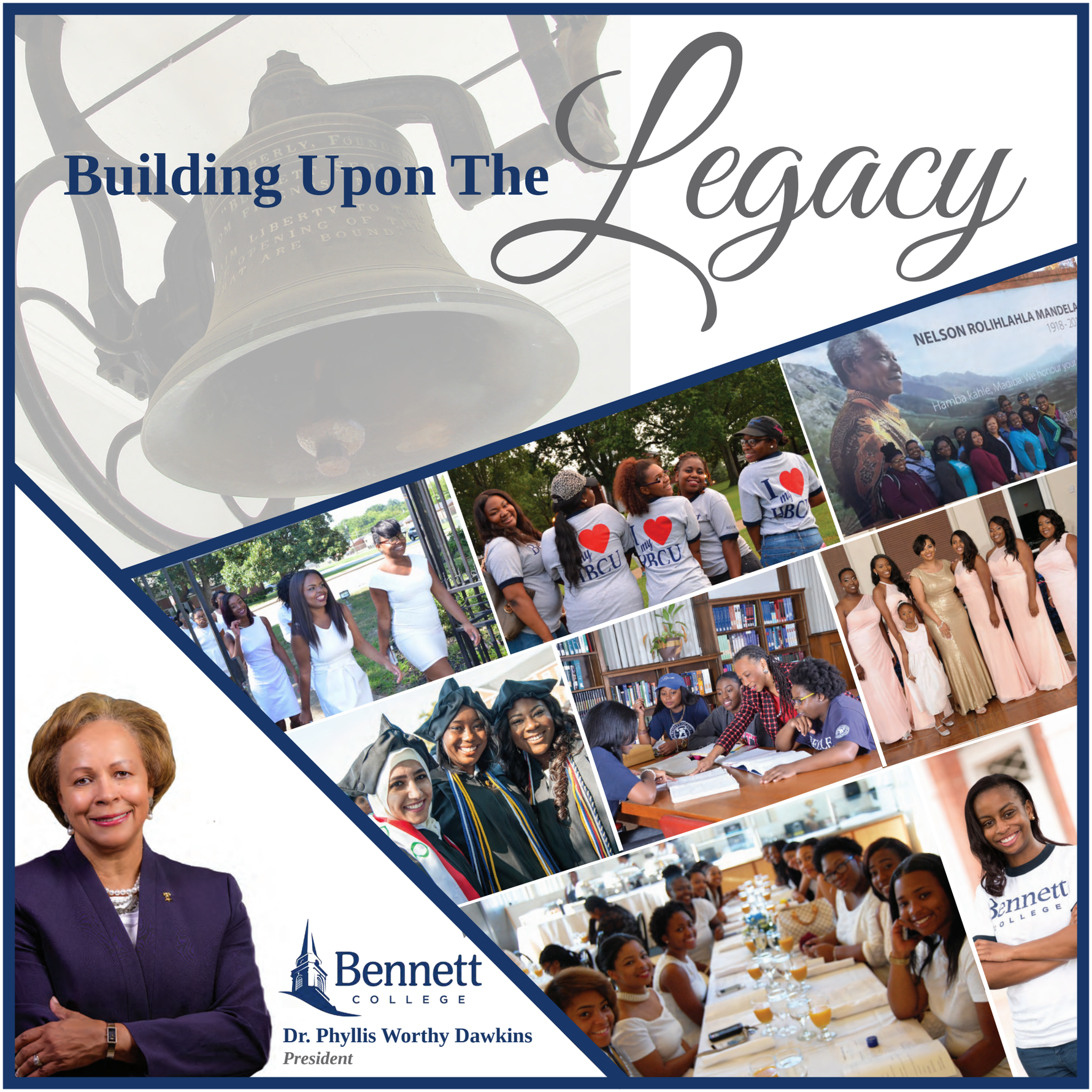
Building Upon The *Legacy*



Bennett
COLLEGE

Dr. Phyllis Worthy Dawkins
President

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends of Bennett College,

As I reflect upon my first year as President of Bennett College, one of America's two historically black colleges for women, I am enthusiastic and empowered by the commitment of our students, faculty, staff, alumnae, trustees, friends, donors and other stakeholders.

Addressing the College's longstanding challenges and embracing its considerable opportunities in constructing a path toward stability, future growth and development is job one. It is my pleasure to announce significant progress has been made over the past year – with more on the horizon.

