

16TH NATIONAL HBCU STUDENT NEWS MEDIA CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 6-9, 2014

HOUSTON AND PRAIRIE VIEW, TEXAS

HOSTED BY:
PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY



General Conference Information

- Please wear your badges at all meal functions.
- Professional dress is expected.
- Remember this is a professional conference so please display your best professionalism. You never know where a job opportunity might be.
- Attend as many sessions as possible. They are designed with you in mind, and the presenters deserve an audience.
- Silence your cell phones during sessions. Everybody deserves respect and to learn in a conducive environment.
- Be sure to sign up for critiques. Your résumé is your first introduction to a potential employer.
- The newspaper critiques will get you ready for the 2014 Excellence in Journalism Contest. Don't miss this opportunity for individual instruction designed especially for you.
- Contest Books (two copies) will be available to all competing schools at the end of the Awards Banquet.
- First Place certificates will be given to the students winning first place, while the plaque will go to the school.

Acknowledgments

Thank You

- **Dean Ann Wead Kimbrough** of the FAMU School of Journalism & Graphic Communication for her support
- **Ashleigh Beverly** and **Wennifer "Sonny" Paul** of the FAMU School of Journalism & Graphic Communication Print Shop
- **Ghislaine Lewis** and **Kenta Joseph**, my two former graduate assistants who are always on the clock, but who never get paid
- **Robert Richardson** for his production assistance
- **Lewis Smith** as conference coordinator and Prairie View A&M University
- **Reginald Stuart** for coordinating the Excellence in Journalism Contest
- **Mary Gilmore** of Amazing Awards, Inc., of Houston, Texas
- **Mrs. Elizabeth H. White**, my mother, who accompanies me and assists me with the conferences
- All conference presenters and workshop leaders

With Sympathy

Our prayers go out to **Dr. Lona Cobb** of Winston-Salem State University, who lost her mother this time last year. Also a late condolence goes out to **Lydia Lay** of LeMoyne Owens College, who lost her mother around conference time in 2012. At the same time that year Pearl Stewart lost her mother. A message was sent over the listserv to acknowledge Ms. Stewart's loss. We apologize for the oversight concerning Ms. Lay. I applaud both Dr. Cobb and Ms. Lay, for they sent their students to the conference during that difficult time.

A Special Thank You goes to . . .



Cover Design: **Ashleigh Beverly**

Book printed at the FAMU School of Journalism & Graphic Communication Print Shop

Welcome

Welcome to the 16th Annual National HBCU Student News Media Conference. Two and a half days of inspiring and informational workshops with outstanding speakers and presenters are planned for your enrichment. Here is an opportunity to be mentored and to network with some of the most outstanding personalities in the industry. **Lewis Smith** and his Prairie View team have planned an impressive program.

Congratulations to the Department of Languages and Communications on their first Communication Week. BCCA is delighted to be a part of this effort.



Valerie D. White, Ph.D., Chair
Black College Communication Association



I welcome you with great enthusiasm to the 2014 National HBCU Student News Media Conference at Prairie View A&M University.

As a founding member of Black College Communication Association, Prairie View A&M University is privileged to host this year's conference because it is an exciting, yet challenging, time for the mass media industry and journalism education. In an era of new media and rapid technological transformation of the media landscape, we are continually faced with the task to make our teaching reflect changing trends in industry. For this reason, one of the first panels for this conference will discuss the changing world of journalism and how educators and students should respond.

Organizing this conference would not have been a success without the support from a number of sponsors at the university. I must thank, most heartily, **Dr. Munir Quddus**, and his staff at the Northwest Houston Center, for allowing us to hold sessions on the premises. I am grateful for the generosity of **Dr. Laurretta F. Byars**, **Dr. Miron P. Billingsley**, **Steve Ransom**, **Orok Orok** and **Christian Leach** of Student Affairs and Institutional Relations. The awards banquet and transportation are provided by this vital arm of our university's operations. I wish to give recognition to **Dean Danny R. Kelley** of the Marvin D. and June Samuel Brailsford College of Arts and Sciences for his support. My profound appreciation goes to department head, **Dr. James M. Palmer**, and the Department of Languages and Communication for expending significant resources to host this conference.

May the 2014 National HBCU Student News Media Conference build upon the successes of past conferences by enriching the minds of student journalists and devising solutions to meet challenges that confront journalism and mass communication education today.

Lewis Smith, Conference Coordinator

On behalf of Prairie View A&M University and the Department of Languages and Communication, I welcome you to the 2014 National HBCU Student News Media Conference. It is indeed an honor to host this national conference and to witness the generosity of those who unceasingly give time and talent to make this event a success.

I am proud that my department's inaugural Communication Week strategically complements this conference. Several of the professionals arrived earlier this week for PVAMU events and workshops and are now participating in this conference on their "own dime." Their dedication to student development and learning inspires me. I applaud the commitment of all the other professionals and educators who are here purposely for this conference to share their knowledge with students. I am thrilled that our featured Communication Week speaker **Stephen A. Smith**, sports journalist and columnist for ESPN.com, will also address the awards dinner on Saturday. An HBCU graduate, he is sure to shake things up on Saturday evening.

There are two people who deserve special praise. As a PVAMU graduate in communication and award-winning producer and director for CBS, **Charles Williams** has given incredible support to ensure this conference's success. Similarly, coordinator **Lewis Smith** deserves everyone's thanks and praise. He has organized a top-notch conference, one positioned firmly in traditional journalism but also one that addresses the rapidly changing media industry.



James M. Palmer, Ph.D.
Department Head

Schedule at a Glance

Thursday, Feb. 6 – Hilton Garden Inn Houston Northwest		
Location	Event	Guide
Noon-6 p.m. Pavilion Lounge	Registration	Sign up for résumé critiques • Leave two copies of résumé Sign up for newspaper critiques • Leave three copies of newspapers Sign up for website critiques • Leave résumé that shows URL
1-1:20 p.m. Versailles B	Opening Session	Dr. Valerie White , BCCA Chairwoman, presiding
1:30-2:30 p.m. Versailles B	What You Need To Know About Legal Protections For Journalists	Frank LoMonte , executive director, Student Press Law Center
2:45-3:45 p.m. Versailles B	Using Your Journalism Skills in Public Relations	Kayla Tucker Adams , senior public relations director, T.D. Jakes Ministries Renee Warren , owner of Arielle Wren PR and NYU professor of public relations
4-5:15 p.m. Versailles B	The Changing World of Journalism: What Must Educators Do?	Dr. Carol Adams-Means , associate professor, Huston-Tillotson College Dr. Bruce dePyssler , associate professor, North Carolina Central University Sam Freedman , NY Times columnist and Columbia University professor Charisse Jones , national correspondent, USA Today Blaise Labbe , news director, Sinclair Broadcast Group Serbino Sandifer-Walker , assistant professor, Texas Southern University
5:30-6:30 p.m. Versailles B	Editors Exchange/Roundtable	Alexandria Sampson , NCCU Campus Echo Meagan Williams , The Southern Digest Joshua Bennett , The Panther, Prairie View
5:30-6:30 p.m. Pavilion Lounge	Advisers/Educators Exchange	
7-9 p.m. Versailles Ballroom	Dinner	Speaker: Charles Williams Jr. CBS-TV and WEG Media Group, New York

