 percent for people who identify as Asian and Pacific Islander, 46 percent for Hispanic or Latino people, and 77 percent for white people.

Mead shared that her experience did not come without criticism. Family members, in fear that the procedure could cause her health problems would say, "Don't be doing nothing that's going to injure you."

While Mead had been listed on the registry for years, it was her mother who inspired her to go through with the procedure after receiving the the call that she was a match. Mead's mother

was diagnosed with gynecological cancer in 2013, and died three years later after undergoing chemotherapy and radiation treatment.

"I know what it's like to have more time with your family member battling cancer," Mead said. "There was nothing like that to help my mom."

Mead, who expressed her gratitude for the additional time with her mom after diagnosis added, "I don't know what this lady has been through. She could be somebody's mama, she could be somebody's sister. She's definitely somebody's child, she could be somebody's aunty, she's somebody's friend. I can give her more time possibly."

The process of donating was easy for Mead, especially during the pre-transplant process, but she noted that there were times during the procedure the process became difficult.

"The procedure took three hours. That last hour, that's when it got hard because you're lying there with two needles in your arms and you can't move," Mead said.

Donors who are a match may also face obstacles that could prevent them from doing the transplant.

"Depending on the age of the donor it can be complicated. You may not be able to take off from work; there could be some challenges that block you from giving."

As part of the requirements of the process, Mead has had no contact with the cancer patient. After a year passes, the patient has the option to contact Mead and speak with her if she chooses. While she is happy she helped, Mead feels like she has done her part, and is fine with whatever decision the patient decides.

Mead hopes stories like hers encourage others to donate and help give people in need a second chance at life.



A number of faculty members published scholarly papers, articles and books during the 2019-20 academic year. Below is a list of some of their works in print and digital media.

Anita Bledsoe-Gardner, and Miller, D.S., Mills, J.T., Davis Bivens, N., Space, Place and the Evolution of the Policing of Black Bodies. In Esmail, A. & Eargle, L. *On These Mean Streets People Are Dying. Police and Citizen Brutality in America.*

William T. Booth, Ph.D., assistant professor of chemistry, Structural mechanism for regulation of DNA binding of BpsR, a Bordetella regulator of biofilm formation, by 6-hydroxynicotinic acid, November 2019. Bordetella bacteria are respiratory pathogens of humans, birds, and livestock. To understand the mechanism of this regulation, we have determined the crystal structures of BpsR and BpsR in complex with 6HNA. The structures reveal that BpsR binding of 6HNA induces a conformational change in the protein to prevent DNA binding.

Cannabinoid Receptor Interacting Protein 1a (CRIP1a): Function and Structure, October 2019. Cannabinoid receptor interacting protein 1a (CRIP1a) is an important CB1 cannabinoid receptor-associated protein, first identified from a yeast two-hybrid

screen to modulate CB1-mediated N-type Ca²⁺ currents. In this paper we review studies of CRIP1a function and structure based upon in vitro experiments and computational chemistry, which elucidate the specific mechanisms for the interaction of CRIP1a with CB1 receptors.

Tim Champion, Ph.D., professor of chemistry, Improvement in Student Research Skills through an Undergraduate Research-focused QEP, Savannah, GA, February 20, 2020

Tim Champion, Ph.D., and John Bannister, Ph.D., Promoted Online Tutorial Use in General Chemistry: Effects on subsequent tests and quizzes and on subsequent use of online tutorial resources. Promoting student success in entry-level STEM courses is a continuing area of national and international interest. While JCSU has made great strides in promoting student success and retention, recent data suggest a rise in the DFW rates for key courses.

Adelheid Eubanks, Ph.D., director of the Center for Integrated Studies, Ananda

Devi's Indian Tango: A Double Helix of the Writer's Responsibility and the Postcolonial World, In: Botezat, Onorina, Mustafa Kirca, eds. Mapping Cultural Identities and Intersections. Imagological Readings. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019: 29-45. Indian Tango is a relatively short yet astonishingly complex that consists of two main protagonists and their respective stories that take place over the course of three months in 2004 in Delhi, India.

Coming Across Home: Thomas Hürlimann's Heimkehr (Homecoming), In: Çankaya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences 13.2 (December 2019): 111-122. In Heimkehr (Homecoming, 2018), renowned and prize-winning Swiss philosopher, dramatist, and writer Thomas Hürlimann introduces Heinrich Ubel. This protagonist suffers a series of physical (and mental) displacements. The more he thinks of home and about going home, the more he recognizes that there is no such thing as "home" in the world of life experiences.

Anand P. Gupta, laboratory coordinator, and A.A. Felton, *Drosophila Information Service* 102 (2019): 15 -17. Egg density effect on individual reaction norm of genotype in *Drosophila pseudoobscura* population from Strawberry Canyon, California.

Drosophila Information Service 102 (2019): 22 – 25, Experimental revelation on the Total Phenotypic Variance Equation based

on the Reaction Norm Curve using *Drosophila pseudoobscura*.

Kimberly M. Harvin, academic coordinator, *The Secret to Effective Worship Leading: A Practical Guide*. This installment in the series is for Worship Leaders who want to do more than entertain people with great songs and maintain regular services. More than essential, you want to be effective in representing and training the Body of Christ to live in full authority and faith in this world.

Jemayne King, Ph.D., *The Soles of Black Folk: African American Sneaker Culture and Its Influence in Literature, Film, Television, Sports Studies, and Music*. *Pro Quest* June 2020. This thesis defines sneaker culture literature as a genre and argues for its inclusion in African American literary studies specifically, and English studies more generally. Even more important, this study represents the work of someone who actively engages in sneaker culture, thus providing an authentic voice to this discussion.

The New York Mets in Popular Culture: Critical Essays. *Straight Up NYC, Like a Mets Fitted: How the New York Mets Influenced Hip-Hop Music and Culture*. This chapter explores the connection of the Mets and Hip-Hop culture, with particular focus to Hip-Hop music.

BerNadette Lawson-Williams, Ph.D., professor of sport management, and

Rennae Williams Stowe, Ph.D., Robert Lyons, Ph.D., Karla Jones, Ph.D., *Wearing Two Hats: Exploring the Role of a Sport Pracademician*. *The NC Journal*, Fall edition, pp 41-48. This article discusses and explores the role of a Sport Pracademician, as well as the benefits of faculty members' engagement in sport industry experiential activities.

Tiffany Turner-Henderson, Ph.D., and Maureen Leary, Ph.D., *Multifaceted Strategies for Social-Emotional Learning and Whole Learner Education*. Their chapter entitled, *Fictive Kinship Networks in Postsecondary Education: Lessons Learned from the "Village"* utilizes Tinto's Model of Attrition and Self-Determination and Resilience Theories to explore the history of fictive kinship models and their impact on minority persistence in higher education.

Katrina Watterson, Ph.D., assistant professor of Spanish, and Marsha W. Rhee, Ph.D., associate professor of English, *Global Kinships: A Beginners' Community-Based Research Agenda*. *Network: A Journal of Faculty Development*, Spring 2020 Issue. As a result of ever-present racism and discrimination against African Americans in the United States, we can acknowledge the hesitation of these students to embrace other languages and cultures.





Dr. John Bannister turned his passion for travel and photography into a book

Bannister captures all 50 states in first photography book

Dr. John Bannister is in the planning stages of his second photography book as he reminisces on the great times he had shooting his first, "America Through My Eyes." He spent four years traveling to each state across the nation, documenting his trips through a lens.

"I've only met one other person that has been to all 50 states," Bannister stated.

Photography has been a hobby of Bannister's for most of his life, but back in 2016, he began to take photography more seriously.

"I love to travel and I always wanted to see every state, so it made sense for me to document it through photography."

During the process, it was Bannister's goal to capture the essence of each state. While some of the photos featured in the book are the typical hero shot, defined as the primary image of a product or service, some of the images have a different look.

"I wanted to capture the vibe that I felt visiting that state and what I experienced from the people I met," he added.

While sharing his experiences, Bannister recounted a particular memory of his trip to Idaho. "I was in a restaurant trying to capture a shot and I ended up talking to one of the bartenders and the owner about the project. In that conversation, they shared with me a lot of things about the state that I didn't know," he explained.

"It's those memories that stand out to me as I look at the book today."

In addition to learning about each state through conversation, Bannister enjoyed the memories he was able to share with his son, who went on a few trips with him. "Seeing the photos in the book always reminds me of the memories we created together," he added.

These days, Bannister has concerns about traveling due to COVID-19, but is more appreciative of his book now than ever before. "No matter where you go, you can find a decent conversation and you can find good people," he said. "As I flip through this book, I'm reminded that each photo tells a story."

Johnson's book shows police brutality and the cry for justice are not new

With a renewed push for justice reform in America following the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, Dr. Tekla Johnson's book, *Free Radical: Ernest Chambers, Black Power, and the Politics of Race* couldn't have come at a better time. Republished in 2019, seven years after its original publishing date, she details the killings of ten Black Americans by police officers in Nebraska during the term of the longest-serving state senator, Ernest Chambers.

"I have a very personal connection to the book," said Johnson, who serves as the Instructional Electronic Resources Librarian. "The book is officially a biography but I consider it a co-ography, meaning you can only understand the killings mentioned in the book by understanding the community in which they happened."

Growing up in Omaha, Nebraska, Johnson knew some of the people in her community killed by police officers. She was the paper girl for Sherdell Lewis, a Black man killed in the doorway of his home in 1975 by officers. In the book, Johnson recounted a number of stories similar to Lewis', but one that she remembers most is the death of Vivian Strong, a 14-year-old girl shot in the head while running away from police in 1969.

"I was a little toddler, but to this day, I still remember being picked up and looking into her casket at her funeral," Johnson said. "For me, this has been going on as long as I've been alive. And of course, we know was much worse and going on long before that."

The deaths caused outrage, protests and calls to address systemic racism across America, very similar to the ones broadcasted in the media today. But according to Johnson, this time around, the push for reform has more support. She explained a number of white people, even internationally, have joined the movement, and there's even been a united effort from celebrities and athletes. "Because they are icons to everybody and they have so much power, they have the ability to influence change. It's beautiful to see them use that power," she emphasized.

While some believe these events to be new, the deaths of Floyd and Taylor were reminders of what she already knew to be true.



Dr. Tekla Johnson, Instructional Electronic Resources Librarian

"It's not that these events were not happening, it's that the press was not reporting. As a child these stories would sometimes appear in a local newspaper, but national press was not reporting on it. Because of people's cell phones and ability to sort of move toward democratization of the news, everything is out in the open; but it was going on the whole time."

Although she is hopeful for change, Johnson knows America still has a long way to go before Black Americans receive equity in this nation. The librarian, who also teaches African American studies at the University of South Carolina, knows her efforts as an educator can influence the next generation. "The lens of African Studies needs to be shown through African people's eyes. African Studies used to be about people studying Africa, but it should be taught from the experience of Black people," she emphasized.



Taneva Bush '20

Foster student found the support she needed to graduate with her JCSU family

Support. It's the signature reason why Taneva Bush '20 chose to attend Johnson C. Smith University.

"I knew being a foster child I was going to need the extra guidance," Bush said.

Born and raised in Toledo, Ohio, Bush originally had her sights set on another HBCU, but it was the Phasing Up to New Possibilities program at JCSU that helped her make the decision to choose the University.

"My high school guidance counselor told me about the program, so I decided to do more research," she said.

Phasing Up to New Possibilities is a foster care program developed by JCSU in 2009. Initially the program was designed to assist foster students who have aged out of the system during their time on campus. Today, the

program also assists students who are homeless or facing homelessness.

Initially, Bush was unsure of what an HBCU would entail, but she is grateful she attended.

"We're like a family," she said with excitement while explaining her experience attending an HBCU. "My professors are more than instructors. They really are a part of my life and my success."

Early on, Bush understood the additional challenges she would face because of her circumstances as a foster child, but she was always determined to become a doctor, a dream she's had since she was 8-years-old.

"Honestly, I was trying to follow the footsteps of my older brother," she shared.

Her brother, who she has a close relationship with, had dreams of being an anesthesiologist, but due to unforeseen circumstances he did not finish school. Bush hopes to become a pediatric anesthesiologist.

"I love kids," she added.

Majoring in both biology and chemistry, Bush has spent the last five years preparing for medical school, but her path to success was not always easy.

"I came into the University as a Biddle Institute student," she shared.

Biddle Institute is a division of University College that provides opportunities for admission to the University for students who may need additional structure and support.

"Don't allow that battle or title to define you or what you know you want to do in life," she emphasized.

Bush has used every resource provided to her during her time at JCSU. She interned with Cincinnati Children's Hospital three consecutive summers.

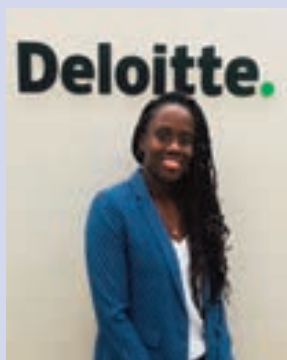
For Bush, support at JCSU has come in many different forms. In 2019, she gained 19 sisters when she became a member of the Gamma Lambda chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

"It was a good experience. I have had more fun in my fifth year than any other year at JCSU," Bush said.

She served as the Executive Secretary for the Student Government Association, an organization she credits with helping her come out of her shell and enjoy her time as a college student. She's also participated in nearly a dozen other organizations.

Following graduation, Bush will attend Campbell University School of Osteopathic Medicine.

Valedictorian lands job months before graduation



Ramoya Grandison '20

Ramoya Grandison '20 secured a job months prior to her graduation as the Class of 2020 valedictorian. Deloitte hired Grandison, who double majored in computer science information systems and business administration, five months before completing her classes in December 2019. Grandison remained in the Queen City and started her new role as Risk and Financial Advisory Group Consultant in March 2020.

"As an international student it was imperative that I secured a full-time offer prior to graduating because I wanted to ensure that I got into a company that was willing to sponsor my work visa in the future," said Grandison, who hails from St. Catherine, Jamaica, and came to Johnson C. Smith University on a track and field scholarship.

Securing her future took dedication, hard work and, most importantly, internships, which President Clarence Armbrister encourages students to complete during their time on campus. Grandison finished three internships, two of those with Deloitte.

"I learned how to effectively and efficiently work with teams of different sizes and with different managers. I also learned that,

even as an intern, my work is just as valuable and impactful for the team," she emphasized.

Prior to being hired by Deloitte, Grandison received a scholarship through the company. She said it was the skills learned at JCSU that helped her develop relationships with the appropriate people within the company.

"JCSU helped me secure the job by hosting numerous resume building workshops and mock interview sessions which I took advantage of. These sessions helped prepare me for the four interviews I had to go through before receiving my internship with Deloitte," she explained.

In addition to attending student workshops on campus, Grandison joined the student chapter of the National Association of Black Accountants.

"I attended all the student conferences held by the organization, which in turn, led to my opportunity with Deloitte," she said.

Grandison hopes her accomplishments inspire other Smithites to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the University.

"I would suggest attending most, if not all, mock interview and resume building sessions. I learned something different every time I went to a session even when the sessions targeted the same area."



(Pictured left to right) Emoni Lewis '20, Aria Springfield '20, and Kneadee Jackson '20

McNair Scholars make presentations around the country

Students in the Johnson C. Smith University McNair Scholars program had a busy year making presentations across the country from California to Florida.

In early October, Aria Springfield '20, Emoni Lewis '20 and Kneadee Jackson '20 made their presentations at the University of New Mexico's McNair Research Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Springfield, presented her research examining the silences of public historical and heritage sites within Charleston, South Carolina. The senior history major wanted to highlight the lack of representation of African American people. She was aided through the Mellon Mays Fellows Undergraduate Program, an academic fellowship for minority students with interest in humanities.