This past fall, Bennett experienced an increase of 38% in first-year student enrollment, the first increase in several years. Next fall's enrollment picture is even more promising with applications up 60%. Private gifts to the College increased by 10% last year, led by loyal alumnae who contributed in excess of $1 million. Giving was also enhanced by the abiding commitment of the United Methodist Church, Bennett's founding denomination, and the United Negro College Fund (UNCF). We are on pace this year to exceed last year's results!

At Bennett College, we are proud both of our storied legacy of achievement and our record of stellar contributions to the Greensboro community and beyond. Our past accomplishments are the foundation upon which we are perfectly positioned to prepare women for leadership in a world that's embracing their equitable participation as never before. The presence of Bennett graduates will be visible and respected across the professions, as entrepreneurs, innovators, effective communicators and global citizens.

Bennett College adds significant value to its students, their families and their communities through a challenging but nurturing hands-on approach to education. The College boldly asserts its singular voice and perspective in a higher education landscape often characterized by uniformity and risk aversion.

Bennett College's unique approach to higher education yields impressive results. We cultivate women leaders who are socially responsible and civically engaged. Our small size is another strength, as it allows us the opportunity to connect and build a strong rapport with our students. Bennett College also meets our students where they are academically, offering wrap-around support services. Finally, Bennett provides a broad-based, liberal arts education that addresses the emerging needs of today's career force.

In short, we not only want to teach our students about the world; we want to give them the tools to change it. Our American democracy thrives with informed and engaged citizens. I am proud to say Bennett graduates, steeped in critical thinking and awareness of national and global issues, are prepared to lead and contribute.

Our goals and objectives are straightforward, and we invite all of our constituents and stakeholders, as well as members of the community, to support us in reaching these goals. Included in our targets are:

- Stabilizing enrollment through continued growth of new students and increased retention of continuing students
- Increasing financial viability by managing resources effectively and generating additional financial resources through larger enrollment and private gifts and grants; building a larger endowment for support of worthy and deserving students; and expanding government-sponsored programs, grants and contracts
- Investing in the strength and success of dedicated faculty and staff. Bennett faculty are developing new majors while engaging in more research that addresses workforce needs
- Expanding Bennett's participation in and partnerships with the Greensboro community and engendering mutually beneficial relationships to enhance the City and the College

Over the coming months, you can expect to learn more about Bennett College as we intensify our community outreach, communications, and marketing initiatives. This newspaper insert is only the beginning of the College's increased communications efforts.

To protect and preserve Bennett, we need community support. I plan to dedicate significant time and attention to fundraising and cultivating new friends. Likewise, we look forward to greeting many of you as you visit our beautiful, welcoming campus as part of our efforts to enhance our community presence.

I invite your observations, feedback, suggestions, participation and support. Please consider joining our quest to aid the emerging and historic ascendency of women to help make our state, our nation and our world better. You can reach me at phyllis.dawkins@bennett.edu or (336)517-2225.

Thank you for allowing me to share with you this special insert that highlights the essence of Bennett College, an institution that in 2016 proudly celebrated its 90th anniversary as an all-women's school.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Worthy Dawkins

Phyllis Worthy Dawkins, Ph.D.
President

Bennett College President Dr. Phyllis Worthy Dawkins has established partnerships within the Greensboro community and beyond with numerous organizations, including:

The Links, Inc.
Jack and Jill of America, Inc.
Las Amigas, Inc.
The Greensboro Men's Club
Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc.
Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity - Beta Epsilon Boule'

She has also formed relationships with the Pulpit Forum of Greensboro and Vicinity and the Greensboro Faith Leaders Council, while serving as a member of the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. Dawkins is also on the Members Committee of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) and the Mission Committee of the National Association of Schools and Colleges of The United Methodist Church, Bennett's founding denomination.

Dawkins was recently nominated to serve on the Executive Committee of North Carolina Independent Colleges & Universities. Moreover, she was just named one of the "50 Most Influential African-Americans in the Piedmont Triad" by Black Business Ink magazine, for which she will be honored May 9 at The Stevens Center in Winston-Salem.

Dawkins is affiliated with the Black College Fund Council of Presidents, and she is a member of the Greensboro Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., which is part of the Guilford County Pan Hellenic Council.

BENNETT BELLES HAVE STORIED HISTORY OF ACTIVISM, LEADERSHIP

In wake of the Me Too and Time's Up movements sweeping the nation, more focus is being placed on women's issues and on women as leaders.