Schedule at a Glance (continued)

Friday, Feb. 7 – Prairie View A&M University, Northwest Houston Campus		
Location	Event	Guide
8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Room 221	Registration	
9:15-10:30 a.m. Room 216	Faces Behind the Lens: The Unseen Jobs	Kristen V. Carter , writer, film and TV, Los Angeles Charles E. Williams Jr. , CBS TV and WEG Media Group, New York Shedrick C. Stokes , SCS Films, Houston
9:15 a.m.-Noon Room 117	Photojournalism Workshop	Dr. Amber Johnson , assistant professor, Prairie View A&M University
10 a.m.-Noon Room 221	Portfolio Critiques and One-on-One Consulting (By Appointment Only)	WEG Media Group Cwilliams@wegmediagroup.com
10:45-Noon Room 216	Putting Your Journalism Skills to Work in Hollywood	Kristen V. Carter , writer, film and TV, Los Angeles
10:45-Noon Room 217	Jump Start Your PR Career	Renee Warren , owner of Arielle Wren PR and professor of public relations
10:45-Noon Room 215	How To Make Yourself Indispensable in the Newsroom	Charisse Jones , national correspondent, USA Today Cornelius (Neil) Foote Jr. , president/CEO, Foote Communications Kasi Stunson , senior executive producer, KPRC-TV Speaker: Melanie Lawson , anchor, ABC 13-TV
12:15-1:45 p.m. Room 107	Lunch	
2-3:15 p.m. Room 217	Multimedia and Mobile Journalism	Tiffany Williams , Twice Media Productions Richard White , ABC-13 TV
2-3:15 p.m. Room 216	The World of Fashion Journalism	Joy Sewing , fashion editor, Houston Chronicle
3:30-4:45 p.m. Room 215	A Missing Piece of Black History by the Author of <i>Breaking The Line</i>	Sam Freedman , NY Times columnist and Columbia University professor
3:30-4:45 p.m. Room 216	Remaining Viable in the Radio Industry in a Technology Driven Society	Michelle Deselle , KPVM 91.3 FM Sheldon Nunn , KTSU 90.9 FM Kwame Hall , KRBE 104.1 Ayana Mack , Radio One
3:30-4:45 p.m. Room 217	Entrepreneurialism in the Mass Media Industry	Darlene Dorsey , freelance reporter Jarren Small , CEO of SmallzMedia Todd Smith , publisher, Regal Magazine
5-6:30 p.m. Room 204-206	Town Hall Conversation: Maintaining Integrity While Covering and Responding to Crises, The Fannin and Gramblinette Stories	Jonathan McCall , reporter/anchor, KROI Radio News 92 FM Sheleah Reed , press secretary, Houston Independent School District Cornelius (Neil) Foote Jr. , president/CEO, Foote Communications Fred Batiste , Student Publications Adviser, Houston Community College Ayana Mack , On-Air Radio/TV Personality, Radio One
7 p.m.	Dinner On Your Own - Explore Houston	

Schedule at a Glance (continued)

Saturday, Feb. 8 – Prairie View A&M University, Northwest and Main Campuses		
Location	Event	Guide
9-10:30 a.m. Room 221	Newspaper Critiques	Appointment Only
9:15-10:30 a.m. Room 107	The 3 B's of Social Media: Breaking News, Building Your Brand and Being Responsible	Kenneth Ware Jr. , digital media producer, KHOU.com Misty Starks , president, Misty Blue Media
10:45-Noon Room 107	How To Succeed In Sports Journalism	Jerome Solomon , Houston Chronicle Kris Gardner , owner, The Houston Roundball Review Max Edison , Houston Defender David Nuno , ABC-13 TV
10:45-Noon Rooms 215, 216, 217	Getting Into Graduate School	Graduate School Coordinators/Recruiters Nancy DeVille , Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism Diane Nguyen , Columbia Journalism School
10:45-Noon Rooms 221	BCCA Board Meeting /Elections	Dr. Valerie White , BCCA chairwoman
Noon-1:15 p.m. Room 107	Lunch	Speaker: Alexis Jones-Herron , associate producer, KHOU
1:30 p.m. PVAMU Northwest Campus	Buses leave PVAMU Northwest Campus for Hilton Garden Inn	
3:30 p.m. Hilton Garden Inn Lobby	Buses leave Hilton Garden Inn for the main campus of Prairie View A&M University	
4:15 p.m.	Tour of PVAMU Campus	
5 p.m. Memorial Student Center	Mixer	
6 p.m. Memorial Student Center	Excellence in Journalism Awards Banquet	Speaker: Stephen A. Smith , Sports journalist and columnist for ESPN.com
10 p.m. Memorial Student Center	Buses Leave PVAMU for Hilton Garden Inn	

Keynote Speakers

Stephen A. Smith

A native of Hollis, Queens, who built his foundation as a journalist over the course of 14 years in New York and Philadelphia, Stephen A. Smith, once widely recognized as one of the most popular voices on ESPN, is still one of the preeminent voices in the African-American community.

After graduating from Winston-Salem State University, Smith's journalism career began as a high school sportswriter at the New York Daily News in the summer of 1993. Meeting the president just 14 months later, he departed to cover college basketball for the Philadelphia Inquirer. As the years went by, Smith rose in the journalism profession, covering everything from college basketball and football at Temple University, to national college basketball and football, and ultimately the National Basketball Association, his dream job. After four years as a beat writer on the Philadelphia 76ers, he became an NBA columnist in 2001. By March 2003, Smith was promoted to general sports columnist, becoming one of only 21 African-Americans in the nation to hold such a title at that time.

Smith's career at ESPN began just seven months later when the worldwide leader hired him away from Fox SportsNet's Best Damn Sports Show, Period! to become an analyst/insider on its premier basketball show, NBA Shootaround. Since then, Smith's demonstrative, informative, in-your-face style accentuated with a perspective rarely seen or heard in mainstream media.

Stephen A. Smith is the speaker at the HBCU Excellence in Journalism Awards Banquet, on Saturday at 6 p.m. at Prairie View A&M University in Prairie View, Texas.