"There is a need for more Black faces in this field," she said. "Obtaining my doctoral degree would be a win as a Black woman." Springfield also presented research at Rice University's

National Student Leadership Conference in Houston, Texas.

Shakoya Brown '20 and Charles Langston '20 traveled to Miami to present their research at the Florida International University McNair Scholars Conference on October 17-19.

Brown's research explored the driving force behind how HBCUs engage in social action and she said conferences, like this one, helped prepare her for her future and allowed her to sharpen her tactical skills and boost her confidence.

"The program has been very beneficial to me," Langston said. "I recognize how important having this opportunity has been for me as a Black male. It has exposed me to a higher level of research and opened doors to possibilities I didn't even know existed."

Finally, Telissah Roseboro '21 and Cameron Campbell '21 attended the 2019 Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students in Anaheim, California, November 13-16,

2019. It is one of the largest communities of underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

“The conference allowed me to be surrounded by many smart and diverse undergraduates who look like me from all over the world,” Roseboro emphasized.

At the conference, students presented research to help them enhance professional development skills, explore graduate schools and network.

“Attending different conferences and presenting my research on both local and national platforms has strengthened my presentation and critical thinking skills tremendously,” Roseboro said. “It also allowed me to be critiqued by people who have already received their Ph.Ds.”

Students in the McNair Scholars Program are required to present research at national conferences, which helps to prepare them for post-graduation.

Dr. Jonathan Smalls, director of JCSU’s McNair Scholars program, is fulfilled when seeing his students present their research.

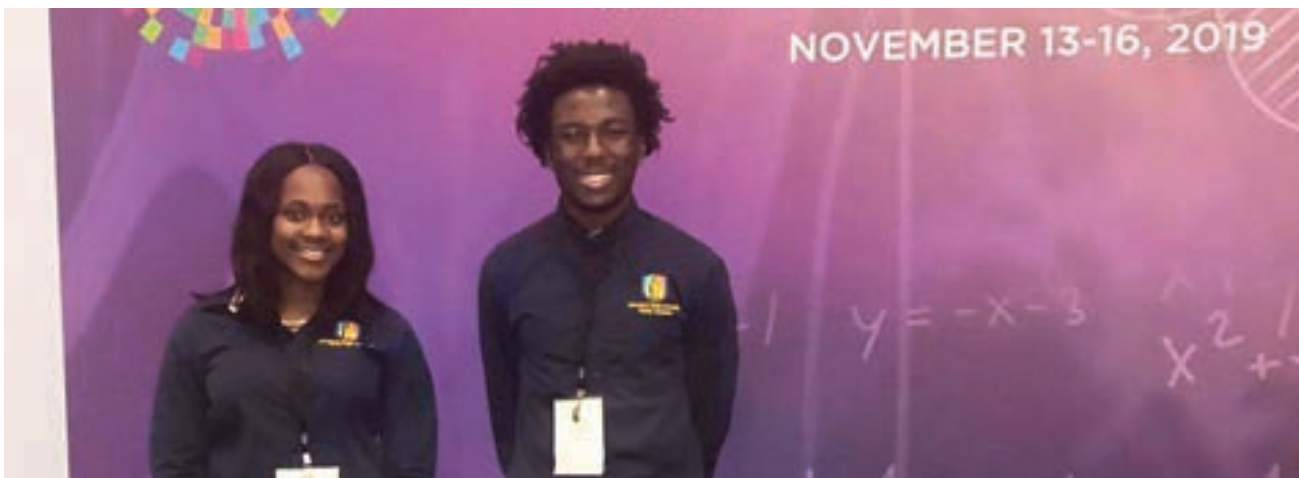
“One of my proudest moments at the conference was observing our scholars’ abilities to stimulate intellectual curiosity and discourse within an academic space independent of their faculty mentor and McNair staff,” he said after attending the conference in Miami.

For Smalls, it is rewarding to see students come into their own and discover their passion through research.

“Those moments not only confirm the effectiveness of our student-centered and data-driven approaches, but also that we are moving beyond platitudes and fulfilling the JCSU Promise.”



Shakoya Brown '20 and Charles Langston '20



Telissah Roseboro '21 and Cameron Campbell '21



Jasmine White '20 and Emanuel Hester '22

Students front and center at Human Rights Campaign HBCU Leadership Summit

Johnson C. Smith University was well represented during the 14th annual Human Rights Campaign (HRC) HBCU Leadership Summit. This year, 49 students from 33 HBCUs convened in Washington, D.C. November 7–12, 2019, including JCSU's Emanuel Hester '22 and Jasmine White '20.

"I learned so much about changing the stigma in society, fighting against adversity within HBCUs and being a change agent for the LGBTQ community," Hester said.

The five-day summit is the only leadership development and advocacy training program that empowers LGBTQ HBCU students to act as change agents on their campuses and in their communities.

Hester added, "The whole experience really pushed me to make that change for students who face adversity here at JCSU."

During the summit, participants developed leadership skills in the key areas of self-awareness, awareness of others, courageous actions and collaboration to advocate for LGBTQ equality and other social justice issues. They achieved this by participating in group activities and team building exercises.

"Overall, the team building skills will help me to work even better with people," he said.

Hester aspires to create an LGBTQ center that serves as a safe space for students on campus. He would also like to see more involvement from administration, faculty and staff when it comes to diversity and inclusion on campus.

Hester said that he would like to help so he can become the change agent that he wants to be.

"Change first starts with us, so I'm taking the initiative," Hester emphasized.

Student launches organization, brings awareness to mental health

More than a dozen students attended Ramel Brown's '20 mental health discussion, "Mel's Mind," in the Rotunda September 20, 2019. The psychology major is working to break the stigma around mental health.

"My motivation is inspiring and impacting people," Brown explained.

Despite advances in health equity, disparities in mental health care persist. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, minorities are less likely to receive diagnosis and treatment for their mental illness, have less access to mental health services and often receive a poorer quality of mental health care.

Tierra Parsons, JCSU's director of Counseling Services, participated in Brown's panel discussion and is excited about the efforts he's making on campus to raise awareness.

"There was an excellent interactive activity that allowed students to share similarities regarding going through college," she said when speaking about the influence Brown has on his peers.

"It was great to see so many males come out and ask questions. I haven't seen that in the six years that I've been at JCSU," Parsons emphasized.

Brown is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., which sponsored Brown's program. He said his fraternity brothers support his efforts.

"As black men, we don't usually speak or express our emotions or our feelings, we tend to suppress," he explained.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, men are less likely to receive mental health treatment and more likely to die by suicide than women.

Brown hopes sharing his journey with others encourages his peers to seek the treatment needed for mental wellness.

"Sharing my story shows them that they're not the only ones going through something," he said. "I provide a comfortable atmosphere which promotes understanding."

Brown hosted additional events on campus and has plans to launch an IGTV roundtable discussion and YouTube channel.



Ramel Brown '20



Ramoya Grandison '20 and Anthony Edwards '21

Students selected to attend Forbes Under 30 Summit for the first time

Johnson C. Smith University has two, Forbes Under 30 Scholars. Ramoya Grandison '20, and Anthony Edwards '21, attended the Forbes Under 30 annual summit in Detroit from October 27–30, 2019, where the best young leaders, founders and creators came together to connect, learn, teach and build.

The Forbes Under 30 Scholars program provides 1,000 minority students the opportunity to attend the Forbes Under 30 Summit free of charge. The summit brings together trailblazers, movers and shakers who are entrepreneurs in several industries.

"I was very grateful and excited to be afforded the opportunity to network and connect with other masterminds, and to be able to hear from some of the most successful entrepreneurs such as Serena Williams, Kevin Durant and Quavo (rapper artist)," said Grandison.

"I felt honored to be selected and excited to be around the future leaders of the world," Edwards added.

Grandison and Edwards are the first JCSU students selected as Forbes Under 30 Scholars. Assistance from professors and administrators in Metropolitan College of Professional Studies helped them attain the prestigious honor and travel to Detroit.

"It gave us an opportunity to spread awareness about our school since many students didn't know about JCSU," Grandison added.

Edwards echoed Grandison's sentiment, adding the conference gave them a feeling of notability.

"This honor is the culmination of the personal development and leadership skills that JCSU has instilled in me since I first stepped onto campus," he said.

In addition to hearing from some of the world's biggest leaders, Grandison and Edwards also networked and learned how to deliver a good pitch to potential investors.

Two students become published authors



Tawanda Nyahasha '20 and "Zamiyah Ben-Isreal '21

Two students became published authors in the 2019-2020 academic year.

Tawanda Nyahasha's '20 journey to becoming published started in his home country of Zimbabwe, Africa. He released his first book of poetry, "The Burdens of a Wise Man," an e-book of his collected work on a variety of topics including wisdom, modern society, politics and death.

"My writings have been my voice for years," said the psychology major. "It has given me courage to speak out against my country's oppressive government when it was dangerous to do so. Because of my relationship with art, I believe in the importance of art for it tells stories never told; it reminds us that we have something to celebrate when the world looks bleak. Most importantly it helps us listen to other people with different perspectives than ours."

He has been writing poetry since he was 11 but has turned his focus to other forms of writing over the years. He was recruited to come to JCSU by Dr. Rixon Campbell after he saw him compete in a public speaking competition in Zimbabwe.

The transition to becoming a JCSU student was a challenging one. Alone in a new country, he gives thanks to Phasing Up to New Possibilities, a JCSU program which helps students in need of a support system, usually students who have aged out of foster care. He said that Pat Newell, who runs the program, heard about his issues and is grateful for her help.

"She heard about my struggles as an international student. I moved here by myself, no family or relatives, thus a lot rested on my shoulders. She stepped in to lift my burden and help," said Nyahasha.

It is this family atmosphere that provided him the confidence to publish his book. "I felt I had a story to tell. I felt the urge to tell that story for I thought it would touch people. Encouragement from mentors and peers also inspired me for they assured me that my story, my perspective, was important, and people would benefit from hearing it."

Zamiyah Ben-Isreal's '21 path to becoming an author began in a very different place. The biology major from Brooklyn, New York, released her book "It Was Written: The Interpretation of a Black Life." In it she shares 32 different stories based on the experience of many African Americans.

"To be honest, becoming an author wasn't on my agenda until recently," she added. "I was an introvert so writing poetry helped express my feelings."

The stories in the book touch on five different categories: systemic oppression, Stockholm syndrome, invasion of privacy, family dysfunction and Black excellence, topics Ben-Isreal is very passionate about.

"If we continue to stay silent, they will continue to kill us," she emphasized while talking about the importance of the international protest sparked by the death of George Floyd.

She hopes her book inspires all people, but most importantly, "enlightens other races on just a few of the many interpretations of living a Black life."

Ben-Isreal's book is available for purchase on Amazon.com and Nyahasha's is available for digital download on Amazon Kindle.

Mother and daughter share graduation day and passion for social work

On Friday, June 5, 2020, Lelia Jackson '20 and her daughter Kneadee Lester-Jackson '20 both received their diplomas from President Clarence D. Armbrister during Johnson C. Smith University's diploma pick-up.

"It was at that moment when our vehicle was next and the president walked towards us that tears just automatically started coming down my face," Jackson said. "I did not realize the impact of what that meant to me until I actually arrived (to pick up my diploma)."

Jackson and her daughter would have graduated together during the University's commencement exercises in May, but the ceremony was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attending college with your parents is not the ideal situation for most students, but Lester-Jackson welcomed it. "I was extremely happy because I knew she wanted to get her master's degree and I'm glad that JCSU was a good fit for her," she said.

In 2016, their family relocated to Charlotte before Lester-Jackson began her undergraduate degree. Little did Jackson know the move would affect her career. A social worker with more than 15 years of experience, she struggled to find a new job in the Queen City.

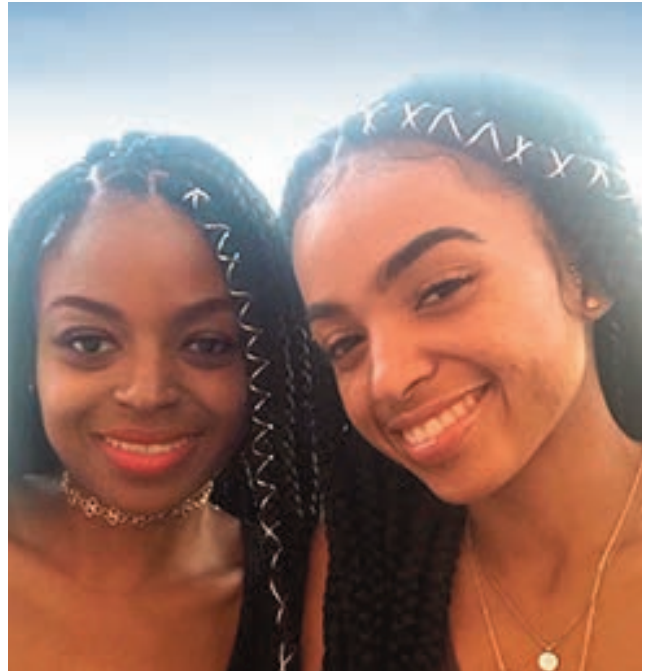
"I was going back for second interviews but not landing the position for whatever reason. I felt the Lord wanted me to return to school," she said. "I thought, 'what better time for me to return to school than the time my daughter was attending school?'"

In 2018, Jackson began the Master of Social Work program at JCSU, which provided her the flexibility she needed to get her degree.

"I could not attend school during the day, so I was happy the program offered evening classes," she added. Returning to school 20 years after receiving her bachelor's degree also gave her a current landscape of her chosen field.

"The program assisted in shifting my view for the future of my career," said Jackson, who once worked with families. She now hopes to work on the collegiate level in the future.

Her ambition has had an everlasting effect on her daughter, who now wants to follow in her footsteps.



Lelia Jackson '20 and her daughter, Kneadee Lester-Jackson '20

"I see what she's done in the social work community," Lester-Jackson said. "Growing up, I saw how she affected others in such positive ways, and it made me feel like I can do this too."

Lester-Jackson once had dreams of becoming a clinical psychologist, but after research and a conversation with MSW program director, Dr. Melvin Herring, she's pursuing a career in clinical social work.

"Once he explained exactly what clinical social work was, I decided that applying to the MSW program at JCSU was the best fit for me."

Lester-Jackson, a first-cohort McNair Scholar, comes from a family of educators. She appreciated having her mother with her on campus and said that the process benefitted her.

"There were no cons because she helped me, and I helped her," Lester Jackson said. Her mother added, "It's a new generation of schooling so there were a lot of systems that I was not aware of, and she was able to assist me."

They hope their story inspires others, especially an older generation, who dream of returning to the classroom.

"My daughter and I represent hope," Jackson emphasized. "Just because I may be older, or at a different place in my life where hers may be beginning, doesn't mean that I sit and wait until she's finished with her goals and then I start with mine."

Mitchell shares his experience as an intern for Congresswoman Alma Adams

Before the start of the fall semester, Cameron Mitchell '20 learned he was selected to intern for Congresswoman Alma Adams. Mitchell, a Charlotte native, served as Congressional Press Intern to Adams, who serves North Carolina's 12th Congressional District in which Johnson C. Smith is located.

Mitchell learned about this opportunity from The Center for Career and Professional Development, which provides students with career readiness, internship opportunities, resume workshops and professional clothing.

"I was able to gain a personal experience with how Congress works on a district level, as well as a national level," Mitchell expressed.

During his internship, Mitchell attended events with Adams, assisted staff with general clerical duties, researched news articles and helped with set up for events.