Yet at Bennett College, leadership and social activism have always been part of student life.

Long before 1960 when Bennett Belles joined in solidarity with the four North Carolina A&T State University students who sat down at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro to protest discrimination, they picketed the Carolina Theater in 1938 over its racist practice of editing African-Americans out of films.

Bennett Belles also protested the negative portrayal of African-Americans in movies – a year before actress Hattie McDaniel played a maid and former slave named Mammy in "Gone With The Wind," for which she won an Academy Award for best supporting actress.

Bennett's activism in the late 1930s hasn't been nearly as well documented as its involvement in the sit-in movement, which is told in "Belles of Liberty: Gender, Bennett College and the Civil Rights Movement in Greensboro, North Carolina." The book, written by Bennet graduate Dr. Linda B. Brown, details the strategic planning behind the sit-ins and the active role Bennett Belles played.
The book is the selected read for this year's orientation classes at Bennett, which includes all first-year students. It was chosen to ensure current students know of the courage Belles before them demonstrated and to give them a historical context for the activism that is expected of them today.

"I wouldn't take anything for the experience I had at Bennett, especially during the civil rights movement," said Mayor Pro Tem Yvonne J. Johnson, a 1964 Bennett graduate and one of the Belles of Liberty. "The president when I was at Bennett was Dr. Willa B. Player, and I'll never forget her saying to those of us who were protesting that if she had to give out diplomas in jail she would. That was her way of supporting what we were doing." Johnson made history in 2007 when she was elected Greensboro's first African-American mayor.

She credits Bennett for giving her the confidence to run for political office.

"I never in my life dreamed of running for mayor of this city, but when the opportunity came I didn't hesitate," Johnson said. "I think a lot of that had to do with the experience I had at Bennett College."

Johnson now serves on the Greensboro City Council and is the executive director of One Step Further, a nonprofit United Way agency in Greensboro that provides mediation and court alternative programs to Greensboro's youth.

Brown, who wrote the book chronicling the Belles' sit-ins experience, said that while the United States is celebrating the reemergence of women leadership, Bennett has always nurtured and extolled student leadership.



Belles marching to the polls



Belles protesting in the 1930s

"This is not a new thing for Bennett College," Brown said. "When I was there in 1960, I knew that part of my education was to develop my leadership abilities and to be an outstanding woman – not just an outstanding person but an outstanding woman." Brown said she, Johnson and other Belles of Liberty dared to protest and get arrested because they knew they had the strong backing of the College.

"We had adults behind us who were supporting us, and we never felt like we were out there on a limb by ourselves," she said. "The professors that we worked with were wonderful. We had the support of my Aunt, Dr. Willa B. Player, and we knew that."

Bennett's legacy of producing strong women has continued through the decades. Examples include Dr. Gladys Ashe Robinson, a 1971 Belle who is a Democratic Senator in the North Carolina General Assembly and also Chairwoman of the Bennett College Board of Trustees, and Belinda J. Foster, a 1979 Belle who made history by becoming North Carolina's first African-American woman District Attorney.

That Bennett Belles have significantly impacted North Carolina politics is no surprise to Dr. Gwendolyn M. Bookman, chairwoman of the Department of Political Science and Sociology and an associate professor of political science. "Bennett Belles are also known as Voting Belles," said Bookman, citing a phrase coined by Congresswoman Alma S. Adams who taught art history at Bennett for 40 years.

Bennett's history of social activism has also continued.

Eleven years ago in September 2007, Bennett students traveled by bus to Jena, Louisiana, to join about 20,000 other people to protest against racial injustice in a case involving six black juveniles who were accused of beating up a white classmate and charged, initially, with attempted second-degree murder. The case highlighted systemic injustices often encountered by African-American defendants.

"Bennett students embrace the concept of using their voices to combat injustice in whatever arenas they encounter it," said Bookman. "They understand this to be a mission of the College and an important aspect of their Bennett education."

Johnson, who attended the famous March on Washington on August 28, 1963, less than a year before she graduated from Bennett, hopes students will continue their activism. Bookman has no doubt they will.

"This semester as we have in years past, we will continue providing Bennett students with the necessary tools to become dynamic leaders, adroit entrepreneurs and competent communicators – traits by which Bennett Belles are known," she said.

“At Bennett College, you can become part of our Center for Global Studies, where we teach students about other cultures and the importance of being global citizens while assisting them with opportunities to study abroad across the globe.”