Conference Program

Thursday, Feb. 6 – Hilton Garden Inn Houston Northwest

1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

What You Need to Know about Legal Protection for Journalists

The First Amendment and open-government laws give college journalists powerful tools to hold their schools accountable, if they're used properly and vigorously enforced. The director of the Student Press Law Center will talk about protecting your rights as a college journalist, how to manage a controversy, and how to stay on the right side of libel and copyright law.

Frank LoMonte, executive director, Student Press Law Center

Versailles B

2:45 – 3:45 p.m.

Using Your Journalism Skills in Public Relations

So you had it all planned out. You've studied for the past four to become a reporter, but graduation is approaching and you want to explore other career options. Have you ever considered a career in public relations? A college journalism program equips you with strong writing and speaking skills, both of which are necessary for a successful career in public relations. This session will delve into the intriguing field of public relations and discuss how your journalism skills can transfer into PR and yield a rewarding and lucrative career path.

Renee Warren, owner of Arielle Wren PR and NYU professor of public relations

Kayla Tucker Adams, senior public relations director, T.D. Jakes Ministries

Versailles B

4 – 5:15 p.m.

The Changing World of Journalism: What Must Educators Do?

The changing structure of the media industry dictates that academic programs in journalism and communication prepare graduates with requisite skills to compete in the current media job market. Media convergence, media mergers, acquisitions and the continued growth of social media mandate that academic programs rapidly adapt to outpace shifting media practices. Partnerships with the media industry are crucial to the success of academic programs. This session will discuss how universities can respond to changing circumstances in the mass media. *Educators and students should attend this session.*

Dr. Carol Adams-Means, associate professor, Huston-Tillotson College

Dr. Bruce dePyssler, associate professor, North Carolina Central University

Sam Freedman, NY Times columnist and Columbia University professor

Charisse Jones, national correspondent, USA Today

Blaise Labbe, news director, Sinclair Broadcast Group

Serbino Sandifer-Walker, assistant professor, Texas Southern University

Versailles B

5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Editors Exchange

Students congregate to discuss issues, solutions and ideas through their campus experiences.

Joshua Bennett, The Panther, Prairie View

Alexandria Sampson, Campus Echo, NCCU

Meagan Williams, The Southern Digest

Versailles B

Advisers/Educators Exchange

Advisers and educators will meet for encouragement, exchange of ideas and teaching methods.

Pavilion Lounge

Conference Program continues on page 10.

Keynote Speakers (cont'd)

Charles E. Williams Jr.



An award-winning editor/producer, Charles E. Williams Jr. began his career in television broadcasting more than 25 years ago. Born in Houston, Texas, Williams knew as a child he wanted to be involved in television productions and filmmaking.

In 1987, Williams produced “Men & Breast Cancer,” a documentary on the trials of men living with breast cancer. In 1988, Williams became editor and editing supervisor for CBS Television in New York. In 1989, he received the National Association of Black Journalists Award for his series, “New York, In Black in White.” The piece called attention to New York racial riots such as the Yusef Hawkins murder and the Benson Hurst riots. In 1997, Williams began WEG Media, Inc., his own video, film and streaming company. His company continues to service clients such as Children’s Television Workshop, TV Land, Ebonyrider, Motorcycle Talk and Disney. In 2006, his work on “Defining Moments” won him an Emmy Award for Best News Multi-Part Special. The series covers events around the world that have impacted history.

In 2014, Williams plans to launch his cutting edge idea: an online network of creative and entertaining programs. The network is prepared to offer around-the-clock, on demand service.

Williams majored in radio and television mass communications at Prairie View A&M University and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in 1984. Cwilliams@wegmediagroup.com

Charles Williams Jr. is the Opening Banquet speaker on Thursday at 7 p.m. in the Versailles Ballroom at the Hilton Garden Inn Northwest Houston.

Melanie Lawson

For award-winning journalist Melanie Lawson, journalism has always been in her blood. The Houstonian is the co-anchor of Live at 5 and Channel 13’s midday show, “Eyewitness News at 11 a.m.” Lawson also hosts a weekly Community Affairs program called “Crossroads,” focusing on city issues and events.

At Channel 13, she has covered virtually every city, state and national election. She has traveled to Cuba, Panama, Africa and Australia. She’s won numerous awards for her reporting, including two Emmys. Lawson has interviewed a wide range of notables, including three U.S. Presidents, the Dalai Lama, poet Maya Angelou, Grammy Award winners Destiny’s Child, former heavyweight champion George Foreman, director Spike Lee, legendary journalist Barbara Walters, evangelists Joel and Victoria Osteen, Hall of Famer Magic Johnson and actor Denzel Washington.

She received her undergraduate degree in politics from Princeton University and a joint degree in law and journalism from Columbia University. She is admitted to both the Texas and New York state bars.



Melanie Lawson is the luncheon speaker on Friday at 12:15 p.m. in room 107 at Prairie View A&M University (Houston Northwest Campus).

Conference Program (cont'd.)

Thursday, Feb. 6 (cont'd) – Hilton Garden Inn Houston Northwest

7-9 p.m.

Opening Banquet

Speaker: Charles E. Williams Jr.

Editor and Editing Supervisor for CBS Television and CEO, WEG Media Group, New York

(See biography on page 9.)

Versailles Ballroom

Friday, Feb. 7 – Prairie View A&M University, Northwest Houston Campus

9:15 – 10:30 a.m.

Faces Behind the Lens: The Unseen Jobs

An informative session on the jobs we don't see on television, but are vital to the newscast. We often see the reporters/anchors, and rarely see the production it takes to put together news/movies/commercials. If you want to know about the jobs that happen behind the scenes, this session is for you.

Kristen V. Carter, writer, film and television, Los Angeles

Shedrick C. Stokes, SCS Films, Houston

Charles E. Williams Jr., CBS Television and WEG Media Group, New York

Room 216

9:15 – Noon

Photojournalism Workshop

There is more to photojournalism than just “selfies” and Instagram filters. Come learn about the art of photojournalism, and everything else it entails. Learn how to tell a story through a camera lens, and truly capture a story or subject.

Dr. Amber Johnson, assistant professor, Prairie View A&M University

Room 117

10 a.m. – Noon

Portfolio Critiques and One-on-One Consulting (By Appointment Only)

Want an extra or unbiased eye to look over your work? Come get an honest critique that will help steer you in the right direction. Consult one-on-one with the pros for tips on how to sharpen your skills.

Charles E. Williams Jr., CBS Television and WEG Media Group

Room 221

10:45 – Noon

Putting Your Journalism Skills to Work in Hollywood

Lights! Camera! Action! Want to work in showbiz? This session will teach you how to put the same skills you use every day for a media organization, to work in Hollywood.

Kristen V. Carter, writer, film and television, Los Angeles

Room 216

Jump Start Your PR Career

Learn from one of the best public relations professionals in the business, and get the inside scoop. PR is more than press releases and photo captions. This session will inform you on how to get on the right PR track.