Adams has been at the forefront of creating partnerships with HBCUs to help increase recruitment and hiring of

African Americans through the HBCU Partnership Challenge. The initiative, spearheaded by the Congressional Bipartisan Historically Black Colleges and Universities Caucus, was launched in 2017 and added 36 new national company partners in 2019 alone.

These corporate partners make public pledges to include HBCUs in their recruitment outreach and hiring efforts to help level the playing field when it comes to hiring African Americans.

Mitchell, who majored in Interdisciplinary Studies with concentrations in public leadership and sustainability, emphasized the importance of internships to a student's development.

"The experience you gain is unmatched. Internships can easily blossom into job opportunities or can add people to your network," he said.

Mitchell finished his internship and degree requirements in December 2019.



Cameron Mitchell '19

Students join in nationwide Black Lives Matter protests

Some students participated in the protests which unfolded in cities across the nation and internationally over the spring and summer, sparked by the death of George Floyd while in police custody in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on May 25, 2020.

Nadia Johnson '22 participated in a protest in Augusta, Georgia.

"I felt the need to get involved as quickly as possible," Johnson said. Following the death of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd, she immediately began using social media to spread awareness of the social injustices taking place, but she wanted to do more.

"During protests I shared the space with hundreds of people who were eager for systemic change, and it was more real than a social media timeline could ever be," she emphasized.

Johnson said she will continue to utilize her voice for change on her media platform that she is creating.

"There will always be a need for my voice and participation in correcting the corrupt areas in society," she emphasized.

Gary Payton '21, also participated in Charlotte-based marches in Freedom Park and Uptown Charlotte and traveled to

Washington D.C. to participate in the 2020 March on Washington. He felt an urge to be a part of history and wanted to join others with the same view of equality for all.

"I participate in protests to raise awareness that it is not OK to treat Black Americans with less dignity than fair-colored skin people. I protest because I believe I have been victimized too many times just because of the color of my skin and not for the content of my character," he said.

Payton also said he felt fear while protesting and that police were generally not welcoming to non-violent protestors. He participated in the 2020 March on Washington in August 2020, which was organized by the Rev. Al Sharpton and Martin Luther King III. The march took place on the 57th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington during which the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

"I feel we as a Black race need to love, respect and encourage each other more through these times in order to build a better community amongst us," said Payton.



Gary Payton '21 attended the March on Washington in August 2020.



Nadia Johnson '22 protested in Georgia.



Tawanda Nyahasha '20

Senior shares life on campus during pandemic

One of the side effects of the COVID-19 pandemic was the need to move most students off campus for the Spring 2020 semester and allow only access to essential employees. However, international students did not have that option since they are in the country under student visas. Tawanda Nyahasha '20 was one of a handful of students who, with JCSU's permission and supervision, remained on campus while almost everyone else left.

"I think the biggest challenge was just the uncertainty. Everything was so unpredictable you couldn't plan for anything. The situation changed daily," Nyahasha said.

Nyahasha was recruited to JCSU from his home country of Zimbabwe, Africa. Arriving in America alone, he received help from JCSU's Phasing Up to New Possibilities program, which caters to students who aged out of foster care, or in Nyahasha's case, a student without family or support system in this county to help his transition.

He has been able to grow and find himself in JCSU's family-like atmosphere, so he misses the daily human interaction.

"What I missed the most was simply the people, even when you don't talk to them, just having them around at times makes a difference," he shared. "Friends, classmates, faculty and staff who continued to reach out to me, asking if I'm okay, it was

really appreciated. It's the little things like that, that make you see the good in an otherwise gloomy situation."

Nyahasha, lived a more solitary spring semester, attending class through video conferencing and submitting assignments electronically. Typically, he finished by midafternoon and spent the rest of the day listening to music, watching TV and reading a lot of Shakespeare. His choice in reading material is not surprising at all since Nyahasha is a passionate speaker and writer.

He released his first book of poetry, "The Burdens of a Wise Man," an e-book of his collected work on a variety of topics including wisdom, modern society, politics, death and spirituality.

Some seniors were rightfully disappointed on the how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted their final semester, but Nyahasha's outlook remained positive.

"Surprisingly I'm not too saddened about that. I mean of course it would have been great to finish the semester and walk the stage in May, but there's really no point being too fixated on what could have been. I am graduating, completing my undergraduate journey and looking forward to what's in store. That's good enough for me."



Danielle Williams '14

Williams inducted to the NCAA Division II Track & Field Hall of Fame

The U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA) announced that Danielle Williams '14, was enshrined in the USTFCCCA NCAA Division II Track & Field Athlete Hall of Fame.

If there wasn't a mandatory five-year moratorium on induction, Williams probably would have been welcomed immediately after she stepped off the track for the last time as a collegian at the 2014 NCAA Division II Outdoor Track & Field Championships.

Simply put: Williams transcended the NCAA Division II level.

Between 2013 and 2014, Williams won nine NCAA titles (eight individuals, one relay), 13 CIAA championships (11 individual, two relay), earned 13 All-America honors and was named either USTFCCCA National Women's Indoor Track or Outdoor Track Athlete of the Year three times.

That doesn't even count the mark she left on the NCAA DII record book, which includes three divisional all-time

bests and a slew of other marks that reside in the top-10 annals of history.

Williams gave arguably the greatest two-day performance in NCAA DII history at the 2013 NCAA Division II Outdoor Track & Field Championships in Pueblo, Colorado, where she helped lead the Golden Bulls to their second consecutive runner-up finish in the team standings.

The future IAAF world champion scored 30½ points thanks to event titles in the 100, 200 and 4×100 relay, as well as a runner-up finish in the 100 Hurdles. She set current divisional records in the 200 (22.62) and 4×100 relay (44.05), clocked the second fastest performance in divisional history in the 100H (12.89) and notched the fifth fastest performance in the 100 (11.24).

Williams is the third athlete from Johnson C. Smith inducted into the USTFCCCA NCAA Division II Track & Field Athlete Hall of Fame in the past four years, joining Leford Green '11 (Class of 2017) and her sister, Shermaine Williams '11 (Class of 2018).

Minor makes BOXTOROW Division II All-American Team

Cayse Minor '20 was named to the 2020 BOXTOROW Division II All-American first team for men's basketball.

The senior guard from Winston-Salem N.C. helped the Golden Bulls earn a share of the division title and top seed in the CIAA tournament by virtue of the divisional record tiebreaker.

Minor completed the regular season as the league's fourth leading scorer with 18.5 points per game. He also ranked seventh in free throw percentage (81.2%), and third in field goals made (118).

He scored double figures in all but three regular season games. His best scoring output of the season came in a 33-point outing against Livingstone College on Feb. 15, 2020. In CIAA play, he scored his 1000th point against Lincoln on Nov. 23, 2019 and against Bowie State he scored 31 points. He was also a CIAA Player of the Year nominee.



Cayse Minor '20

Wilson earns football post season honors

Running back Emanuel Wilson '22 was named to the second team offense of the Don Hansen NCAA Division II All Super Region Two Squad.

Wilson, who received All-CIAA second team honors, was also named to the All CIAA Rookie Team and Offensive Rookie of the Year. Wilson ranked third in the conference in rushing with 1,040 yards and 13 touchdowns, while averaging 6.5 yards per carry. He also caught 13 passes for 86 yards. Wilson was named CIAA Offensive Back in week two of the season. He had 12 carries for 265 yards, averaging an impressive 22.1 yards per carry, and three touchdowns. He had touchdown runs of 83, 73, and 64 yards to help lead the Golden Bulls to a 34-31 win over Benedict. He was also named BOXTOROW National Player of the Week.

The Don Hansen team showcases the legacy of long-time small college football advocate Don Hansen, who passed away at age 75 on Aug. 29, 2010. Hansen, from Brookfield, Ill., started and published Don Hansen's National Weekly Football Gazette for three decades, selecting NCAA Division II All-America teams for the first time in 1988. The Gazette began selecting Division II All Region squads in 2003.



Emanuel Wilson '22



Grandison nominated for NCAA Woman of the Year

Ramoya Grandison '20 was among 605 female collegiate athletes nominated for NCAA Woman of the Year. Grandison, a Kingston, Jamaica native, was the class valedictorian, double majoring in computer science information systems and business administration. The track scholar-athlete graduated with a perfect 4.0 grade point average.

Grandison was a member of various activities as a student. She participated in the Cans for Cones Program, organized the Cards for Hospitalized Kids Program and served as a LinkedIn and resume workshop host.

Grandison is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated (Gamma Delta Chapter), a Forbes Under 30 Scholar (2019), was the president of the Delta Mu Delta Iota Chapter- International Business Honors Society, president (Fall 2017) of National Association of Black Accountants student chapter and Women's Track & Field Captain during the 2017 and 2018 seasons.

Rooted in Title IX, the NCAA Woman of the Year Award was established in 1991 to recognize graduating female student-athletes who exhausted their eligibility and distinguished themselves in academics, athletics, service and leadership throughout their collegiate careers.

The nominees represent all three NCAA divisions, including 259 nominees from Division I, 126 from Division II and 220 from Division III. Nominees competed in 24 sports, with multisport student-athletes accounting for 128 of the nominees.

Member schools are encouraged to honor their top graduating female college athletes each year by submitting their names for consideration for the Woman of the Year Award. Schools can recognize two nominees if at least one is a woman of color or international student-athlete.

Conference offices will select up to two nominees each from their pool of member school nominees. All nominees who compete in a sport not sponsored by their school's primary conference, as well as associate conference nominees and independent nominees, will be considered by a selection committee. Then, the Woman of the Year selection committee, made up of representatives from the NCAA membership, choose the Top 30 honorees — 10 from each division.

From the Top 30, the Woman of the Year selection committee determines the top three honorees in each division and announces nine finalists. The NCAA Committee on Women's Athletics chooses the NCAA Woman of the Year, who is named each fall.

Milenkovic enjoys his years in the U.S., thrives in the Golden Bulls basketball program

During his senior year, Nenad Milenkovic'20 spent every minute proving he could shoot from anywhere on the basketball court. He came to Johnson C. Smith University after transferring from the University of South Carolina-Aiken, and JCSU welcomed him with open arms

It is a difficult adjustment for all student-athletes to move to college, let alone coming halfway across the world, leaving parents, Dragomir and Gorica Milenkovic, and sibling, Stefan.

However, his ability to succeed in the classroom granted Milenkovic the opportunity to move from Serbia to the U.S. and enroll in prep school in Concord, N.C., just outside of Charlotte.

Milenkovic attended Concord First Assembly where he garnered, all-conference and all-state honors. He tallied over 500 points as a senior and as one of the top 40 players in North Carolina, while guiding his team to a third-place finish in the state.

Like many international students, he was still learning about U.S. life and the culture. His host family was a big help.

Shari Dunn, Nenad's host mother, is a veteran at hosting international students and helping them to succeed. "Our family hosted 12 students prior to Nenad coming to us from Serbia," Dunn said.

Milenkovic, who depended on the help of his host family to complete a part of his athletics recruitment, confirmed the sometimes challenging task of navigating the process.

"He started out at USC-Aiken and that was a lot of traveling for us," said Dunn. "Nenad got a call from his high school coach to look into Johnson C. Smith University. He was very impressed with Coach (Stephen Joyner Sr.) and the atmosphere of the school. We made sure not to miss any JCSU home games after he transferred."

Milenkovic enjoyed the challenge of playing basketball while fully engaging in his studies.

"While starting out here at Smith, Dr. (Cindy) Kistenberg helped me by making sure my classes transferred from USC-Aiken," Milenkovic said. "All of my professors made sure I was doing well and were a good source of support."

He expressed gratitude to the CIAA and to JCSU for giving him a good college career. "Playing in the CIAA was a great experience," said Milenkovic. "I love the conference because it gave my teammates and me many memories. I love Smith even more and wish I had come here first. It has been amazing!"

Milenkovic finished his senior season with 374 points with a game high of 36 points against Virginia Union University, grabbed 83 boards and shot 86 percent from the charity stripe.

"Almost immediately I felt integrated into the atmosphere at Johnson C Smith and fell in love with many different aspects of both athletics and academics," he said. "The thing that stands out the most about JCSU to me is that people truly care about your experience here and want to help you on your own path as much as they can."



Nenad Milenkovic'20 (left) and his host family (right)



Tennis program earns academic honors

The women's tennis program was named an ITA All-Academic Team, while six of the Golden Bull players earned ITA Scholar-Athlete honors for the 2019-20 season.

This is the fourth time that the Golden Bulls have earned the team honor. To be eligible for the award, teams must possess a combined GPA of at least 3.20.

Senior Aria Springfield garnered her third career ITA Scholar-Athlete honor. She first earned the award as a sophomore in 2018. Senior Cierra Turner garnered her third career ITA Scholar-Athlete honor, first earning the award as a freshman in 2018. Juniors Halle Parker and Jada Strickland garnered their third career award. The two first earned the award as freshmen in 2018. First time plaudits go to freshmen Taylor Proffett-Brooks and Imani Small.

To be named an ITA Scholar-Athlete, a player must have a grade point average of at least 3.5 (on a 4.00 scale) for the current academic year.

To be named an ITA All-Academic Team, programs must have a team grade point average of 3.2 or above (on a 4.00 scale).

The Johnson C. Smith men's tennis program has been named an ITA All-Academic Team, while three Golden Bulls earned ITA Scholar-Athlete honors for the 2019-20 season.

Junior players Desire Johnson and Cameron Hyman earned their first career ITA Scholar-Athlete honor. Sophomore Tayvon Lassiter also earned the honor for the first time in his career.

Golf student-athletes tee off with a Carolina Panther

It's not every day you get to golf with a professional athlete, but for two members of Johnson C. Smith University's golf team, that dream became a reality. Victor A. Beatty '20 and Myles Moore '21 had the opportunity to hit the course with former Carolina Panthers safety Tre Boston.

On January 20, 2020, while taking advantage of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday and a day out of class, Beatty noticed the football player at Sunset Hills Golf Course in Charlotte and approached him.

"With Victor being a Panthers fan, he immediately recognized him," Moore explained.

Boston, who is known for getting in rounds of golf during the off-season, did not hesitate to hit a few holes with the students

after they introduced themselves and told him they were on JCSU's golf team.

"My favorite part was just getting to pick his brain and talk about life other than sports," Beatty said.

Boston gets attention for his golf game and randomly playing with his fans. This encounter with Beatty and Moore was featured in Golf Digest.

Moore, who played football prior to golf, is happy Boston is bringing attention to the sport. "Because he is a minority, young men who look like him will find the sport more appealing," Moore said.

Beatty added, "To see professional athletes that play other sports enjoy the game is awesome."



Myles Moore '21 (left), Tre Boston (middle), Victor A. Beatty '20 (right)

Golden Bullettes learn routine from Charlotte Hornets Honey Bees

The Golden Bullettes dance team had the opportunity to practice with the Honey Bees, the official dance team for the Charlotte Hornets.

On October 30, 2019, the Honey Bees, led by head coach Brandii McCoy, taught the Bullettes a new routine inside Brayboy Gymnasium.

During practice, the Bullettes formed bonds and learned what it takes to be a professional dancer in the NBA.

Golden Bullettes dancer Alexys Gabriel '22, who aspires to be a professional

dancer, was grateful for the opportunity to learn from professionals.

"It was amazing to learn about the obstacles that they overcame. I also learned tips to take into consideration before I try out for the Honey Bees next year," she said.

Janel Joyner, coach of the Golden Bullettes, was truly grateful for the knowledge the Honey Bees provided her dance team. Because of an outreach program that connects community dance programs and NBA professional dance teams, Joyner was able to facilitate

the practice with the Honey Bees. She desired to help the Golden Bullettes gain a new level of confidence.