BENNETT BELLES ARE GLOBAL BELLES!



Belles in Belgium

When you're housed in a city with four larger institutions of higher learning and an emerging law school, it might be easy to get lost in the shuffle.

However, one of the draws for Bennett College is its robust International Program, which since 2009 has sent about 200 students to 29 countries as far away and varied as Australia, China, Costa Rica, South Africa, South Korea and Tanzania.

Moreover, Bennett has hosted 19 international students from formal government scholarship programs from countries including Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Turkmenistan.

"We're proud to offer our students the opportunity to travel internationally," said Bennett College President Dr. Phyllis Worthy Dawkins. "It's one thing to read about a country online, but it's something else altogether to visit that country. Students who enroll at Bennett College get the opportunity to do just that."

Dawkins traveled with students to Seoul, South Korea, and Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa, last year on grant-sponsored trips.

Kim Drye, director of the Leadership Development Institute for Women, led a group of eight students and two staffers to Belgium last year.

"The students and staff had the opportunity to interact with conference attendees from 70 countries and attend sessions that examined key leadership theories and practices as well as the importance of adapting to leadership across boundaries," Drye said. "Bennett College has a long, rich legacy of preparing young women for leadership roles in a global society."

While some Bennett students go overseas for brief trips, others like Rochelle Givens spend an entire semester studying abroad. Givens, a junior business administration major who's double minoring in entrepreneurship and global studies, was in Cyprus during the fall of 2017.

"Bennett College puts a very strong emphasis on its International Program because the administration understands that not a lot of African-American women have the opportunity, funding and support to travel abroad," Givens said. "The Center for Global Studies has consistently improved during my time here by providing more opportunities and making sure students have passports and are able to enhance their skills and abilities."

Kelly Mallari, interim director of Bennett's Center for Global Studies, said she hopes to influence more students to travel abroad.

"The International Program at Bennett is designed to provide students the unique opportunity to study abroad at institutes of higher learning in over a dozen countries worldwide," Mallari said. "With anywhere from five to 10 students traveling to places like Cyprus, Senegal, Korea, China and Tanzania, Bennett provides a plethora of opportunities to turn Bennett Belles into Global Belles."

According to a study released in October 2017 by the Institute of International Education, students who study abroad for any period of time develop essential skills that will positively impact their professional development.

IIE data show that "about 10% of U.S. students go abroad at some point during their undergraduate years, and about 63% of them go abroad for eight weeks or less. Only 3% of all students spend an entire academic year abroad."

Moreover, the 2016 QS Global Employer Survey Report found that 60% of employers around the world "give extra credit for an international student experience, and more than 80% said they actively sought graduates who had studied abroad." The survey included the views of more than 10,000 employers in 116 counties on five continents.

Mallari, who earned her undergraduate degree in English, International and Global Studies and Religious Studies from UNC Greensboro, knows firsthand the impact of studying abroad. During her junior year at UNCG, she studied at the University of Westminster in London, an experience she called life changing.

"Prior to going to London, I'd always been afraid of heights and had never flown," Mallari said. "One of my best friends had studied abroad in Sweden and told me I'd have to learn to face my fears if I wanted to experience new things. From the moment I landed in Heathrow and walked out of the tube station, I saw a building that was 500 years old. Immediately, I felt immersed in a different world. It was amazing."

Mallari recommends traveling abroad to all college students and is determined to help many Belles seize the opportunity. This year, plans are for Bennett students to travel to Cyprus, Rome and Cuba. Additionally, Mallari said, exchange students from Cairo, Egypt, are expected at Bennett next spring.

Bennett professors also take advantage of international study opportunities. Dr. Valerie Ann Johnson, Mott Distinguished Professor of Women's Studies and Director, Africana Women's Studies has been awarded a residency for an intensive, two-week curriculum development program in interdisciplinary, contemporary antisemitism studies July 29-August 11 at St. John's College in Oxford, United Kingdom She'll use what she gleans from the intensive program to develop new course offerings for students.

"I'm well aware of the impact race and ethnicity have on behavior and the way societies are organized," said Johnson, an anthropologist. "My aim is … to increase global awareness through revised and new courses that integrate African diaspora studies and antisemitism studies."

Bennett College Provost Dr. Dorothy C. Browne, also the Institution's vice president for Academic Affairs, said Johnson's travel abroad will not only enable her to enhance Bennett's course offerings but may also motivate more students to study abroad.