Renee Warren, public relations professor and owner of Arielle Wren PR

Room 217

Conference Program continues on page 12.

Keynote Speakers (cont'd)

Alexis Jones-Herron

Alexis Jones-Herron serves as associate producer for KHOU Ch.11's "Great Day Houston" with Deborah Duncan. She is a graduate of Clark Atlanta University, receiving her B.A. in mass media arts with a concentration in public relations.

Throughout her media career, Jones-Herron has been handpicked to work for some of the best in the industry. She has worked behind the scenes with Music World Entertainment (formerly the management company for Beyonce Knowles and Destiny Child), national publications such as Jones and Upscale magazines, and Guerilla Tactics Media (producers of BET's reality show "Master of the Mix"). She has served two terms as the publicity chair for the annual awards gala for the Houston Association of Black Journalists. Jones-Herron is also the co-publisher and author of the book, "Super Singles, Activate!," a faith-based compilation of testimonies to inspire the single woman.

She has recently taken on the role as "First Lady" of the Courageous Faith Christian Center located in Katy, Texas, and is newly married to Pastor J.D. Herron.

Her personal brand (which is affectionately known as Alexis "Fly") sets out to inspire individuals to have confidence in themselves—encouraging many to fly high and to DO SO with ALL FAITH and NO FEAR!



Alexis Jones-Herron is the luncheon speaker on Saturday at noon in room 107 at Prairie View A&M University (Houston Northwest Campus).

2013 HBCU Excellence in Journalism Contest Judges

Regina Boone	photographer, Detroit Free Press
Candace Buckner	sports writer, The Indianapolis Star
Duchesne Drew	managing editor for operations, The (Minneapolis) Star Tribune
Jeanne Fox Alston	news consultant
Deborah Heard	news consultant
Don Hudson	executive editor, The Decatur (Ala.) Daily
Delano Massey	metropolitan editor, Lexington (Ky.) Herald-Leader
Maria Reeve	deputy metro editor, The (Minneapolis) Star Tribune
Linda Williams	assistant managing editor, The (Raleigh) News & Observer

Contest Coordinator

Reginald Stuart journalist and corporate recruiter, The McClatchy Company

The Excellence in Journalism Contest winners will be announced at the Awards Banquet on Saturday, Feb. 8, at 6 p.m. in the Memorial Student Center on the campus of Prairie View A&M University in Prairie View, Texas.

10:45 – Noon

How To Make Yourself Indispensable in the Newsroom

This session will teach you on how to become a valuable tool in the newsroom in the technology age. Professionals from all media platforms will inform you of secrets to be indispensable.

Charisse Jones, national correspondent, USA Today

Cornelius (Neil) Foote Jr., president/CEO, Foote Communications

Kasi Stunson, senior executive producer, KPRC-TV

Room 215

12:15 – 1:45 p.m.

Lunch

Speaker: Melanie Lawson

Anchor, ABC 13-TV

(See biography on page 9.)

Room 107

2 – 3:15 p.m.

Multimedia and Mobile Journalism

Multimedia and mobile journalism are changing the way news is gathered, disseminated and consumed. Learn about the various tools and applications that allow multi-platform journalists to shoot and edit photos and videos, translate and transcribe documents more efficiently, and remotely store tons of information, all from their mobile devices. It's journalism on the go.

Serbino Sandifer-Walker, assistant professor, Texas Southern University

Tiffany Williams, Twice Media Productions

Richard White, ABC-13 TV

Room 215

The World of Fashion Journalism

Have a knack for fashion and journalism? Up on the latest styles? Come walk the catwalk and get a glimpse of the world of fashion journalism.

Joy Sewing, Fashion Editor, Houston Chronicle

Room 216

3:30 – 4:45 p.m.

A Missing Piece of Black History by the Author of *Breaking The Line*

Award-winning author, professor and New York Times columnist Sam Freedman will explore a piece of black history that isn't commonly talked about or told. One of Freedman's widely-acclaimed books, *Breaking the Line*, is about two famous black college football coaches and two outstanding quarterbacks who broke the color line in professional football. Just like "Lee Daniels' The Butler," Freedman explains how these football coaches showed their activism on the football field.

Sam Freedman, NY Times columnist and Columbia University professor

Remaining Viable in the Radio Industry in a Technology Driven Society

With Internet and satellite radio steadily increasing, it may seem like radio is dwindling. This session will teach you how to remain relevant in radio in the age of the Internet.

Michelle Deselle, KPVM 91.3 FM

Kwame Hall, KRBE 104.1

Ayana Mack, Radio One

Sheldon Nunn, KTSU 90.9 FM

Room 215

Conference Program continues on next page.

Friday, Feb. 7 (cont'd) – Prairie View A&M University, Northwest Houston Campus

3:30 – 4:45 p.m.

Entrepreneurialism in the Mass Media Industry

The world of journalism continues to change. While the industry outlook isn't bleak as it once was, skilled journalists are still losing their jobs every day. There are a number of tools out there that can help journalists start, run, and grow their own successful businesses. With existing skills, a few new tools, and the drive to work hard, more and more journalists are jumping into entrepreneurial journalism and loving every minute of it. Come learn from those who have created their own footprints in the mass media.

Darlene Dorsey, Freelance Reporter

Jarren Small, CEO of SmallzMedia

Todd Smith, Publisher, Regal Magazine

Tiffany Williams, Twice Media Productions

Room 217

5 – 6:30 p.m.

Town Hall Conversation: Maintaining Integrity While Covering and Responding to Crises, The Famuan and Gramblinite Stories

What do you do when your school makes national news in a crisis? Come learn from and pose questions to professionals who have had to step in and play big roles at unexpected times, all the while keeping their integrity and credibility.

Fred Batiste, student publications adviser, Houston Community College

Cornelius (Neil) Foote Jr., president/CEO, Foote Communications

Ayana Mack, on-air radio/television personality, Radio One

Jonathan McCall, reporter/anchor, KROI Radio News 92 FM

Sheleah Reed, press secretary, Houston Independent School District

Room 204-206

Saturday, Feb. 8 (cont'd) – Prairie View A&M University, Northwest Houston Campus

9 – 10:30 a.m.

Newspaper Critiques

(By appointment only)

Room 221

9:15 – 10:30 a.m.

The 3 B's of Social Media: Breaking News, Building Your Brand and Being Responsible

With self-proclaimed journalists popping up every day, how do you distinguish yourself from the pack, distribute meaningful information and maintain integrity? This panel tackles the issues associated with handling breaking news, building a string media brand, and responsibly navigating the world of journalism. The session is especially relevant for young professionals entering the media.