"I hope they learned how to work together as a team," Joyner said. "My goal was for them to realize that the sky is the limit and to prepare for their future. This was a wonderful learning opportunity for those aspiring to be professional dancers and a great memory for those who are dancing simply because it's something they love to do. I really hope to make this session with the Honey Bees an annual part of our dance program."



Members of the Charlotte Hornets Honey Bees along with team coach Brandii McCoy (front row, third from left) taught the Golden Bullettes a dance routine.



Football Frenzy celebrates JCSU football traditions and hypes the team

After two games on the road, Golden Bulls football returned to Irwin Belk Complex on October 5, 2019. The Athletics department and University Communications and Marketing collaborated to hold the school's first Football Frenzy to help the football team and the student body get hyped for the home game against Lincoln University.

The event, held under the lights in IBC, featured the International Institution of Sound marching band, the Luv-A-Bulls cheerleading team and the Golden Bullettes dance team. Students displayed their Golden Bulls pride, pumped up the football team and prepared to level up the game day experience with JCSU chants, songs and grooves.

Members of the football team enjoyed the support from their fellow students.

"It really helped us get hyped, said David Francis, a team captain. "I was proud to be a Golden Bull and grateful to have students and even staff at Football Frenzy to support us."





CTS Health provided free t-shirts to Golden Bulls fans during a women's volleyball match on World Mental Health Day.

Mental health awareness put in focus during volleyball match

During the October 10, 2019, volleyball match against Livingstone College, multiple departments, including Athletics, Counseling Services, Campus Police, University Communications and Marketing, and community health organizations came together to shed light on mental wellness for World Mental Health Day.

The Gastonia-based health services group, CTS Health, partnered with the University to help break the stigma affecting a number of minorities.

"We want to be able to say we are here if you have an issue or a need," said CTS Health executive Hughes Crisp.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, minorities are less likely to receive diagnosis and treatment for their mental illness, have less access to mental health services and often receive a poorer quality of mental health care.

Crisp and Tierra M. Parsons, director of Counseling Services at JCSU, hope events like these form relationships with students, break stigmas in the Black community and prevent crises. "When we are able to reach the students, we are able to positively influence them to seek help," Parsons emphasized.

Collaborating with student events allows Parsons to achieve her goal. Prior to the match, CTS Health provided free shirts to students; University Communications and Marketing distributed green ribbons and provided mental health awareness signs for students to use in photos. In addition, campus police Chief Jermaine Cherry, student advocate Ramel Brown '20 and Parsons spoke to students about the number of services offered to them on campus.

Parsons said collaborations have helped her reach more people in need. She's partnered with the Health Center to provide mental health first aid to the campus and community, as well as Residence Life and LYFT for students in need of transportation to area behavioral health departments. Interns with the School



Tierra M. Parsons, director of Counseling Services, and Maurice Raley, head coach of the women's volleyball team, show their support on World Mental Health Day.



University Communications and Marketing provided fans with free green ribbons, the international symbol for mental health awareness.

of Social Work are also providing support to students through their Friends of the Counseling Center initiative.

“We’ve been very intentional about visiting classrooms to build relationships, hanging with students in the evening and being participants in campus resource fairs,” she said. “We are present at faculty meetings and are available for faculty consultations,” she added.

In addition to raising mental health awareness, Parsons has hired a full-time counselor for the first time in over five years

and plans to hire a part-time counselor to specifically address use of alcohol and other substances.

Her efforts influenced Brown, who started his student mental health initiative, Mel’s Minds. Parsons sat on his first panel, which brought together nearly two dozen students for a discussion on mental wellness.

“We may be a small staff, but we make a big difference in the lives of our students in our quest to break the stigma of mental illness,” Parsons said.



Golden Bullettes and the men's and women's basketball teams perform a choreographed dance for fans during Midnight Madness

Midnight Madness returned to tip off basketball season

Cheers, chants and screams filled Brayboy Gymnasium on October 14, 2019, for the return of Midnight Madness. DJ Fannie Mae, a local sensation, kept the crowd hype until the stroke of midnight marked the calendar change to October 15 and the women's and men's basketball teams were revealed.

Following their introduction, the teams performed a joint dance routine, competed in a women vs. men three-point shooting contest and a quick co-ed scrimmage. The high flyers

on the men's team presented a showcase of daring dunks to the approval of the crowd. Performances by the marching band, Luv-A-Bulls cheerleaders and Golden Bullettes dance team were also a part of the program.

Pre-midnight activities for students included competitive games for prizes and an impromptu Greek stroll-off in addition to dancing and enjoying the madness of a gym packed with hyped Smithites.



Students brought a lot of energy during Midnight Madness.



The Luv-A-Bulls perform a routine during Midnight Madness.

1969 CIAA Championship team celebrated on College Colors Day

JCSU celebrated College Colors Day August 30, 2019, by bringing together past and current football players. Three members of the 1969 CIAA Football Championship team reunited at Irwin Belk Complex with two current players ahead of the season opener against Wingate University.

“Being around people who aspire to be something in life, helps build your character,” said Willie Martin '71.

Eddie McGirt coached the 1969 team to victory on and off the field. His leadership landed 17 players, including Martin who played for the Atlanta Falcons, in the NFL and also provided the men with skills to navigate life.

“I come out of the small town of Clover, S.C., and I was the only boy in that area attending college thanks to a scholarship awarded to me by coach McGirt,” Robert Johnson '71 said.

While they admired a videoboard in Irwin Belk Complex that displayed a photo of the 1969 team, Tom Baldwin '71, Johnson

and Martin provided words of encouragement to quarterback Antonio Wallace '22 and defensive back Jahvez Mitchell '20.

“Fifty years ago we were coming out of environments that were segregated. We didn't know it could be possible to get an education, let alone win a championship,” Baldwin said.

The 2019 football season marked 50 years since the CIAA Football Championship and 150 years of college football. JCSU is a major contributor to the American college football tradition. The University played Livingstone College in the first HBCU football game 127 years ago.

“When I was growing up, I wanted to be a part of an institute or a college that had a lot of tradition. Since this is the first HBCU to play Black college football ever, it's an amazing feeling to be a part of this team,” Wallace said.



Current student athletes (far left) Jahvez Mitchell '19 and Antonio Wallace '21 (far right) with Willie Martin '71, Robert Johnson '71 Thomas Baldwin '71.



Jamonte Gray '22



Emanuel Wilson '22

Baptism, spiritual journey inspire teammates

Two student-athletes were recognized for their lives away from the football field. Emanuel Wilson '22 and Jamonte Gray '22 inspired the Golden Bulls football team through their spiritual journey. In 2019, they were baptized at Mayfield Memorial Missionary Baptist Church in Charlotte.

"It was time after going through a lot in my childhood. I felt like God could save me, and He did," said Gray.

Gray and Wilson have a bond unlike other players on the field, first forming a friendship in middle school. The two say they have become brothers, providing guidance, support and friendship to one another.

Their spiritual journey has also allowed them to be an influence to their peers and families.

"My teammates hold me accountable. They are looking for me to hold weekly Bible study and go to church on Sunday," Wilson explained.

In addition to Bible study, Wilson texts teammates a daily scripture. He started doing both on his own as a testimony of his faith.

Gray has provided support to young athletes in the Charlotte community by being present for their accomplishments, even attending some students' signing days.

"I know my actions are not only helping me, but people behind us," Gray emphasized when referring to local high school athletes who look up to them.

However, Wilson and Gray could not have completed this journey without help. Warren Stukes, Charlotte urban area director for Fellowship of Christian Athletes and associate minister at Friendship Ministry church, helped the players and many other athletes in the Charlotte-area achieve their spiritual goals.

"God puts people in your life for a reason, and I get excited seeing these young brothers on fire for Christ," Stukes emphasized.

FCA is an international, non-denominational ministry that provides mentorship to student-athletes. Stukes, who serves as campus director to Johnson C. Smith University, ministers to coaches and athletes of all ages. Through a friendship, Stukes was introduced to Gray and Wilson while they were attending North Mecklenburg High School and says he could not be more proud of the growth they've shown over the years.

"I always knew it was in them. Once you give them the tools to change, you begin to see who they can become."

Stukes relates to the athletes in many ways, because he used to be a college athlete and understands the trials and tribulations they may face during this period in their lives.

"It's bigger than football; it's bigger than sports. It's about you being a better person," Stukes emphasized.

Currently he mentors about 200 student-athletes, including Gray and Wilson. He hopes to see more student-athletes follow their example.



Members of the 1969 CIAA football championship team presented President Armbrister with a check for \$110,000 during halftime of the homecoming game.

Football championship team raises \$110,000 to commemorate 50th anniversary

The 1969 Golden Bulls football team gave JCSU our only CIAA Football Championship, and 50 years later, the players continue to give back to their alma mater.

The team raised \$110,000 for the University's Athletics department, exceeding their \$100,000 goal, at a banquet on October 25, 2019, where the team commemorated their big win.

During the homecoming game, the 1969 team presented the check to President Clarence D. Armbrister. The funds will provide scholarships for student-athletes.

Many members of the 1969 championship team know first-hand that scholarships are critical for athletes trying to earn college degrees.

"I come out of the small town of Clover, S.C., and I was the only boy in that area attending college thanks to a scholarship awarded to me by Coach Eddie McGirt," 1969 player Robert Johnson '71 said.

McGirt coached the team to victory, on and off the field. His leadership landed 17 players from the 1969 team in the NFL, but also provided the men with skillsets to navigate life.

"This experience gave me a purpose for life and a purpose in life," said 1969 player Willie Martin '71.

Martin, who went on to play for the Atlanta Falcons and then used his degree to become a corporate officer at DuPont, a Fortune 500 company, said the team provided him character and self-discipline.

Teammates Tom Baldwin '71, Johnson and Martin, organized the banquet to reminisce and give back to the school that gave to them.

"This type of giving can become contagious," Johnson, emphasized.

The men believe giving is vital, especially to HBCUs, and hope others follow their example.

"Johnson C. Smith University helped me to transition from being an inexperienced teenager to a mature, contributing adult, who went from a possible liability in society, to an asset," said Baldwin.

Baldwin is a Trustee Emeritus of JCSU and an advocate for his alma mater. He understands the importance of higher education to Black male student-athletes.

"Fifty years ago we were coming out of environments that were segregated. We didn't know it could be possible to get an education, let alone win a championship," Baldwin added.

"The men are happy about the championship they won 50 years ago, but they stress the importance of what football provides off the field."

"It was amazing that we won that championship. It was even more amazing that it helped us realize we could graduate from this institution and move on and be contributing players in society," Baldwin said.

Football also provided the men a brotherhood. Fifty-two years after meeting one another, they still talk on the phone daily, pray together and encourage one another.

"On the field we would challenge each other, but if you had a problem or concern, we could go to each other," Baldwin said.

The men say it's their relationship with God and each other that helped them win the CIAA championship.

"During homecoming weekend, members of the team received championship rings and shared memories of their time at JCSU."

The 1969 team hopes students at the University continue to hold high the Gold and Blue and understand the privilege they're afforded at an institution like JCSU, dedicated to helping young Black students receive degrees. They also want students to embrace the importance of giving back to HBCUs.

"It means the world to me that I attended Johnson C. Smith. It allows me to talk to my friends, family and most importantly my grandkids about what this legacy really meant," Martin shared.

Alumni raise more than \$1 million dollars for 2019-20 fiscal year

Johnson C. Smith University alumni know how to Hold High the Gold and Blue. For the 2019-2020 fiscal year, alumni raised more than \$1.1 million for the University. It's been nearly ten years since alumni have contributed this much money to the institution.

"The Office of Alumni Relations would like to thank our Alumni for their continuous support and generosity. We could not achieve true success without their loyalty,

leadership, service and donations," said Wanda Foy-Burroughs '73, director of Alumni Relations. "Despite challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, our alumni still managed to provide for dear ol' JCSU. The dynamic Golden Bulls proved that there is nothing that can stop their unfailing love for our illustrious University."

Funds collected assisted students and the University during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.





David Tepper, owner of the Carolina Panthers, with wife Nicole Tepper

David and Nicole Tepper create scholarship at Johnson C. Smith University

David and Nicole Tepper contributed \$250,000 to aid deserving Johnson C. Smith University students as they overcome financial hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students and their families were negatively impacted by the loss of jobs during this unprecedented time and many would not have the financial resources to return to school were it not for this generous gift. All of the funds donated were used to help students return for the 2020-2021 academic year.

President Clarence D. Armbrister said the gift allowed students to continue pursuing their dreams of earning a college education while also helping JCSU prevent a decrease in enrollment as the University navigates the operational challenges in higher education at this time. "We are elated the Teppers chose to invest in the students at Johnson C. Smith University," Armbrister said.

"The donation to the University affirms their commitment to minority students in the Charlotte community and beyond. The continued success of historically Black universities like JCSU is at a critical point," said Armbrister. "Partnerships like this are essential to sustaining HBCUs which are educating the next generation of leaders in the workplace and in the

community. With COVID-19's significantly disproportionate impact on people of color, these scholarship funds could not have been donated at a better time for our students."

Scholarship funds benefitted as many as 70 returning students who demonstrated financial need. Establishing the David and Nicole Tepper Scholarship at JCSU demonstrates the Teppers' belief that providing deserving minority students with access to a high quality, affordable college education is integral to closing the equality gap.

"Nicole and I have visited Johnson C. Smith and have gotten to know President Armbrister and some of the leaders at the school," David Tepper said. "This pandemic has put a lot of people in a tough spot, particularly students who are trying to complete their education and earn their degrees. Hopefully, this contribution can help. This institution means a lot to this community, and we look forward to building on our relationship in the future."

The Teppers' charitable efforts focus on the core beliefs that everyone deserves an education and access to healthcare resources, and that no one should go to bed hungry. David Tepper is the founder and president of Appaloosa Management, L.P. and owner of the NFL's Carolina Panthers

Alumni and donors doubled last year's Giving Tuesday total



Alumni and supporters didn't just exceed the totals raised from Giving Tuesday 2018, they doubled them.

The JCSU community went the extra mile on Giving Tuesday, December 3, 2019. The online campaign raised \$10,000, in

its inaugural year for the President's Gap Scholarship Fund, which covers the financial aid shortfall many deserving students face.

University Communications and Marketing worked to create a social media campaign that shared personal messages from students and alumni and outline how funds benefit current students. As a result of this targeted outreach, the Giving Tuesday 2019 campaign doubled its funds in 2018 and raised \$20,000 to support students financially.



President Armbrister with Pi Phi chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. graduate chapter donates \$10,000 to JCSU

Pi Phi Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., presented a \$10,000 check to JCSU President Clarence D. Armbrister on September 12, 2019. The contribution supported the President's Gap Scholarship Fund, which provides funds for students to close the gap between the financial aid they receive and the cost of tuition.

Perry Caudle Jr., president of Pi Phi Chapter, said the donation was made because chapter members know the importance of HBCUs.

"We have members from just about every HBCU in the country but, as Charlotte residents, we recognize our responsibility to the growth and development of our community," said Caudle. "Johnson C. Smith University has an important role in the lives of so many young adults who contribute to making Charlotte one of the best cities in the nation. Members of Pi Phi Chapter consider JCSU to be 'our HBCU' and challenge all members of Black Greek Letter Organizations as well as all Charlotteans to do the same."

Belk donates to JCSU professional clothes closet

Charlotte-based retailer, Belk, is providing professional work attire for students at Johnson C. Smith University. With the help of the university's business advisory board, Belk donated approximately eight bags of clothes, consisting of dresses, skirts, ties and shirts, to the professional clothes closet located in the Center for Career Development on campus.