"Data on factors influencing students to study abroad, especially students from underrepresented populations, show that faculty members with study abroad experiences influenced their decisions," Browne said.

Mallari can't wait to see how Johnson integrates what she learns at Oxford into her Greensboro classroom.

"I'm sure Dr. V.J. is going to do an amazing job as she already incorporates global elements into her curriculum. Likewise, she does a fantastic job of reminding Belles that they're stakeholders in their future and being a global citizen is essential to being relevant and to being heard in today's society."

BELLES DO IT ALL: GOOD GRADES, INTERNSHIPS AND TRAVEL ABROAD



Ophelia Murray '19

Ophelia Murray kept to herself as a student at Imhotep Institute Charter High School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

"I've always been smart and I've always had potential, but I was afraid to be a leader," Murray said. "When I got to Bennett I didn't come out of my room my first year other than to go to class, the cafeteria or required events."

Today Murray is Junior Class President and a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She's Secretary General of the Model United Nations, a member of Sisters of Service and on Bennett's quiz bowl team that will compete in the Honda Campus All-Star Challenge National Championship Tournament April 7-11 in Los Angeles.

Murray is among many Bennett Belles who credit Bennett for helping her not only to excel academically but also to become the leader she didn't think she could be.

"Bennett College has definitely transformed me into a confident woman," said Murray, whose cumulative GPA is just under 3.5. "Now I'm a leader. I'm out front and I feel good about it."

Sophomore Carmen Acosta is a mathematics major who was born in the Dominican Republic but graduated from high school in Raleigh. Like Murray, she is taking full advantage of the numerous opportunities to grow and excel at Bennett. Acosta has a near-perfect 4.0 GPA and is a peer tutor, co-president of the Math & Computer Science Club and president of the Bennett chapter of Alpha Lambda Delta Honors Society.

Acosta and graduating senior Aaleah Lancaster, from Bryans Road, Maryland, were among 10 undergraduates chosen last summer – out of more than 120 applicants nationwide – for a paid, prestigious math/biology research experience for undergraduates at UNC Greensboro.

Acosta aspires to study abroad while she's at Bennett and is trying to determine which semester would be best. Murray already has travelled abroad with a Bennett contingent that spent two weeks in China. This summer, she'll intern at Nike in Portland, Oregon, in a position the Fortune 100 Company tailored for her.

Dr. Gwendolyn M. Bookman, chairwoman of the Department of Political Science and Sociology and an associate professor of political science, said Murray is on the road to success.

"Ophelia is an outstanding young woman, and I'm proud to claim her as a political science major," Bookman said. "She's an example of the best Bennett offers… I expect her to continue to excel!"

Murray's father, a graduate of Fayetteville State University and Shaw University, died while she was in high school. Her mother has degrees from Princeton University and La Salle University.

"My mom has demonstrated there are no boundaries in life, and whatever I want to do I can do," Murray said. "When I was in middle school I took a fashion design illustration class at Moore College of Art & Design in Philly, and my senior year I took art classes at Temple University and got to do a show of the art I'd created."

The strong backing Murray received at home has been positively reinforced at Bennett where professors willingly work with students to ensure they remain on successful paths.

"I'd always been interested in other cultures because my mother is an ESL teacher and would come home and tell me stories about different cultures," Murray said. "But when I got to Bennett, Dr. Bookman mentioned the free passport program and encouraged me to apply to study abroad."

Likewise, Dr. Santiba Campbell, an assistant professor of psychology and the director of General Education, has had a huge impact on Murray.

"I took Dr. Campbell's honors course last year and … it really helped me become a better researcher and a better student," Murray said. "She'd always tell me to dig deeper and push me to get past my comfort zone and get past my boundaries."

Murray used Campbell's motivation to launch her successful campaign for class president, with "Dig Deep" as her platform.

Murray's role models include former First Lady Michelle Obama and California Congresswoman Kamala Harris. She also said she likes Bennett President Dr. Phyllis Worthy Dawkins.

"I think Dr. Dawkins is a wonderful president," Murray said. "She's very personable. She always give us hugs and asks us how our day's going."

This summer Murray will participate in Nike's Global Marketing Specialist internship program. It typically concentrates on marketing; however, Nike officials are allowing Murray, an aspiring lawyer, to spend two days a week in the legal department.

"They contacted me last year," Murray said. "The woman who called said Nike was impressed by my accomplishments. I'm super excited about the internship … I'm from the inner-city in Philadelphia, where not many kids get the opportunity to go to a big company like Nike."