Kenneth Ware Jr., digital media producer, KHOU.com

Misty Starks, president, Misty Blue Media

Room 107

10:45 a.m. – Noon

How To Succeed In Sports Journalism

It's tough to get into such a big industry, let alone scratch the surface. In this session you'll meet professionals who've covered stories and athletes across the nation in the world of sports. Let their knowledge and lessons help you make an impact in the sports world.

Jerome Solomon, Houston Chronicle

Kris Gardner, owner, The Houston Roundball Review

Max Edison, Houston Defender

David Nuno, ABC-13 TV

Room 107

Conference Program continues on next page.

Saturday, Feb. 8 (cont'd) – Prairie View A&M University, Northwest Houston Campus

10:45 a.m. – Noon

Getting Into Graduate School

Representatives from graduate programs will be on hand to answer all questions you may have about post-graduate education in their schools and guide you through the application process.

Nancy DeVille, Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism

Diane Nguyen, Columbia Journalism School

Room 215

10:45 a.m. – Noon

BCCA Board Meeting /Elections

Dr. Valerie D. White, BCCA chairwoman

Room 221

Noon – 1:15 p.m.

Lunch

Speaker: Alexis Jones-Herron

Associate Producer, KHOU

(See biography on page 11.)

Room 107

1:30 p.m.

Buses leave PVAMU Northwest Campus for Hilton Garden Inn

3:30 p.m.

Buses leave Hilton Garden Inn for the main campus of Prairie View A&M University

4:15 p.m.

Tour of Prairie View A&M University Campus

5 p.m.

Mixer

Memorial Student Center

6 p.m.

Excellence in Journalism Awards Banquet

Speaker: Stephen A. Smith

Sports Journalist and Columnist for ESPN.com

Memorial Student Center

10 p.m.

Buses leave PVAMU for Hilton Garden Inn

*See you next year at the
17th Annual National HBCU Student News Media Conference
Baltimore/Washington, D.C. area*

Speaker Bio's

Kayla Tucker Adams serves as the senior public relations director for The Potter's House/T.D. Jakes Ministries. She manages the public image of Bishop T.D. Jakes and all elements of The Potter's House, T.D. Jakes Ministries and T.D. Jakes Enterprises.

With more than 14 years experience in public relations, Adams served as director of communications for the Dallas and Ft. Worth chapters of March of Dimes. She has delivered motivational speeches and workshops for the March of Dimes, the National Association of Black Journalists, The Potter's House, Texas School Public Relations Association, Region 10 Education Service Center, Prairie View A&M University, Wiley College, Southwestern Christian College, North Texas Central College and various churches, empowerment conferences and youth organizations.

A Presidential Scholar and honors graduate from Prairie View A&M University, Adams received a Bachelor of Arts degree in radio/television broadcasting with a minor in business administration. She also holds a Master of Science degree in human relations and business.



Dr. Carol L. Adams-Means is an associate professor of communication at Huston-Tillotson University in Austin, Texas. She and her colleagues restored the Bachelor of Arts degree in communication, which was inaugurated in fall 2011. She served as president of the Texas Association of Broadcast Educators.

Adams-Means began her university teaching career at Prairie View A&M University, where she also served as the first news director at KPVM-FM (NPR) radio and remained in that position until 1999.

Adams-Means holds a post-doctorate in business from the University of Florida at Gainesville, Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Arts degrees in journalism from the University of Texas at Austin, a post-baccalaureate in health communication from the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston and a Bachelor of Arts degree in drama from the University of Houston. She is married and has two adult children.

Fredrick Batiste serves as a communications instructor at Houston Community College and advises The Egalitarian, the system's student newspaper

A graduate of Southern University of A&M College, he spent six years at the Hammond (La.) Daily Star covering news and sports before returning to his alma mater in 2008 to advise student publications. While at Southern, student writers racked up several awards under Batiste's watch, including a top-10 finish in special issues at the 2012 ACP/CMA National College Media Convention.



Kristen V. Carter founded JazziDreamer Entertainment LLC, a multimedia company specializing in writing and production services. She has written three feature length screenplays and continues to create scripted and non-scripted projects for TV, the Web, and film, including the award-winning short film "First Date" (2013), which is broadcast on Magic Johnson's ASPIRE TV Network. She has produced for a variety of top programs including NBC's "The Voice," Lifetime's "Project Runway" and MTV's "America's Best Dance Crew." In addition, Carter has served as a speechwriter for Viacom executives, including BET's CEO Debra Lee.

Carter has won several awards, including the Cosby Screenwriting Fellowship (2011) and the Best First Time Filmmaker Award at the San Francisco Black Film Festival (2013). She is currently writing the feature film version of First Date and pitching two docu-series projects.

Hailing from Newark, N.J., she is a graduate of Hofstra University, where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in television/video production.

Speaker Bio's (cont'd)

Although academically trained in cultural anthropology, **Dr. Bruce dePyssler** has taught media theory, journalism and a variety of media production courses, as well as advised the N.C. Central University Campus Echo for 13 years. He has conducted research in communication and development in both Mexico and India, has print production experience with the Durham-based Independent Weekly and has produced two documentaries about the African-American experience in Durham, "Upbuilding Whitted" and "In the House." He is working on a documentary project in Kenya on the use of improvisational theater to decrease adolescent pregnancy and HIV rates.



Michelle DeSelle is the host of her own prime time show at KPVU 91.3 FM. There she provides inspiration, discusses current events and plays three genres of music, one of which is country and western. DeSelle is the only African American woman in the state to do such and the first in the station's 30-year history.

DeSelle is an instructor of speech communication at Prairie View A&M University and formerly Texas Southern. Her research interests include understanding the ways in which communication erodes and sustains collaboration within and among local, national and global communities.

She earned a B.A. in broadcast journalism and an M.A. in communication from Texas Southern University. Her notable honors include the Stellar Communicators Award from her alma mater.

Darlene Dorsey is the community relations coordinator at the San Antonio River Authority. With 20 years in broadcast media, she has been a reporter at WOAI-TV and a freelance writer for the San Antonio Business Journal and San Antonio Brides Magazine.

Dorsey produced a college radio show about current events, news and music. She worked as a desk assistant and assistant producer at KTRK-TV in Houston. Her first reporting job was in Beaumont, Texas. After that she accepted a reporting job in Milwaukee, Wis.

She studied art and graphics at the University of Houston and graduated with a bachelor's degree in journalism from Texas Southern University.

Dorsey is married to a broadcast advertising executive and has two children and three dogs.



G. Max Edison is the award winning sports editor for college and professional sports at the Houston Defender, recently voted the nation's leading black newspaper.

A 31-year veteran in the business, Edison has extensive experience in print, radio and television. He hosted sports talk shows in Houston and is a regular guest on the "Sunday Morning Live" community affairs program on KMJQ, Magic 102.1 FM. Over the years he has covered a who's who list of regional and national sporting events. Super Bowls, NBA playoffs and championships, championship boxing events, the World Series, NCAA football bowl games and basketball tournament games are just a sample of the events Edison has covered throughout his career.