"It's one of the largest programs we have, other than work study that students utilize", said Sonia Youngblood, assistant director of Career Readiness. According to Youngblood, the closet benefits about one third of the student body; providing the proper professional attire for students during internships, job interviews and career fairs.

Students at the University really take advantage of the closet. "I came to the closet about seven times since I've been at the University," said Donnell Thompson '20. "It gives you self confidence knowing you can go in there and find something that looks the part." Emanuel Smith '22 added. "Students want these clothes, they are very fashionable, they make them feel good in the classroom and job interviews," said Dr. Lucinda Blue, assistant professor of Business. Dr. Blue, a member of the business advisory board, has encouraged her business students, who dress professionally every Wednesday, to visit the closet. As Youngblood



Donnell Thompson '20 and Emanuel Smith '22 try on suits donated by Belk

added, "This gives us here in the center an opportunity to talk about the other services we provide." Students can learn of new internships, jobs and work study opportunities while shopping for professional attire.

In addition to the donation by Belk, American Dry Cleaners on North Graham Street provided free cleaning services to the university

thanks to Dr. Blue. "We give students quality and we make sure the clothes are clean."

Clean, gently used or new professional clothing donations are accepted year-round. Companies or individuals interested in donating can contact the Center for Career Development and Professional Development at career_services@jcsu.edu.

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awards two grants to JCSU

Johnson C. Smith University was awarded two grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation totaling \$610,000 to support JCSU's Cultural Studies program in the College of Arts and Letters and relief efforts to JCSU students impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cultural Studies program expansion

A \$500,000 grant will assist the expansion, enrichment, and engagement of JCSU Cultural Studies programs, including the development of courses, programs, and concentrations in Africana studies, cultural studies, gender studies, and global studies.

"We are grateful for the Mellon Foundation's continued support of the arts and humanities at Johnson C. Smith University," said Dr. Brian M. Jones, dean of the College of Arts and Letters and principal investigator for the grant. "This funding will allow us to reinvigorate these areas as they develop innovative programs for 21st century students — programs that will meet workforce needs while developing the habits of mind that will benefit them in their careers and in their lives as citizens."

In addition to developing programs and courses, which will support both major-level courses as well as general education courses that fulfill graduation requirements in the Humanities pillar and Integrated Studies, Global Studies,

and Emergent Fields pillar, the grant will support a learning community for JCSU faculty to study cultural studies topics and develop pedagogical material.

"We no longer — if we ever truly did — live in a world where any one culture dominates societal discourse," said Professor of English Matthew DeForrest, who serves as the grant's project director. "Instead, viewers watch animation derived from Japanese styles (e.g., the Studio Ghibi aesthetic) while listening to popular music heavily influenced by American hip-hop while playing games that allows them to connect with people across the globe."

COVID-19 pandemic emergency funding

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation distributed \$1.76 million in emergency grants to sixteen Historically Black Colleges and Universities — including \$110,000 to JCSU — to directly support students continuing their education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mellon Foundation President Elizabeth Alexander said, "HBCUs play an essential role in shaping the minds and futures of our nation's talented young people. As the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affects under resourced institutions and communities of color, the Mellon Foundation is proud to provide focused support for students attending these vital historically black schools."



Dr. Brian M. Jones, dean of the College of Arts and Letters and Dr. Matthew DeForrest were critical in securing two grants worth \$610,000 for JCSU.

JCSU receives significant increase in annual donor funding

During the Fiscal Year 2019-2020, Johnson C. Smith made great advancements in fundraising. Pledges and donations from alumni, corporations, foundations, organizations, faculty, staff and friends totaled \$12.7 million. The year's total represented a 32 percent increase from the previous year, serving as a beacon encouraging members of the philanthropic community to continue their support of the highly talented and deserving students at JCSU.

"Johnson C. Smith University takes pride in providing a competitive education for any student willing to work hard and meet the demands of higher education. Our students graduate with the skills necessary to be successful professionals and fully engaged community advocates," said Tami Simmons, vice president of Institutional Advancement. "Were it not for the generous contributions of corporate and foundation partners, the outstanding JCSU alumni, numerous friends of the University, and our many community champions we would not be able to stay the course. Our donors have kept the doors of JCSU open for 153 years and we look forward to 153 more."

The Institutional Advancement Division continues to partner with existing and new donors to address the needs of the University, which was established in 1867.

During the fiscal year, JCSU welcomed the generous support of various members of the philanthropic community, including those who made new commitments of \$25,000 more. community, including those who made new commitments of \$25,000 more.



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of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
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University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
VentureWell
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2020 | 1867 GIVING SOCIETIES INDUCTEES

Golden Bull Society in honor of the University's golden bull mascot - the embodiment of pride, spirit and association with Johnson C. Smith University.

Cumulative gifts ranging from \$100,000 - \$499,999

Mrs. Dorothy B. Latimer '74
 Mr. Thomas Latimer '72
 Estate of Reginald McNeely '88

Duke Society in honor of James B. Duke, who included Johnson C. Smith University in the Duke Endowment in 1924.

Cumulative gifts ranging from \$50,000 - \$99,999

Dr. Ronald L. Carter

Myers Society in honor of Col. William R. Myers' gift of eight acres of land to establish a permanent site for the then Biddle Memorial Institute.

Cumulative gifts ranging from \$25,000 - \$49,999

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 Dr. Telezee Littlejohn Foster '55
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 Mr. Benjamin C. Heatley '92
 Mr. Stephen W. Joyner, Sr. '73
 Mrs. Melba D. Mobley '67

Trustee John B. Stedman, Jr.
 Dr. Kenneth Whitted '65
 Mr. Gilbert Williams

Sanders Society in honor of Dr. Daniel J. Sanders, the first African- American President of Johnson C. Smith University.

Cumulative gifts ranging from \$10,000 - \$24,999

Mr. Johnny R. Bowen '66
 Dr. Harry T. Coleman '65
 Dr. Rhonda O. Covington '74
 Mr. Charles F. Davis '57
 Dr. Carladenise Edwards
 Mr. Herman Edwards
 Mr. Spencer Fulweiler
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 Trustee Michelle Lee
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 Mr. Roosevelt McGruder '84
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 Estate of Thomas B. Riley
 Mr. Carroll B. Saunders '59
 Dr. Jay Selle
 Ms. Nanella Warren
 Mr. Christopher A. Womack '86

The 1867 Society

The 1867 Society recognizes donors whose cumulative giving since January 2000 to Johnson C. Smith University totals \$10,000 or more. This distinguished society is comprised of six societal giving levels, named in honor of images and transformational leaders and donors of the University. The 1867 Society members are inducted into the society at one of the societal levels and recognized for each new level attained at an annual luncheon held during Founders' Day weekend. All 1867 Society inductees are also invited to join the student processional for Convocation, which is also held during Founders' Day weekend.

1867 SOCIETY MEMBERS

Reverend State W. Alexander '41*
Reverend James L. Allen '60*
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Dr. Shirley Aluko
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Alumni Giving Honor Roll

Alumni financial support is the critical difference in the life and legacy of the University. During Fiscal Year 2019-2020, alumni giving totaled \$1,131,621 and the alumni giving participation rate was 15 percent.

CLASS OF 1945 - \$2,882

Class Agent - Mrs. Mildred S. Grier
Estate of Esther Knuckles Witherspoon

CLASS OF 1946 - \$100

Class Agent - Office of Alumni Affairs
Ms. Margaret Louise Carr

CLASS OF 1948 - \$5,540

Class Agents - Mrs. Mattie S. Grigsby
Dr. Clarence W.R. Wade
Ms. Mary B. Chasten
Mrs. Mattie Solice Grigsby
Mrs. Magnolia M. Pickens
Dr. Clarence W. R. Wade
Mrs. Darwin McBeth Walton
Mrs. Juanita Griffith Williams

CLASS OF 1949 - \$200

Class Agent - Mr. Charles W. Hargrave
Mrs. Helen Reese Epps
Mrs. Anita T. Garner

CLASS OF 1950 - \$300

Class Agent - Mrs. Ruth S. Cathey
Mrs. Ruth S. Cathey

CLASS OF 1951 - \$3,675

Class Agents - Mr. Harry L. Jackson
Dr. Maggie Lynch Mallory
Mrs. Leora Ernestine Broady
Mr. Willie E. Davis
Mr. Harry L. Jackson
Dr. Maggie Lynch Mallory
Mr. Vincent G. Mallory
Dr. David H. Woodbury, Jr.

CLASS OF 1952 - \$1,150

Class Agent - Mrs. Mary L. Massey-Jones
Mr. Melton Ellerby
Ms. Leatrice R. Pearson
Mr. Arthur C. Redding

CLASS OF 1953 - \$2,250

Class Agent - Mrs. Deloris G. Evans
Dr. Louilyn Funderburk Hargett
Mrs. Ruby D. Harris
Mrs. Helen V. Henry
Mrs. Frances T. Wade

Mr. Howard Williams

CLASS OF 1954 - \$1,100

Class Agent - Mrs. Johnsie M. Grier
Mr. Robert L. Babbs
Mrs. Janie Clinkscales Chavis-Lucas
Dr. Thornell K. Page

CLASS OF 1955 - \$7,275

Class Agent - Dr. Telezee Littlejohn Foster
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Mrs. Evelyn J. Blackwell
Mrs. Grace J. Bryant
Mrs. Elizabeth A. Carrothers
Mrs. Rosetta Dudley-Tilghman
Dr. Telezee Littlejohn Foster
Mr. Simeon Humes
Dr. David L. Hunter
Mr. Roosevelt D. Odom, Jr.
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Mr. Rudolph C. Worsley

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Class Agent - Mrs. Muriel D. Wiggins
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Mrs. Pecola Abraham Maxwell
Mrs. Shirley Williams Paramore
Mrs. Muriel D. Wiggins

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Mrs. Esther F. Goins
Ms. Louise Page Gordon
Mrs. Mildred L. Johnson
Mrs. Velvie B. Ketch
Ms. Alice P. Lee
Dr. Eddie S. Moore
Mrs. Lucille Reynolds Morris

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Class Agent - Mrs. Sarah Young Gist
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Mr. Lemuel H. Froneberger
Ms. Theon Hardy
Mr. William Hunter Harris
Mr. Frederick D. Horne, Jr.

Mrs. Eartha Mae McMichael
Dr. William Bruce McMillan, Jr.
Dr. Carroll J. Redfern

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Class Agent - Reverend Lloyd B. Morris
Mrs. Yvonne Blocker-Sims
Mr. James Edwards
Mrs. Bernice S. Ferguson
Reverend Lloyd B. Morris
Mrs. Neutrice Quick Townens
Reverend George Murray Wilson

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Ms. Edith Strickland DeLaine
Mrs. Gloria Smith Frieson
Dr. Argie Knox Johnson
Mr. Johnny H. Johnson
Mr. Donald L. McIntosh
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Class Agent - Mr. Talmadge W. Fair
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Mr. Talmadge W. Fair
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Mr. George K. Johnson
Mrs. Vera B. McIntosh
Mrs. Lena Helton Pickens
Ms. Rose Lyons Smith
Ms. Anna M. Vernon

CLASS OF 1962 - \$9,650

Class Agent - Mrs. Jeannette Dozier
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Mrs. Jo Alice Blyther
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Mrs. Gladys A. Massey
Mrs. Hannah A. Miller
Mrs. Nancy Springs Morris
Mrs. Sandra Williams Palmer
Mr. James Walker
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 Rev. Johnnie Monroe
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 Ms. Ellaree Hampton
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 Dr. Shirley Wilson Logan
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 Ms. Vertelle D. Middleton
 Ms. Amy L. Pasour
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 Ms. Alice F. Mitchell
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 Representative Evelyn A. Terry
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 Ms. Marguerite D. Greene
 Ms. Gertude Hadley
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 Mr. Samuel H. Reid
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 Mrs. Brenda E. Twiggs
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 Ms. Margo Judge Watts
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 Mrs. Shirley Means Greene
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Mr. James W. Scales
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Mr. Ivory W. Tate Jr.
Mr. Fred L. Tatum
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Reverend David L. Wallace, Sr.
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Mrs. Linda L. Burton
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Mrs. Kaye Williams Rogers
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Dr. Michael Anthony Turner
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Ms. Juanita Yates

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CLASS OF 1974 - \$22,444

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Ms. Janice McCall
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Ms. Robbie J. Thompson
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Ms. Agnes Whittle
Ms. Dorothy Jean Wilkins

CLASS OF 1977 - \$24,221

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Mr. Leonard E. Bodrick
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Mr. Leslie J. Egleston
Mr. Lewis Frederick
Mr. Lloyd Beaver Gibson
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Mr. George Griffin
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Mr. Garrett P. Harvest
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Mr. Edsel Tyree Johnson, Jr.
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Mrs. Treva G. Pettis
Ms. Phyllis Watkins Ratliffe
Ms. Deborah Redmond
Mr. Maurice Redmond
Mr. Edward Earl Richardson
Mr. Andrew Rogers III
Ms. Mamie Rogers
Ms. Wanda Gail Rogers Phillips



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Mrs. Cathy Murray
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Mrs. Shelia Bethune Petty
Mr. Dwight Pinson
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Mrs. Nedra Burns Snow
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CLASS OF 1979 - \$8,544

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Mr. Andrew Ladd
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Reverend Carl L. Manue, Jr.
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Ms. Heather F. Philpott
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Mrs. Helen Turner
Mr. Nathan R. Walker
Ms. Clemise C. Wirt-Tyson

CLASS OF 1980 - \$5,702

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Mr. Robert S. Cunningham
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Mr. William T. Harper
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Mr. Sam Hinnant
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Mrs. Betty Booker Lee
Mrs. Maxie C. McRae
Mrs. Loretta B. Moore
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Mr. Edwin D. Smith
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Ms. Valerie Douglas Vanderhall
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CLASS OF 1981 - \$3,266

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Mrs. Lauryetta G. Gentry
Mrs. Juanita G. Gilmore-Walton
Mrs. Sylbria Valgene Brown Graves
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Mrs. Jennifer J. Parker
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CLASS OF 1982 - \$11,162

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Ms. Stephanie M. McLeod
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Mrs. Gaile S. Threath
Mr. William Henry Tibbs
Mrs. Sheila Williams

CLASS OF 1983 - \$5,115

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Mrs. Sherry Ford-Ellis
Mr. Henry Gilmore III
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Mr. Thomas S. Johnson
Mr. Raymond Knox, Jr.
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Ms. Nancy E. Mark
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Mrs. Tracey Motley
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Ms. Robin Lynn Simmons Blackwell
Mrs. Marilyn Wallace
Ms. Jacqueline P. Waters
Mrs. Deborah Byrd White

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Ms. Beverly Kegler Davis
Mrs. Cheryl McCullough Davis
Mr. Joseph K. Farrow
Mr. Leroy Forney, Jr.
Ms. Vonda D. Hayes

Mr. Christopher I Johnson
Ms. Monica Taylor Lane
Ms. Sharon Carter Mackey
Ms. Randolyn Camille Mayo
Ms. Robin Y. McClain-Gibson
Mr. Darryl Everett Moore
Mr. Marcus Morgan, Sr.
Mr. Tony C. Reaves, Sr.
Ms. Gina L. Sammons
Ms. Phyllis Throckmorton
Mr. Ricky G. Wade
Mr. Herbert L. White
Mr. Aaron E. Whitfield
Mr. Ricky Lynn Wooten

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Ms. Ronnise C. Handy
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Mrs. Cynthia A. Murray
Mrs. Lisa McCullough Patton
Mrs. Sherri Jackson Paysour
Ms. Renee Williams
Ms. Veronica Williams-Mosley
Mr. Leviticus Williamson
Mr. William R. Worsley

CLASS OF 1986 - \$4,310

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Mrs. Dellene Williams Maybin
Mr. Jeremiah Sims
Mr. Dennis Squirewell
Mr. Christopher A. Womack
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CLASS OF 1987 - \$2,990

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Mrs. Tonya Y. Hodges
Mrs. Miriam T. Jordan
Mr. Abraham McCormick
Ms. LaTonya M. McGowan
Ms. Kathryn McKenzie-Zeigler
Mrs. Debra Renee Mitchell-Chiselom
Mrs. Vicki Bell Morris
Mr. Joe H. Pendergrass
Mr. Daryl Sledge
Mrs. Valerie Stockton Sammons
Ms. Tanya Jordan Washington

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Mr. Karl L. Booker
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Ms. Tiffany Eastman
Mr. James Ely III
Estate of Mr. Reginald McNeely
Ms. Tammie Galloway
Mrs. Kim McLean Graham
Mr. Kenneth Griffin
Mr. Douglas G. Jones
Ms. Bridget Lightner
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Ms. Sarena Mobley
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Ms. Pamela Hobbs
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Ms. Stephaine Jones
Ms. Andrea Knotts
Ms. Yvette M. Mathis
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Mrs. Adrian Ward-Jackson
Mr. Roger A. Williams, Jr.

Mrs. Winifred Regina Williams-Bennett
Mrs. Jamela Middleton Wintons

CLASS OF 1990 - \$4,981

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Mr. Tracy Chamblee
Ms. Sonya Crump-Greene
Ms. Alisa Everett
Mr. Sebastian Nigel Farmer
Ms. Velda G. Fludd
Ms. Sheila M. Giles
Mrs. Mia F Jolly
Mrs. Wanda Holloway Jones
Ms. Stephanie Knox
Dr. Rosalind C. Lee
Ms. Natina Savage
Dr. Jimmie H. Smith, Jr.
Ms. Patricia Wright
Ms. Tabatha L. Young
Ms. Tabatha Young

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Ms. Anisha Campbell
Ms. Janet Campbell
Ms. Tashia Clemons
Ms. Annissa Samuel Colson
Mr. Anton D. Davis
Ms. Tammie Dingle
Ms. Nicole Griffin
Mrs. Tammi Harmon
Ms. Michelle Oliver Houston
Ms. Shania L. Jackson
Ms. Kimberly D. Jarvis
Mr. Marvin M. Maynor
Mrs. Tonya Y. Morrow
Ms. Lisa M. Nix
Mr. James Antonio Robinson
Mr. Spencer Tukes
Mr. Mark T. Wilson
Ms. Patricia Wilson
Mrs. Susan Wilson
Ms. Lisa Wright

CLASS OF 1992 - \$11,628

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Mr. Edwin O. Benjamin
Ms. Bernice Miche Clark
Mr. James Colbert, Jr.
Ms. Apasra D. Eady
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Mrs. Shawna A. Ford
Mrs. LaJuan Holliday Gallmon
Ms. Kathryn L. Goins
Dr. Patrick C. Graham
Mrs. Felicia Walton Gray
Ms. Kimberly Green
Ms. Veronica Williams Hall
Rev. Adrian Harper
Mr. Carlton Harris
Mr. Charlton J. Harris
Mr. Benjamin C. Heatley
Ms. Dionne Holley
Mr. Curtis Lee E. Ifill
Ms. Jill Jinks
Ms. Monica Kellam
Mr. Shedrick D. Kirkpatrick
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Ms. Stephanie Mack
Mr. Joseph Major III
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Mrs. Darlene Simmons Boles
Mr. James E. Brantley
Ms. Latissa Simmons Brown
Ms. Cheryl Butler
Mr. Aaron Cheeks
Ms. Sonja Greene Chicot
Mrs. Adrienne Chisolm-Cox
Mr. Julian Coaxum
Ms. Barbara D. Grant-Kelly
Mr. Alexander Lynn Hall
Ms. Kia Hilton
Mr. Anthony L. Holloman
Mrs. Kimberly F. Ifill
Ms. Raquel S. Jackson
Ms. Juana Renee Jordan
Mr. Edward Lee
Mrs. Vereatta A. Lowe
Ms. Pamela Lucas
Ms. Allison Marks
Mr. James Martin III
Ms. Sonja Mattress
Ms. Nicole McNeil
Ms. Tracie Lynne Murray
Mrs. Dawn R. Perry
Mr. LaMonte Richardson
Mr. Carlton Riddick
Mrs. Tara Foster Robinson
Dr. Pamela L. Taylor
Mrs. Christy Grindela Thompson
Ms. Jennifer Snow Webster
Ms. Latoshia Wiggins
Mr. Elliott A. Willingham, Jr.
Ms. Nannie Priscilla Willingham
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A photograph of a graduation ceremony. A male graduate in a black cap and gown with a colorful sash is raising his right arm in celebration. Other graduates are visible in the background.

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GIVING BY ALUMNI ORGANIZATIONS

Alumni organizations serve as the catalyst for alumni engagement around the nation. We applaud all alumni chapters and organizations for continuously holding high the Gold and Blue.

Organizations	Giving Total
Gamma Delta Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.	10,000
JCSU 100 Club	300
JCSU Baltimore Alumni Chapter	1,000
JCSU Charlotte Alumni Chapter	3,750
JCSU Columbia Alumni Chapter	3,600
JCSU National Alumni Association	29,885
JCSU Philadelphia Alumni Chapter	4,500
JCSU Phoenix Alumni Chapter	100
JCSU Raleigh Durham Chapter	3,000
JCSU Sumter Regional Alumni Chapter	3,000
JCSU Washington Metropolitan Chapter	2,000
JCSU Winston-Salem Alumni Chapter	200
Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. - Pi Phi Chapter	3,528
Grand Total	\$64,863

GIVING IN MEMORY OF

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 Dr. Magdy Attia
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 Mr. Calvin Colson, Sr.
 Ms. Vanessa Coles '76
 Ben & Lena Faulkner
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Students learn JCSU history from a community perspective

Residents of McCrorey Heights, a community in the Historic West End of Charlotte, welcomed Johnson C. Smith University students and alumni for a homecoming celebration. McCrorey Heights was created by Dr. Henry L. McCrorey (class of 1893), who served as JCSU president 1907-1947.

Smithites old and new enjoyed music, food and games after the Golden Bulls football team defeated Lincoln University on October 5, 2019. The event provided a good way for people from the neighborhood and the University to unite.

Students from Dr. Jasmine Corbett-Warren's public speaking and communications class attended the event. During the fall 2019 semester, they worked on a project titled: Allow Me to Reintroduce Myself, a nod to Jay-Z's "The Black album".

"We want to reintroduce our wonderful alumni, accomplishments, trends and programs because as the premier University that sits at the heart of the city, it's time people remember why JCSU is so special," Corbett-Warren said.

JCSU has always been the anchor of these historic communities on the West End, and black middle class families were drawn to the University to provide an atmosphere of sophistication and education in the age of segregated schools and facilities in Charlotte. Corbett-Warren feels it's imperative for students, especially freshmen and first-generation, to learn the University's history.

"My parents went here, so my brother and I remember the pride they had in JCSU. My father passed away six years ago, but every time I'm on this campus, I feel how proud he was," she explained.

Corbett-Warren has teamed up with University archivist and digital manager Brandon Lunsford to provide information to students for the project. JCSU's revamped Digital Smith website provides access to course catalogs going back to 1878, yearbooks going back to 1928, publications going back to 1911, and hundreds of



original photographs, documents and artifacts telling the JCSU story.

"There was a time when young people went to school at Biddleville Elementary (since torn down), then to West Charlotte High and then on to JCSU. Now JCSU students are often not from Charlotte or even from North Carolina, and their connection to these communities is not as strong. We hope to change that and raise awareness," Lunsford explained.

Corbett-Warren, like Lunsford, recognizes the rapid gentrification in the neighborhoods surrounding JCSU but hopes projects like this help the story and history live on forever.

"This entire year we'll be working with companies that want to reintroduce themselves to our community, reintroducing past musical artists that performed at The Excelsior Club and reintroducing the vision for this school," she said.

"Our goal is that other faculty will see the framework and teach the University history in their own classes," she explained.

JCSU band brings the HBCU sound to NASCAR

The crowd danced and cheered as the International Institution of Sound played the classic sounds and beats of HBCU marching bands during Charlotte Motor Speedway's Roval 400 preview in Uptown Charlotte September 24, 2019. JCSU's mascot, Smitty, and Lugnut, the speedway's mascot, led the IIOS to the front of the Bank of America building to kick off the celebration attended by NASCAR executives, media and the public. The event was such a success, the band was invited to perform on race day as part of festivities for the Roval 400 at Charlotte Motor Speedway on September 29, 2019.



Charlotte creatives eat breakfast and socialize in front Biddle Memorial Hall before the Creative Mornings event

JCSU hosts popular series for Charlotte's creative community

Creative Mornings Charlotte, a breakfast lecture series for the creative community, held its monthly meeting in Biddle Hall July 12, 2019. Dr. Philip Otienoburu, credited with getting the organization to Johnson C. Smith University, served as University host.

Guests networked, played games and listened to speaker Sonja Gantt, executive director of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Foundation. Gantt, a Charlotte native, spoke on the topic of

"ending well" and highlighted her accomplishments during her 30-year career in television news.

RCLM37, (pronounced Reclaim 37) an art exhibit paying homage to Northwestern Charlotte's Black history in the face of ongoing gentrification, was recognized during the event. The work was unveiled spring 2019 at on the first floor of the James B. Duke Library on campus. Creative Mornings previously awarded the exhibit a grant.



Members of the Gamma Delta Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., at community event

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., gives back to the community and acknowledges military

The Gamma Delta Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., is known for giving back to the community. During the fall 2019 semester, the organization was heavily in the community.

AKAs planned a service project for students to write notes to men and women in the military during the Golden Bulls game against Fayetteville State University October 19, 2019 on campus.

By chance, the AKAs learned about Coca-Cola's national "Message In A Bottle" program and partnered with the company to provide a way for students and football fans to thank U.S. armed forces for their service, which consists of one percent of the nation's population.

Partnering with Coke provided AKA an opportunity to expand on their idea of sending letters to soldiers, said Kiaira Thompson, president of Gamma Delta Chapter.

"Coca-Cola is one of the biggest brands in the world, so it made sense for us to utilize the resources of their Message In A Bottle program. Coke is one of JCSU's biggest corporate sponsors so

we were able to have our service project as part of a Golden Bulls football game."

As students and fans walked towards Irwin Belk Complex for the game, AKA had a table where they could write notes to those serving in the military. JCSU's Coke Ambassador distributed free drinks to fans who wrote notes. After the game, each handwritten note was placed into a mini Coke bottle along with messages of gratitude from Johnson C. Smith University and Gamma Delta Chapter.

Fayetteville State University fans were happy to join forces with Golden Bulls fans in support of our military, Thompson said.

"We just so happened to be playing FSU that Saturday. This service project resonated with their fans because of the close tie between the city of Fayetteville and Fort Bragg (the U.S. Army base). They were happy to write notes," she said.

Coca Cola Consolidated Inc., was pleased to partner with AKA on the project because it allowed both organizations to meet their shared goal of showing appreciation to the members of

the U.S. armed forces, said Alliecia Butler '15, marketing assets manager for Coke Consolidated.

"Not only did this project with the AKAs bring one of our national initiatives to JCSU's campus, but it also allowed the company to do more than just be the University's official beverages provider," Butler said. "Partnering on initiatives such as Message In A Bottle help our brand to be a part of campus life."

Butler manages marketing and brand activation for seven HBCUs, including JCSU, and other higher education institutions.

As a result of the project, more than 200 soldiers received a Coke mini bottle filled with messages acknowledging their sacrifice, courage and devotion to duty. Coca-Cola decided to deliver the bottles to Fort Bragg since the service project coincided with the FSU vs. JCSU game.

AKA and Coke Consolidated said they hope to collaborate again next year and increase the number of notes written so even more military members will receive a mini bottle.

On November 15, 2019, the chapter was back at it for another community service event. They observed AKA Caregivers' Community Impact Day, by giving spa baskets to employees at Loving Touch Adult Day Care Health Center on Beatties Ford Road in Charlotte. AKA Caregivers' Day recognizes individuals and workers who provide care for those experiencing illness or disability. Individuals who care for family members and even professional caregivers often give so much to others that they neglect themselves.

"We were excited to lift the spirits of the women and men who give care to the clients at Loving Touch,"



said Telissha Roseboro '21, vice president and program chair of Gamma Delta Chapter. "They give so much of themselves and go the extra mile. They really are unsung heroes."

Caregivers' Day is a time for the sorority to thank caregivers for their selflessness and show appreciation for their tireless work in providing care to those who need assistance.





Sa'Keithia Hamond '15

Alumni adapt to life in a pandemic, keep businesses going and help their communities

Just as the COVID-19 pandemic has affected our students and how they live and study, so has it changed all our lives, including those of our alumni.

Business owners, hit by restrictions on how people can interact with businesses because of social distancing and other safety measures, have been forced to find creative ways to make a living.

Sa'Keithia Hamond '15, a hairstylist and makeup artist has had to use her wits to stay financially stable.

"I am not physically able to perform services; however, I am able to sell retail products such as my eyelash line and hair extensions online. Social media marketing is an even greater tool to me now because I do not see my clients in person," Hammond said.

Some small business owners have been forced to shutter their businesses or navigate an uncertain future like

Kimberly Wilkinson '09. She owns two businesses – Members Only, a private social lounge and tasting room that serves craft cocktails and beer, and Juice Box, a natural juice bar.

"The pandemic had completely shut down the cocktail bar, because it's non-essential," Wilkinson said. "Juice Box remains open for grab-and-go orders, but sales are down 50 to 60 percent."

Despite the challenges the pandemic presents, Wilkinson sees a light at the end of the tunnel.

"My biggest accomplishment is my perseverance. Without that I would not be able to adapt with the changes in the market, grow, and continually create in my entrepreneurial space," she said. "To be able to survive and thrive during this difficult time is nothing short of a blessing."

Johnson C. Smith alumni are also finding new ways to give back to the community, despite what has been a very tough time for most Americans.

Charlotte City Councilman Malcom Graham '85, who serves District 2 in which JCSU is located, is the chair of Charlotte's COVID-19 Housing Task Force, which provides relief for rent and mortgages, in addition to assisting the city's homeless population.

"I take it seriously to be a representative of the community, to speak truth to power, to be factual but also to be prepared and that preparedness started on the campus of JCSU," Graham said.

Graham's political life has also been changed due to the pandemic. He has had to move meetings online, hosting several virtual community conference calls and holding town hall meetings using Facebook live. Graham has also appeared on CNN where he spoke on the efforts the city is taking to keep residents safe during COVID-19.

"I majored in political science and always knew I wanted to be involved in public affairs. When you see me on TV, you see the foundation of who I am and that started for me at Smith."

The JCSU family continues to reach out to each other to help each other and make the word a better place.

Dr. Diron T. Ford '93, an assistant principal at Woodside High School, in Newport News, Virginia, asked Taiia Smart Young '95, an award-winning author, if she would be interested in creating a writing workshop for his students.

Young rose to the challenge and created an online workshop called Write Now: Stories from the Quarantine.

"The goal was to design a safe space where students could be creative and honest about life in their respective quarantines," she explained.