Speaker Bio's (cont'd)



A long time media executive, **Cornelius (Neil) Foote Jr.** is a principal lecturer at the Mayborn School of Journalism at the University of North Texas, where he specializes in the future of media, social media and journalism, media management, and multimedia storytelling.

Foote also runs Foote Communications, a public relations and media strategy firm. He launched Tom Joyner's BlackAmericaWeb.com and developed and directed the public relations for the nationally syndicated Tom Joyner Morning Show, BlackAmericaWeb.com and the Tom Joyner Foundation. Foote also worked at several media outlets, including the Miami Herald, the Washington Post, the Dallas Morning News and the Belo Corporation. He is the editor/co-founder of PoliticsInColor.com and former North Texas Publisher for Girlfriends Health Guide for Women of Color.

Foote has a B.A. in government from Wesleyan University and holds a master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University and an MBA from Southern Methodist University.

Samuel G. Freedman is a columnist for The New York Times and a professor at Columbia University. He is the author of seven acclaimed books, most recently *Breaking The Line: the Season in Black College Football that Transformed the Game and Changed the Course of Civil Rights* (2013).

His books have won numerous awards including being a finalist for the 1997 Pulitzer Prize. Freedman writes the column "On Religion" and was a staff reporter for The New York Times. He was also a regular columnist on American Jewish issues for the Jerusalem Post and has contributed to The New Yorker, Daily Beast, New York, Rolling Stone, USA Today, Salon, Tablet, The Forward, and BeliefNet.

A tenured professor at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, Freedman was named outstanding journalism educator in 1997 by the Society of Professional Journalists. In 2012, he received Columbia University's coveted Presidential Award for Outstanding Teaching.

Freedman holds a bachelor's degree in journalism and history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He lives in New York with his wife, Christia Chana Blomquist, and his children, Aaron and Sara.



Kris Gardner is co-founder of The Houston Roundball Review in 1994. The HRR began as an NBA draft publication but evolved into covering the Houston area college and pro basketball teams.

Beginning in 1995, Gardner appeared as a basketball analyst on numerous Houston sports radio stations. He has covered the NCAA Women's Final Four since 2002, the NCAA Men's Final Four and the NBA All-Star Games. Gardner is part of the trio and producer of the "KG, the 5th Ward Wildcat and Doc" podcasts.

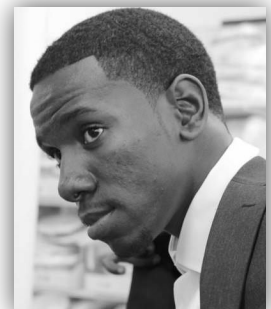
Gardner is a member of the Houston Association of Black Journalists and the United States Basketball Writers Association. He is a voter for the USBWA national college basketball awards as well as the John R. Woode, Naismith and Senior CLASS Awards.

He is a 1994 graduate of the University of Houston graduate with a B.A. in business administration.

Kwame Hall is a radio-personality with six years experience in the industry having worked for Radio One Houston and Cumulus Media Houston.

Successful at leading high performing teams through all phases of projects, he is a charismatic and persuasive radio talent offering expertise in public speaking, advertising and media relations. Hall is a writer and editor who communicates effectively with target audiences through strategic brand management and PR campaigns.

His latest community events include hosting an NFL Play 60 event, promoting health and fitness in Cinco Ranch and feeding 52 children free Whataburgers at the Boys & Girls Club in the 5th Ward.



Speaker Bio's (cont'd)



Dr. Amber Johnson is an assistant professor of communication in the Department of Languages and Communication at Prairie View A&M University. Her research merges qualitative and rhetorical research design in the areas of identity, sexuality, performance and digital media. She has published articles in several journals, including "Critical Studies in Media and Communication," "Text & Performance Quarterly," "Liminalities: a Journal of Performance Studies" and "Communication Quarterly." Her book, which will be published by Peter Lang Press, is titled *Messy Intersections: Navigating Cultural Terrain*. The book blends poetic narrative, autocritography and photography.

Johnson holds a Ph.D. in communication arts from Pennsylvania State University, and bachelor's and master's degrees in communication from St. Louis University.

Charisse Jones is a national correspondent for USA Today and co-author of "Shifting: the Double Lives of Black Women in America," (HarperCollins) winner of the 2004 American Book Award. She was a staff writer for The New York Times and part of a Pulitzer Prize-winning team at The Los Angeles Times who covered the L.A. riots. She has been a guest on "Good Morning America," the "Today show," C-Span's "Washington Journal," a contributing writer for Essence Magazine, as well as a contributor and guest commentator for National Public Radio.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism from the University of Southern California.



Frank LoMonte became the executive director of the Student Press Law Center in January 2008 after practicing law with Atlanta-based Sutherland LLP and clerking for federal judges on the Northern District of Georgia and the Eleventh Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals. Before law school, he was an investigative journalist and political columnist for daily newspapers in Florida and Georgia.

His articles about the First Amendment and media law topics have been published in Slate, The Atlantic, Education Week, The Chronicle of Higher Education, the American University Law Review and the First Amendment Law Review.

LoMonte graduated magna cum laude from the University of Georgia School of Law, where he serves as an adjunct professor.

Jonathan McCall is the 6 and 10 p.m. main anchor and executive producer at KAVU-TV, the ABC affiliate, in Victoria, Texas.

He has worked at CBS affiliates, KZTV in Corpus Christi, Texas, and KSLA-TV in Shreveport, La., where he broke such national stories as the copyright infringement trial of Tyler Perry and the federal raid on the Tony Alamo Ministries in Fouke, Ark. While serving as the morning reporter in Las Vegas for KLAS-TV, the #1 CBS affiliate on the West Coast, he covered the investigation into the death of Michael Jackson and the appeals process of O.J. Simpson.

McCall was a meteorologist in the U.S. Navy and a certified forecaster as part of 2004 Wasp Expeditionary Strike Group in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. While in the military, he filed stories for Navy-Marine Corps News, the Pentagon Channel and anchored a monthly newscast for the City of Norfolk, Va. His reporting helped the station win back-to-back Emmy awards from the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences-Pacific Southwest Chapter in 2009 and 2010 for Best Morning Newscast. In 2013, he was honored as Best News Anchor and for Best Breaking News reporting from the NATAS-Lone Star Chapter.