Young and students met on Zoom where she presented them with a variety of entertaining topics to write about related to the pandemic.

"So often, reading and writing are not seen as the fun things to do. It's not an Instagram post, Snapchat feed or a TikTok video, so that makes my job of engaging students much more difficult," she said.

Nevertheless, Young has not allowed challenges to deter her from assisting students.

"My goal is to get students to tell the best story ever, no matter if they are writing a journal entry or crafting an essay to impress an admissions officer at JCSU."



Kimberly Wilkinson '09



Malcom Graham '85



Taiia Smart Young '95



Craig Cannon '16

Three alumni journalists on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our everyday lives; including the way we work. Medical professionals, truck drivers and grocery store employees are among some of the professionals deemed essential and continued to work daily. Journalists are also included in that group.

From TV to social media, it's hard not to notice the number of news professionals who worked around the clock to keep us informed about COVID-19. Here in the Carolinas, a few of those essential professionals are Golden Bulls.

The challenges of the pandemic forced changes to the workflow of some of our alumni, including Craig Cannon '16. The WCNC Charlotte news producer said, "I miss the human interaction with my coworkers."

Cannon, who graduated as a communication arts major from JCSU, worked from home to produce the 4 p.m. newscast for his station. His obligation as a producer, in which he provides facts to the Charlotte community, did not change.

"Producing from a tiny laptop in comparison to a big desktop work station slows down the process a lot, but the show must go on."

Like many essential professionals, working through this crisis was stressful, but it's Cannon's passion for storytelling that continues to fuel him.

"There's something special about informing a community that relies heavily on the balanced truth," he explained.

Carl McLean '05, senior TV news photographer/editor/SAT engineer at WSOC-TV Charlotte, dealt with the same challenges brought on by COVID-19.



"We no longer have the normal resources of the newsroom to depend on," McLean said. "Most of our interviews are via Skype and FaceTime to ensure the social distancing standard," the Emmy Award-winning photographer added.

Like Cannon, his station took the necessary precautions to keep him safe by asking him to work remotely. In addition, each day

McLean was partnered with the same reporter and carried essential products like gloves, sanitizer and masks.

Despite a career as a TV photographer that spans more than three decades covering major crises such as natural disasters, active shooter situations and riots, this experience was unlike any other McLean has dealt with.

"Coronavirus is not a story any journalist picked to cover. It picked us," McLean stated matter of factly.

Kimberlei Davis '03 is a digital news anchor and director for the ABC affiliate (WOLO-TV) in Columbia, South Carolina. With all of her content disseminated online, she felt prepared for this pandemic.

"Thankfully, I recognized the shift that would occur in how journalists would disseminate and viewers would consume information years ago, so I made sure to take advantage of professional development for times like this," she said.

During the early months of the pandemic, she utilized all her skills, especially ones learned from mentors and professors as a communication arts major at JCSU.

"I sense their critique when making a decision related to my role as a storyteller," she explained.

All three journalists thrived under the daily pressures, critiques and challenges presented by COVID-19 while making sure to take care of themselves.

"Staying six feet or more away from others when running to the grocery store is something I keep at the forefront to make sure I'm doing my part to help flatten the curve," Cannon added.

McLean even rigged a telescope pole with his wireless microphone to ensure that essential in-person interviews were done with at least six feet of distance.

They hope their efforts to provide the facts, especially during COVID-19, inspire aspiring journalists, especially ones attending JCSU.

"It is scary to cover something that could make me very sick or, God forbid, kill me," McLean stated. "But as journalists, that's our job."



(top photo) Carl McLean '05 (bottom photo) Kimberlei Davis '03

Smithville

Homecoming 2019 was filled with excitement. The theme, "Smithville, featured concerts, bonfires, fireworks, a silent headphone party and non-stop fun all week. The 1969 CIAA championship football team presented a check for \$110,000 to President Clarence D. Armbrister to celebrate the 50th anniversary of its championship. The donation was one of many, including another \$10,000 donated by the Gamma Delta Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sorority, Inc., as current members and alumnae celebrated 75 years of sisterhood and service.





Roy makes history at Charlotte Fire Department



Venessa Roy '08

Venessa Roy '08 has been a firefighter for the last 10 years. It wasn't the career she envisioned for herself, but it is the one in which she is making big achievements. Roy is Charlotte Fire Department's first African American engineer, the firefighter who drives and operates the fire truck.

"It's a bit overwhelming but I am honored and humbled to carry the title as the first," she said.

Roy, who has two bachelor's degrees from JCSU, credits the University with helping to catapult her career.

"If it wasn't for Coach Rod recruiting me for the JCSU softball team, I doubt I ever would've set foot in Charlotte. That in itself put me in the right place to have the best college experience, surround me with some very influential people and bring me closer to a career I love," she emphasized.

The Charlotte Fire Department has created a platform for Roy to give back to the community. She currently serves as the director of Camp Ignite, a girls' youth camp. The free summer program, offered by CFD as an introduction to the fire service and other non-traditional public service careers. The camp builds confidence in young girls through, teambuilding and leadership skills.

Roy understands the importance of learning a skillset at a young age and continues to utilize the skills she learned at JCSU, especially in her career.

"Unfortunately, there haven't been many Black females to make it on the fire department," she said. "At JCSU, I learned how to walk in my truth and be confident in myself."

Her advice for current students preparing to embark on their careers: "Take everything one step at a time and don't allow anything or anyone intimidate you."

Outside of serving as a firefighter, Roy spends her time writing. She's a poet, the author of "Shattered Mirrors" and a photographer.

Johnson C. Smith University remembers J. Charles Jones

Joseph Charles Jones Sr. '58, died at the age of 82 on December 27, 2019. Known as an activist and pillar in the Charlotte community, Jones led more than 200 JCSU students in protests against racial segregation in the Queen City (February 1960) by staging a series of sit-ins at uptown establishments. He even served hard time after an arrest for trespassing while trying to integrate an all-white lunch counter in nearby Rock Hill, S.C.

Jones' leadership influenced a number of alumni, including first-term Charlotte City Council member Malcom Graham '85. "To walk the same path as Jones and many other alumni who fought for equality and justice for all made each and every one of us dig deeper and aspire to create positive change for our campus and communities," Graham said in tribute to Jones.

Jones served his alma mater as a campus leader and active participant in student government, which led to his involvement in the national student political movement of the 1960s.

Jones later moved to the Biddleville community adjacent to the University where he organized the Biddleville/Smallwood/Five Points Neighborhood Association, and remained an active and engaged advocate for his beloved community until his death.



Joseph Charles Jones Sr. '58

"His legacy inspired me to seek a career in elective office to bring about meaningful change in Charlotte and to continue the legacy of JCSU alumni being actively involved in the political process,"

Cobb leads marketing and communications at Allen University

Anika Cobb '13 is now the director of marketing and communications at Allen University in Columbia, S.C.

"What Allen University is accomplishing is remarkable, and I'm just glad to be a part of it," she said.

The former communication arts major has an extensive resume in communications. Cobb is the former director of public relations at Morris College and communication coordinator of a South Carolina non-profit. She credits her success to the guidance she received at Johnson C. Smith University.

"I definitely wouldn't be in this position without the help of professors Gary Guffey, Valerie Black and Laurie Porter."

With their assistance during her college years, Cobb landed an internship at WBTV and became the student coordinator for The Real Urban Network, developed at JCSU to chronicle the gentrification of Charlotte.

Not only did JCSU provide Cobb the necessary tools for success, but it also gave her a pro-Black environment she was longing for. "I had never been in a predominantly Black environment before and it was very intriguing to me."

Originally from Columbia, S.C., Cobb was recruited to JCSU by Viticus Thomas '04 who works in the admissions office. The impact the alumnus had on her was everlasting.

"I will never forget it. I was walking out of my high school to my car, and I had a voicemail message. It was fitting because he says, 'go J-C, go J-C go' with all this energy. It was in that that moment that I knew JCSU was the place for me."



In addition, she enjoyed the small family atmosphere and made everlasting friendships with her line sisters of the Gamma Lambda Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc.

"We push each other and my friends are awesome. I'm grateful that I still have those relationships," she emphasized.

In her new role, Cobb is hoping to impact others. "I am very intentional about the roles that I choose," she said. "I don't look at my career as what's the next job, but as what's the next mission?"

The proud alumna hopes current Smithites do the same. Her advice to them is to, "remain thankful and grateful and the opportunities will continue to come." She also encourages them to embrace their time on campus.

"It's like nothing else you'll ever experience."

Gilliam shifts gears from NASCAR to Sheriff's Office



Dejah Gilliam '16 was used to working in the fast lanes as a member of NASCAR's Integrated Marketing Communications Department. The communication arts major then shifted gears and joined the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office.

In her new role, she is responsible for the internal and external messaging for the Sheriff's Office, as well as the daily operations of the public information office.

"I am on the front lines of change within our community," she explained. "I get to see community impact and change throughout

Mecklenburg County, and I'm able to be a voice and cheerleader for the Sheriff's Office."

She also has the joy of working alongside alumnus Sheriff Gary McFadden '82, the first Black sheriff of Mecklenburg County.

In 2017, before working full-time in NASCAR, she participated in the NASCAR Diversity Internship Program. Her resilience and persistence helped her to turn that opportunity with the company into a permanent role.

"I was self-motivated to learn all I could, which helped me stand out to managers at NASCAR," she said.

When asked if she had any advice to offer current students, she emphasized, "no one will want your own success more than you. Be twice as good as them by any means necessary."



JCSU community saddened by the loss of Fred "Curly" Neal, former Harlem Globetrotter

Johnson C. Smith University mourn the loss of Fred "Curly" Neal, a 1975 alumnus who was a former member of the Harlem Globetrotters and the Golden Bulls basketball team.

President Clarence D. Armbrister expressed sadness at the loss of Neal, who was not only a talented basketball player but also a global goodwill ambassador. "Like millions of people around the world, I remember being in awe of Curly's skills on the basketball court and the joy I felt watching him and the other Globetrotters as they entertained us," Armbrister said. "His talents as a Harlem Globetrotter, and most importantly as a Golden Bull, will forever be remembered."

Neal played in more than 6,000 games in 97 countries from 1963 to 1985 with the Globetrotters, making him one of the world's most recognized faces. In addition to being known as one of the greatest all-time dribblers, Neal was an incredible shooter and had a knack for hitting shots from beyond the mid-court mark. During his time at Johnson C. Smith University,

Neal averaged 23.1 points per game and was named an All-CIAA guard. He was inducted in the CIAA Hall of Fame in 1986 and the North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame in 2008. The Harlem Globetrotters presented Neal with the team's prestigious "Legends" ring in 1993 and retired his #22 jersey in 2008.

JCSU Director of Athletics Stephen Joyner Sr. '73 acknowledged the contributions Neal made in advancing sports internationally. "Curly Neal is an important part of Johnson C. Smith University's basketball history and the history of Black college basketball," said Joyner. "His work as a global superstar and ambassador, even after his retirement from the Harlem Globetrotters, is proof that sports unite people and demonstrate the power of teamwork. Curly was one of the greatest ambassadors for Johnson C. Smith University, holding high the Gold and Blue around the world. His basketball accomplishments elevated the possibilities for the Black athlete at every level of amateur, collegiate and professional play."

McMullin looks to diversify craft brewing industry

"Over the last several years, craft breweries have been one of the top trending businesses in the food and drink industry. For millennials, they serve as a new location to socialize but, there's a lack of diversity within the industry. David McMullin Jr. '12 is hoping to change that. The alumnus was mentioned in a Forbes magazine article for his business, Mack Brewing Co.

"I want to be the Allen Iverson of craft beer," he expressed. Does he have a ring? No. Is he one of the best players ever in the game? Yes."

McMullin first gained interest in craft brewing as a student.

"I was always the guy that would bring a new beer or drink to the party," he said.

"His friends would sample his creations and he regularly visited local breweries to perfect his craft." However, it wasn't until he attended Fresh Fest, a national festival for Black-owned breweries, when he realized the potential of his product.

"Garrett Oliver, the owner of Brooklyn Brewery, who's been in the craft beer business for nearly 30 years, tasted my brew and that's when I knew I definitely had something."

"McMullin attended the festival, as a spectator, because he cannot legally sell beer."

"I sell the label on the bottle and you get a free gift with that label: a six-pack of beer," he said. Once he secures a location, he can then sell his brew.

He's been featured in multiple publications and is building a buzz in the craft beer industry largely due to his marketing efforts.

"I took the Nike approach," he said. "I sent the brew to target bloggers who wrote articles on my brand and that really helped with the momentum."

"He learned Nike's influencer marketing strategy from Professor Jemayne King. Although McMullin has graduated, the two remain close, and he utilizes the tools learned in King's class to help grow his business.

Within the next five years, McMullin plans to open a microbrewery or storefront in his hometown of Philadelphia, that highlights the contributions of Blacks within the city.



David McMullin Jr. '12

"Philly wouldn't be anything without us, and we don't have a foothold on the history and culture."

McMullin realizes white culture dominates craft beer, but his main objective is to reach people who do not typically drink craft beer, many of whom are people of color.

"That's how my first recipe came about," he said. I created craft beers for my friends who typically drank store-bought beers."

McMullin hopes his determination to help diversify craft brewing influences Smithites to pursue their dreams.

"I want to give people a beacon, so to speak, to be different and dare to be different," he emphasized.



Gamma Delta Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc. celebrates 75 years at Homecoming 2019

Gamma Delta Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc. celebrates 75 years

The Gamma Delta Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc. celebrated 75 years on the campus of Johnson C. Smith University with a service project, sisterly relations gatherings, a float in the parade, a celebration banquet and tailgating on the Humanities lawn during homecoming week.

Hundreds of members gathered at the Sheraton hotel in Uptown Charlotte to commemorate the milestone on October 25, 2019

"This gathering gave everyone a chance to take a break from work and school, spend some quality time together to reconnect and connect with old and new friends and remember what's uniquely wonderful about being part of an amazing sisterhood," said Kim Graham '88, chair of the 75th Celebration Planning Committee.

As Gamma Delta Graduate Advisor Jacqueline Green '77 emphasized, 75 years is a significant milestone for the organization.

"As a young initiate in 1975, I had no idea that I would be here in a role that allows me to champion this chapter for many more years to come," she said.

As Green mentioned, she hopes future AKAs continue the standard when carrying on the legacy.

"Our goal is to pass on those ideals so that in another 25, 50, or 75 years, other like-minded members of Gamma Delta Chapter will be present to celebrate another milestone," Green expressed.

Gamma Delta President Kiaira Thompson '20 echoed her sentiments adding, "I would love to see the chapter continue to prevail in excellence, remain steadfast in service to the University and community, and have an annual scholarship for students in need of extra funding."

In addition to the banquet, Gamma Delta stocked the University's food pantry, donated clothes to the Center for Career and Professional Development clothes closet and contributed more than \$10,000 towards an endowed scholarship fund at the University. The check was presented to President Clarence D. Armbrister during the homecoming football game.

"Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. has shown me the power of the bonds of sisterhood and strength as well as servant leadership for the greater good. I am honored to be a part of such an illustrious organization," Graham added.

Pratt, former pro basketball player, begins career in law enforcement

Former student-athlete and professional basketball player, Diondre Pratt '16, was sworn in as an officer with the Salisbury Police Department on January 29, 2020.

"It's a blessing to be able to wake up every morning excited about your job," Pratt said.

Following graduation, Pratt played professionally overseas in Saudi Arabia and Bolivia for three years. He now plays basketball for Primetime Players, a semi-pro team based out of nearby Fort Mill, S.C.