Speaker Bio's (cont'd)

Sheldon T. Nunn is music director for KTSU 90.9 FM. The native Houstonian is an avid music lover, jazz connoisseur and alumnus of Texas Southern University. Before coming to KTSU, he served in the U.S. Air Force. Nunn also worked in corporate America as a research and development technical professional at NASA, Weed Eater, IBM, Schlumberger, Hydril, Shell and Kraton Polymers. Other pursuits include time spent as a media correspondent for Jus' Jazz Media, Jazzreview.com, freelance writer and photographer for numerous independent publications.

As a professional photographer, Sheldon has photographed artists, concerts, festivals and jazz related events. He often serves as KTSU's unofficial photographer.



David Nuño joined the KTRK Sports Department in 2012. Before his break into broadcast television, Nuño served as marketing and communications manager for the Harris County Houston Sports Authority and was host on Yahoo Sports Radio and 1560 The Game interviewing athletes and celebrities.

Prior to radio, Nuño worked as weekend sports anchor and reporter for ABC affiliates KXXV-Waco, Texas, and KRHD-Bryan/College Station covering his alma mater.

He also served two years for the Dallas Mavericks as corporate and Hispanic marketing manager.

Nuño grew up in Houston and has a degree in broadcast journalism from Texas A&M University. He and his wife, Elizabeth, have three children.

Sheleah D. Reed serves as the press secretary for the Houston Independent School District. In this role, she is responsible for developing and executing media strategies, assisting school principals and administrators with crisis communication and is chief spokesperson for the state's largest school district. Prior to this position, she served as executive director of communications for Prairie View A&M University.

Reed has worked 15 years in communication focusing on branding, crisis communication and marketing including stints at The Princeton Review, Texas Southern University, Security One Federal Credit Union and PrimeWay Federal Credit. She has served as a consultant to record labels, professional athletes and small businesses and taught college students the principles of public relations and the fundamentals of advertising.

A Houston native, Reed earned a bachelor's degree in communications from Prairie View A&M University and a master's in journalism and public relations from Texas Christian University. This year, she launched Shine Communications Group, a full service marketing and branding consulting firm.



Serbino Sandifer-Walker is founder of the Social Media Correspondents group, www.socialmediacorrespondents.net, which covers untold stories in underserved communities. She created the hashtag #TwitterNewsChat as a social media newsfeed.

Sandifer-Walker is the creator of the historic website, Houston Student Movement, www.houstonstudentmovement.com, which chronicles Houston's civil rights movement. Her work on Houston civil rights led the Texas Historical Commission to designate a historic marker on March 4, 2010, in honor of the 50th anniversary of Houston's first sit-in.

Sandifer-Walker is a founding board member of the National Association of Black Journalists Digital Journalism Task Force. She served as president of the Houston Association of Black Journalists (2006-2007), when it was named NABJ's Chapter of the Year. She is a graduate of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism.

Speaker Bio's (cont'd)

Joy Sewing is the Houston Chronicle's fashion and beauty editor, covering fashion, beauty, celebrity style, fitness and other lifestyle topics. She also writes the ShopGirl blog on Chron.com.

An award-winning journalist, Sewing worked for the Kansas City Star, the New York Post and has written for Money, People, Vibe, Shape, Time and Town & Country. She has interviewed hundreds of famous faces, from Oscar de la Renta to Houston's own Beyoncé Knowles, and is a regular style commentator and speaker at local and regional style events. In 2013, Sewing was profiled on international sites, The Coveteur and The Huffington Post.

A former competitive ice skater, Sewing became Houston's first professional African American ice skating coach while still in college.

Sewing holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Houston, a master's degree in business management from Webster University and taught journalism at Central Missouri State University.



Jarren Small is CEO of SmallzMedia, a media company he started while a student at Prairie View. He shoots music videos and documentaries "to express his love for mass media." He has done contract work for the NBA, BET and Comcast sports and is in the process of starting another business.

Small's interest in media started when he attended Hightower High School, where he was accepted into the broadcast media academy. He came to love the film side of the media world and learned how to shoot music videos, short films, PSAs and commercials.

He majored in mass communication with a minor in marketing at Prairie View A&M University.

A former president of the Student Government Association (2011-2012), he interned at Houston mayor's office and the city's HTV network.

Todd A. Smith founded the online publication Regal Magazine (RegalMag.com) in November 2006 to highlight inspirational Black men and provide a platform to address their issues. Later he launched "Regal Roundtable," a male talk show that features one topic per episode and allows men of all races the opportunity to present their own unique perspective.

He is a movie critic for RegalMag.com and stars in the web television series "Celibate...and Looking for a Serious Relationship."

He has taught journalism at Texas Southern University and Lone Star College.

A native of Houston, Smith received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and political science from Southern University and a Master of Arts degree in journalism from Texas Southern University.



Jerome Solomon is a sports columnist for the Houston Chronicle and radio talk show host for Houston's ESPN 97.5 radio. He has won writing awards for investigative journalism, feature writing and columns, and his "King Solomon's Mind" blog has been a popular feature on Chron.com since its debut in December 2006.

After majoring in engineering in college, the Houston native traveled the world as a flight attendant before turning to journalism, where he began as a freelance writer for the Chronicle at \$25 a story. He moved on to cover the Big 12 and eventually became the paper's lead writer on college football and basketball, where he covered national championship football games, major bowl games and Final Four tournaments. He has also covered five Olympic Games, many major golf tournaments like the U.S. Open and The Masters, as well as numerous Super Bowls. He was the New England Patriots beat writer for the Boston Globe.

Solomon is president of the Houston Association of Black Journalists.

Speaker Bio's (cont'd)

Misty Starks is the founder of Misty Blue Media, a digital publishing and content creation firm. She is an award-winning writer, video producer and technology advocate.

She has served as a communications consultant and writer for global Fortune 500 energy companies, an American university and a pioneer in the human resources industry. Prior to her work in corporate America, Starks was a producer for the internationally syndicated television program, "Judge Alex." She was also a Web producer for Black Entertainment Television. Starks has served as a television news writer and producer at KRIV-TV in Houston and at New York 1 News in New York City. Her written work has appeared in Essence.com, Glam.com and Honeymag.com.

A native of New Orleans, La., Starks holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Howard University and a Master of Liberal Arts degree in communications from the University of St. Thomas.



Kenneth Ware Jr. is a digital media content producer at KHOU 11 News and the host of a new Web series called #LNEM (Late Nights, Early Mornings) that will debut in mid-February.

He is an alumnus of Texas Southern University School of Communication and credits his success to his strong work ethic and "go-getter" attitude.

Renée E. Warren is president of Arielle-Wren, Inc. and co-founder of Noelle-Elaine Media, Inc.

Under her two nationally recognized firms, she has worked with many national companies, including BET, BTV247, Charles Schwab, Citibank, Black Enterprise magazine, Essence, MONEY magazine, Disney & Disney Channel, L'Oreal, the National Cancer Institute, the National Urban League, Pepsi, the Steve Harvey Foundation and UNCF.