"I was blessed to have one of the best coaches and mentors at JCSU. Coach (Stephen) Joyner (Sr.) was able to give me the best advice in basketball as well as life lessons that I still live by today."

Pratt, who earned his bachelor's degree in criminal justice at JCSU, is using the skills he learned at JCSU to adapt to the diverse environments he experiences.

"Graduating from what I believe to be one of the top criminal justice programs in the country, I am able to excel at what I love to do," he expressed.

Pratt feels fortunate to work alongside Jamaal Livingston '16, his line brother from the Alpha Epsilon Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., and alumna Shakya Taylor '14.



Diondre Pratt '16

Pratt offered a piece of advice for current and future students.

"JCSU prepares you for every life situation possible. Take advantage of it because someone has been there and lived it before you."



Pratt drives toward the basket during a CIAA Tournament game in 2016.



Cody Byrd '17

Byrd saves child from kidnapping attempt

Quick thinking from Cody Byrd '17 helped to save the life of an 8-year-old girl. Byrd, who told his story to WXII 12 News, the NBC affiliate in Greensboro, N.C., said he was shocked to learn his efforts helped officers.

"I followed the man as he tried to leave, taking pictures of him and the vehicle he was in," Byrd said.

While Byrd was waiting to get his food at Biscuitville, a local restaurant, on December 27, 2019, he noticed the child tell her mother that she had to go to the bathroom. Then he watched the suspect follow her to the area where restrooms were located.

"The way he was staring at the little girl was constant and way too intent looking, as if he wasn't focused on anything else but her," Byrd explained to WXII 12 News.

Byrd's intuition kicked in and he followed the suspect to the bathroom only to find him waiting outside the men's restroom. When Byrd asked if he was waiting on the restroom and he replied, "no," he knew something was wrong.

As Byrd was getting ready to walk in the men's restroom, the little girl walked out of the women's restroom and the suspect attempted to take the little girl, who luckily managed to get away. It was at that moment that Byrd quickly questioned the man and followed him out of the restaurant.

After sharing photos with law enforcement, detectives with the Greensboro Police Department informed Byrd they were able to locate and arrest the suspect with his help. They also told him the suspect had intentions of kidnapping the little girl and keeping her in a sexual servitude.

"I just had a weird feeling about him," he emphasized.

Byrd hopes his story inspires others to pay attention to their surroundings in public places and realize the smallest effort can make the biggest difference.

"Being called a hero feels somewhat strange. I honestly just consider myself an everyday person who did a good deed," he said.



Hodges publishes her 30th novel



Cheri Hodges '99

Cheri Hodges '99 released her 30th romance novel, "Tempted at Midnight" in September 2019. The story examines love, family strife and the magic of a midnight kiss. Hodges credits her professors with teaching her how to write.

"Professor Cassandra Wynn was instrumental in making me a better writer. I will always be grateful to her as a teacher and a mentor. She also taught me about hard work," Hodges explained. "JCSU is filled with instructors who will support you and make you strive for more."

Hodges' success did not come without obstacles. Finding the right publishing company and agent has been a challenge through the course of her career, but her biggest challenge has been telling Black love stories.

"You would be surprised to know that some people don't find Black love realistic," she said.

Despite the obstacles she faced, Hodges believes her experience as a Smithite gave her the skills to deal with the unexpected circumstances she encountered as an author.

"When I think about challenges in the publishing industry, I realize that JCSU prepared me for greatness. I'm forever thankful for the education and the confidence that I received from attending JCSU. If I have to rank the top ten best decisions in my life, attending Johnson C. Smith



Alexander, former two-sport scholar-athlete, on track to become a medical doctor



Andrew Alexander '15

"I couldn't have made a better decision," said Andrew Alexander '15 while reflecting on his journey at Johnson C. Smith University.

"I was very happy with the idea of being able to go to an HBCU in the city of Charlotte, which is close to my family so they can watch me play."

At the end of his senior year at Ardrey Kell High School in Charlotte, N.C., the quarterback met with football recruits from JCSU by chance.

"At the time, I was really close with one of the school security guards. He told the Smith recruiters they should check me out. I let them see my highlight film and next thing I know I was being offered a scholarship," he said. The moment changed his life forever.

Alexander already knew he wanted to follow the example of his older brother and enter the medical field. It earned him a nickname from his coaches.

"They called me 'Doctor Drew' from the day I walked on the field because I told them I wanted to be a doctor. They never doubted my dreams and they pushed me to be the best," Alexander added.

During his time at JCSU, Alexander also took up track. Being a two-sport student-athlete was demanding for the young biology major, but not impossible.

"It was Smith that gave me the tools for a solid foundation so that I had the knowledge and work ethic in me to succeed in medical school. They gave me the opportunity to play sports, which is something I wanted to do, but I think the bigger picture was that I was able to balance playing sports and schoolwork while trying to excel in both."

As the son of Jamaican immigrants, Alexander saw firsthand what hard work looks like.

"They came here and really just worked their tails off to make sure that they had a viable future," he said. He never forgot how hard they worked for their success and was determined to do the same.

Alexander will specialize in physical medicine and rehabilitation-focusing on maximizing patients' day-to-day function in their environment.

"We work a lot with patients who've had some type of traumatic brain, spinal cord or musculoskeletal injury that's impeding them from living their independent autonomous lifestyle. We manage their medical problems while trying to maximize the functional problems," he explained.

Alexander is passionate about serving people with disabilities, but hopes to one day help athletes too. "I plan on specializing in sports later down the line when the time comes," he added.

In 2020, Alexander began his residency at Moses H. Cone Hospital in Greensboro, N.C., for one year. His final three years of residency will be completed at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. He never imagined it would happen.

"I'm still in disbelief that an institution like that wants me, but I'm so happy."

JCSU laid the foundation for Alexander's success, and for that, he is forever grateful.

"Going to an HBCU really cemented my belief that it was okay to be me. It helped me be comfortable in my skin as a Black man in America."

He hopes current students take advantage of the support JCSU provides to students.

Alexander enjoys mentoring others and sharing his success story. Although it wasn't easy to attain, the long nights were well worth it.

"I want people to know my story because it shows that with hard work, anything is attainable."





Jeremiah Allen '04



Allen successfully dives into entrepreneurship by launching lapel pin brand

What started as a form of therapy has turned into a successful business for alumnus Jeremiah Allen '04. Allen, the creator of Rook & King, transformed one of his darkest moments in life into works of art: creating unique lapel pins.

"During the time I was in the thick of battling the depression, I started making the pins and discovered it was a meditative experience for me. I started making them for myself, just to fill my own voids because I was unable to find the type of pieces I was personally looking for. I had no idea others would eventually gravitate towards my work," said Allen.

Allen, who never planned to become an entrepreneur, based his business model on the game of chess. He admits he's not the best player, but the game has been an intricate part of his strategy for success.

"I named my business Rook & King after the chess pieces," said Allen. "The rook and king pieces have a maneuver called 'castling' that is generally recommended the player execute within the first 7 moves. The whole point is to better set yourself up for success. I always try to train myself to look at life similarly, in the sense it

involves the art of knowing how to move strategically."

Despite juggling a full-time job, and running a business, Allen said he is appreciative of his success gained.

"I still haven't gotten used to it. It's all still deeply moving for me."

Allen added that his success is also attributed to his experience as a Smithite.

"JCSU is where my roots got planted. I had professors who doubled as mentors and spoke life into me even after I left. Those interactions and relationships shaped me. I'd like to believe I have carried that with me ever since."

Allen hopes current Smithites do the same when it comes to their careers. His one rule of advice for students: "Be dope!"

"Whatever it is you love, find a way to incorporate it into your daily life. It doesn't matter how far-fetched it may seem," Allen explained. "We learn as we go, so get started where you are with what you have."



(left to right) Jeremiah Chapman '11, Reverend Dr. William Barber II and Tom Steyer

Chapman helps shape U.S. presidential candidate's HBCU plan

Tom Steyer was one of nearly two dozen Presidential candidates in the race for the Democratic Presidential nomination at the start of 2020, and a Golden Bull was part of his campaign. Jeremiah Chapman '11 was the social impact director for Steyer's campaign.

"During my time at Smith, I actually did a lot of what I am doing now," Chapman said. "The mindset JCSU and other HBCUs embed in their students is to be twice as good as our PWI counterparts, and I think I bring a lot of that raw, gritty, go-getter mentality to the team."

Chapman has been working for Tom Steyer related entities since 2016, first as the North Carolina director for the Get Out The Vote campaign. In his most recent role, he managed a majority of Steyer's social media platforms, content and general ideas.

His influence went further than social media. Chapman made national headlines for helping to shape Steyer's HBCU plan, which would have invested \$125 billion in HBCUs over 10 years with an initial investment of \$35 billion in the first year. In addition,

The plan would have given HBCU administrations more leverage on how funds were used at their institutions.

"A plan like this would establish an HBCU board of regents that presidents or administrators would craft and determine how said money should be dispersed and allocated," he explained.

Steyer's HBCU plan also called for funds towards operating and infrastructural budgets to help institutions drive down costs of tuition, a plan to better integrate minority students into STEM, address the lack of diversity in the tech industry, and provide support for young Black entrepreneurs.

"As a graduate of JCSU, I have a unique perspective on how HBCUs and more broadly, Black communities, flow economically as an ecosystem between Black businesses, banks and institutions."

A number of events that Chapman has experienced, including the Black Lives Matter protests following the shooting deaths of Jonathan Ferrell and Keith Lamont Scott in Charlotte, helped him

develop initiatives for Steyer's campaign. "I have advised Tom on Black issues ranging from reparations, Black maternal healthcare and dismantling white supremacy to the need to invest in HBCUs," he said.

Because Chapman attended an HBCU, he is able to provide insight that Steyer's team may not have had otherwise. Despite his long track record in politics, including his prior experience as field director for Congresswoman Alma Adams, where he helped her establish the first ever HBCU Caucus within the U.S House of Representatives, Chapman never imagined himself in politics.

"When I started at Smith, I was a jock on the football team who didn't even know how government operated," he said.

It wasn't until Chapman pledged Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., and began organizing students to go speak at Charlotte public schools that he really began to get into politics.

"I was told that the predominantly Black schools were being shut down due to cuts in North Carolina's education budget and that kind of radicalized me," he emphasized. Chapman said he also lost

a friend to white supremacists' violence, which solidified his desire to remain involved in politics.

These days, aside from working hard on the campaign trail, Chapman works on his craft as a rapper, which unbelievably helps him in his profession.

"It keeps me relevant to Black youth who will undoubtedly decide the next President and it allows me to maintain my gritty edge and connection to culture," he emphasized.

In addition, Chapman has banded together with Black leaders from across the globe to create Black Culture Weekly, a mobile app with Black news, businesses and information.

Chapman hopes his efforts inspire Black students, especially those at JCSU.

When asked what advice he would give to current students, he said, "Allow yourself to grow from your failure and realize success is not a straight rise to the top."



Jeremiah Chapman '11 and Tom Steyer (middle)



1940s

Mary Chasten '48 celebrated her 92nd birthday. She is the oldest member of the North Carolina Eastern Alumni Chapter.

1960s

Pettis Norman '62 released his autobiography, "The Pettis Norman Story: A Journey through the Cotton Fields, the Cotton Bowl, the Super Bowl and into



Servant Leadership." For more information visit www.pettisnorman.com.

Butch Walker '62 was inducted into the Commemorative Classic Hall of Fame on November 9, 2019, in Salisbury, N.C.



Dorothy Counts-Scoggins '64 received the Living Legends Award during the 2020 Pride Awards Luncheon on February 14, 2020 in Charlotte, N.C.

Norman T. Little '66 retired on January 31, 2020, from the North Carolina Department of Revenue after 42 years of dedicated and outstanding service. His positions included tax collector, auditor, revenue officer I and assistant manager of Charlotte's Taxpayer Assistance Office. At his retirement ceremony, he received the prestigious order of the Long Leaf Pine with rank of ambassador extraordinary from North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper. The award was presented by the secretary of revenue, Ronald Penny.



Calvin Banks '69 received the JCSU faculty/staff leadership award during the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership Luncheon on January 31, 2020.

1970s

Dr. James Ewers, Jr. '70 was named chairperson of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee for the Louisiana Tennis Association (LTA). The LTA is a part of the United States Tennis Association. He holds JCSU's tennis singles record – winning 34 consecutive matches and was All-CIAA for four years.



Thomas Baldwin '71, Garry McFadden '82, Ervin Gourdine '84, and Malcolm Graham '85



participated in the Black Men United March and Rally on June 17, 2020, in Charlotte, N.C. Malcolm Graham, a Charlotte City Council member, and Garry McFadden, Mecklenburg County Sherriff, spoke about racial equality, social justice and racism in today's society.



Larry D. Hall '78 was appointed secretary for the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs by Governor Roy Cooper.

Mickel "Cheese" Roseborough '78 was elected as president of the JCSU 100 Club.

1980s

Lorraine Ophelia Smith '82 released her fiction novel, "Still Searching."

G. Wayne Mallory '83 and Cheryl B. Bunn-Mallory '88 celebrated 30 years of marriage by renewing their vows on August 19, 2019.

Dwayne Chambers '83 was appointed as the deputy chief for Morgan State University's Office of Police and Public Safety.

Cheryl McCullough '84 won the Division of Institutional Advancement/Alumni Relations raffle for an exclusive JCSU branded refrigerator.

Elizabeth Anne Simmons Dames '84 joined IBM full-time as a microcode developer for printers in Charlotte, N.C., at the age of 20. Currently she serves as the senior technical staff member and crypto tribe leader for the I/O firmware organization leading teams in Charlotte, N.C., Lexington, Ky, Poughkeepsie, Ny and Boeblingen, Germany. She has also co-authored 20 patents in the security and key management space.

1990s



Monika Rhue '91, director of Library Services at JCSU, was appointed by Governor Roy Cooper to serve as a member of the North Carolina State Historical Records Advisory Board.

The Class of '92 hosted the Dr. Jeffrey A. Smith Scholarship Celebration on October 24 at the SpringHill Suites in Charlotte, N.C. The scholarship was established in the name of the late Dr. Smith, a member of the class and former University administrator. In 2017, the class embarked on a five-year fundraising campaign with the goal of raising \$25,000; the University's requirement for an endowed scholarship.

Dr. Brian L. Johnson '95 was appointed as Warner Pacific University's eighth president.

Jonathan E. White '99 retired from the military after 20 years of service in the United States Armed Forces.



Rashida Lawrence '99, known professionally as Shay Moore recently reached number one in the Nielsen ratings for her morning show, entitled "The Morning Grind with Shay & Shyne" on KPRS- FM Hot 103 Jamz (Kansas City, MO).

2000s



Dr. Kristene Kelly '00 was promoted to Executive Associate Athletics Director for Varsity Sports at Dartmouth College.



Dr. Andrew Lovett, Jr. '01, a 17-year educator in the Atlanta Public Schools (APS), received the 2019 Teach on Project Award.

Dr. Frederick V. Engram, Jr. '05 earned a Doctor of Education degree in Higher Education Administration from Northeastern University in May 2019.

Dr. Tia Lites '05 earned a Doctor of Education degree in Curriculum Teaching Learning and Leadership from Northeastern University.

2010

Sabrina Davis '12 was named KIPP DC: Somerset's College Prep Teacher of the Year.

Anika Cobb '13 was appointed as the director of marketing and communications at Allen University.



Craig Cannon '16 began a new role as the producer at NBC Charlotte on August 26, 2019.

GOT & Good NEWS?

Tell us about it!

Please send your wedding and birth announcements, anniversaries, promotions and accomplishments to:

ALUMNI@JCSU.EDU



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