Warren is an award-winning producer who has interviewed and/or worked with many notables including U.S. Presidents George W. Bush, George H. Bush, William Jefferson Clinton and Barack Obama, South African President Nelson Mandela and a host of international political leaders, celebrities and business leaders.

She is the co-author of *You Buy the Peanut Butter, I'll Get the Bread: the Absolutely True Adventures of Best Friends in Business* and serves as an adjunct/assistant professor at New York University, where she teaches social media and event public relations.

Warren received a B.S. from Old Dominion University and an M.S. from Columbia University. She has received numerous awards, including the Forty Under 40 Achievement Award and Old Dominion University Distinguished Alumni Award.



Richard White works at ABC 13 as production assistant and assignment editor. He is a native Houstonian and Prairie View A&M University alumnus. While he was an undergraduate, he was editor-in-chief for "The Panther," community assistant for University College, and completed internships with the Freedom Forum and The New York Times. After graduation, he moved to Washington, D.C., and worked for the Chronicle of Philanthropy, Washington Nationals, Washington Redskins and Washington Capitals. In 2012, he received a master's degree in journalism from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University.

Speaker Bio's (cont'd)

Tiffany L. Williams is brand manager and creative director for Twice Media Productions, LLC, a commercial photography and video production company based in Houston, Texas. Williams is also multimedia coordinator for the Houston Defender Media Group, where she writes and oversees multimedia projects for all Defender publications.

During her time at the Defender, Williams created the popular web series, “The Faces of Black Houston” and now serves as the project's executive producer.

Williams also works as an adjunct professor in the Languages and Communication Department at Prairie View A&M University, where she teaches video production.

She received her Master of Arts degree in journalism, with an emphasis in documentary filmmaking from Michigan State University and her Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Tennessee State University.



Black College Wire needs your stories of national appeal.

About Black College Wire

Black College Wire is a news service established in 2002 to promote the journalistic work of students at predominantly black colleges and universities and link those young journalists to training and employment opportunities in the field.

The news service was initiated as a project of the Black College Communication Association (BCCAnews.org), an organization for faculty members teaching journalism and mass communication at black colleges and universities.

The news service reinforces the training that students receive in the skills and principles needed to product quality journalism. It also provides a regular news report reflecting black college life that is available to campus and other news outlets, and links students to training and employment opportunities in journalism and related fields.

Black College Wire offers assistance and training to college journalists upon request.

www.BlackCollegeWire.org
bcwire@gmail.com

A note to my HBCU newspaper colleagues: It's possible

It was May 11, 2013, the day I had been longing for finally arrived. It was time for me to graduate from Kentucky State University. I couldn't be any more excited.

The best four years of my life were over in a blink of an eye. I was patiently waiting for my name to be called, so I could walk across the stage. Finally I hear Alysee Shelton, departmental honors and cum laude. I walked on stage, posed for a picture with my school's president and then took my bachelor's degree in journalism. As I was walking off stage, my excitement slowly turned into fear. It just hit me. I was about to enter the real world. No more parties during the week, random road trips and no more summer break...just straight work every day. I had an internship lined up, but what was going to happen after that?

Luckily, I've had two great mentors to help me get to where I am today.

Back in February 2013, my newspaper adviser told the staff we would be going to the HBCU journalism conference in Nashville. If that meant getting out of Frankfort, Ky., and not having class for a couple of days, then we were all on board. A week later, we hopped into a big white van with our over-stuffed suitcases to head to Tennessee. We were all pretty optimistic about what was to come at this conference.

Three hours pass by and we finally arrive in Nashville. At the conference, I met students from Tennessee State, Winston-Salem State, Hampton, Prairie View and other HBCUs. Outside the conference, we made an effort to get to know one another. Today many of us still keep in contact.

During the week, we would attend workshops led by professionals in the journalism industry. One workshop involved getting your résumé critiqued. I thought my résumé could use some work, so I turned mine in. I thought I would get a little feedback. What I got back was life changing.

Reggie Stuart ripped my résumé to shreds. "This is a disaster," "I wouldn't hire you" and "This has to be one of the worst résumés I've seen" were some of the phrases he used. No one ever really taught me how to write a résumé. I learned from Google. It was two pages long with every job I've ever worked listed on the pages. Even though Mr. Stuart's critique was pretty harsh, there was something about what he was saying that made me want to listen to him. I wanted to have a better résumé and be a better journalist. After what was probably the fourth résumé rewrite, Mr. Stuart realized I too was serious. That day, he decided to take me under his wing.

After the conference, we kept in touch. Mr. Stuart had me go from one task to the next. He thought it would be a good idea for me to intern at the Lexington Herald-Leader. I went to visit the metro

editor, Delano Massey, who was at the conference. Mr. Massey explained their internship program to me. In addition, he suggested I sign up for the NABJ national convention student project. I took his advice, and lo and behold I was one of the students selected for the print team.

I started my internship in May. That was probably the best internship I've ever had. I learned so much, and the editors were very helpful and trusting of us interns. They threw us into the deep end on our second day. I wrote about local fires, brewery expansions, new businesses, social media and Islam. At the end of the internship, I knew how to write hard news, features stories, business stories and even obituaries. I was more than prepared for the NABJ conference in July.

I finally get to the NABJ conference, and that is something I will never forget. Our leaders worked all of us to death. We would wake up at 9 a.m. and wouldn't go home until 8 p.m. Mind you, we had a 4 p.m. deadline every day. I made a ton of connections. I met so many people who were willing to help me find a job and improve my journalism skills. I still keep in contact with a majority of the people I met. During the convention, my mentor ran into the editor of the Duluth News Tribune. The editor was talking to Mr. Stuart and told him he was looking for a general assignment reporter. Mr. Stuart told me about this opportunity. I wasn't exactly thrilled at the idea of living in Minnesota. I'd never even heard of Duluth. Still, I knew this was my chance to finally get my foot in the door. One phone call and two interviews later, I got a call from the editor saying I got the job.

It is evident that anything is possible. My advice to you is to network as much as you can and make sacrifices. Meet as many people as you can. When you do, it's important to keep in contact with them. I'm so thankful for all the people I've met. They didn't have to take the time to help me, but they did. I'm beyond grateful for that. This industry is small; you never know when someone could help you out in a major way. Not to mention, you can learn a lot from the people you meet. I was told at the HBCU journalism conference that sometimes you have to make sacrifices early in your career in order to get to where you want to be later. That is so true. You may not want to work in a certain state, company or concentration of journalism. Do it anyway. You don't have to do it forever. It will definitely pay off in the long run. You may not have life figured out right now, and that's OK. Eventually everything works out and falls into place. As long as you're willing to make an effort and give it your all.

Alysee Shelton

2013 HBCU Conference participant
ashelton@duluthnews.com

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