Her success doesn't surprise Anneshia Vieira, Murray's former high school teacher.

"Ophelia is a bright young lady. She's organized, very caring and takes her academics seriously," Vieira said. "She also cares about other people's well-being. I always knew she was going to do well."



Murray posing in front of the Great Wall of China

BENNETT STUDENT JANIYAH SHELTON HAS ART SHOW



Janiyah Shelton

Prior to coming to Bennett College, Janiyah Shelton listed having an art show before she graduated as one of her goals.

Well, the sophomore Journalism and Media Studies major can already check that off her list.

Shelton had an art show March 13 at Greensboro Project Space, where 20 of her photographs depicting mental illness among college students were displayed. Greensboro Project Space was created by the School of Art at UNC Greensboro and is their off-campus, contemporary art center.

"Janiyah was part of another show we did with a Bennett College photojournalism class in the fall," said Greensboro Project Space Director Adam Carlin. "She approached me afterward and said she was really interested in having a solo exhibit. She had some really good ideas, and she took time to develop the project. She thought of different iterations of it and what that would look like together with what the audience experience would be. She even had something for people to read.

"What I liked about it a lot was her exhibition contained a lot of people and was about the people and their stories," Carlin continued. "A lot of times when artists have exhibits it's just about the work, but her exhibit contained the community and that's just a really powerful thing that artists can do and that's what she did."

Shelton became interested in photography in high school and started her own business as a junior. "I wanted to do something in the art field since I played instruments from middle to high school," she said. "I was really exploring what I wanted to do as a career – something that I would have a passion for forever."

Her exhibition focused on a subject that has gained national attention again in the wake of the February 14 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, that left 17 people dead and another 17 injured. The alleged shooter is known to have suffered from depression and has been treated for mental illness. Shelton selected the mental health of college students in hopes of shedding light on a subject that's all too often glossed over.

"My pictures are arranged by emotion," Shelton said. "I have a total of five emotions and 20 students, and I gave four students each the same emotion to display. My first emotion starts with joy, and I end with anger. I wanted to make sure it didn't start on a negative note to affect those who are seeing the show. It was a pretty stressful process juggling school work and preparing for an art show, and I want to thank those who participated in the show and were comfortable enough to share their stories with me."

Shelton turned down a chance to study abroad this semester because of the art show but doesn't regret the decision. She's one of many talented Journalism and Media Studies majors at Bennett College, where biology, social work, business administration, psychology and JMS are the top five majors.

In the summer of 2017, Shelton went with Assistant Journalism & Media Studies Professor Tom Lipscomb and four classmates to the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) annual convention in New Orleans, Louisiana.

"My experience at the NABJ Convention in New Orleans was wonderful," Shelton said. "I networked with other college journalism students from around the country, and each day we attended different workshops led by professional journalists from media outlets including Buzz Feed, NBC and CNN. I even exchanged business cards with an NBC photojournalist who gave me advice on ways to better market my business. He also followed me on Instagram at the end of the networking session."

Shelton was happy for colleagues Azuree Bateman of Charlotte and Dasja Sanford of Dayton, Ohio, who during the convention interviewed actor Shemar Moore and producer Jon Landau. Moore previously starred in the hit CBS shows "Criminal Minds" and "The Young and the Restless," and Landau is known for producing blockbusters including "The Titanic," which won him an Academy Award and earned $2.19 billion in gross revenues, and "Avatar."

"If our JMS professors didn't adequately prepare us, I don't think I would have had the insight to exchange business cards with a professional photojournalist," Shelton said. "I also don't think Azuree or Dasja would have been able to hold their own in the interviews with such famous people. I'm grateful for the outstanding and caring professors we have in JMS."

Lipscomb said he enjoys working with Bennett's JMS students and preparing them for the workforce.



Shelton discussing her art work with attendees at her art show

"The professors in JMS try to let the students understand that their success after college depends on far more than grades," said Lipscomb. "We try to introduce them to professionals in their field through networking events and internships.

"We teach them to write more effectively, and they create projects across multiple platforms of media that they can use to showcase their skills," Lipscomb continued. "Last year, as an example, Professor Tamara Jeffries held a workshop on interviewing techniques and discussed her experience interviewing Oprah Winfrey for an Essence magazine cover."

Shelton said she's grateful to Keonte Coleman, interim dean of professional studies, Lipscomb and other Bennett faculty, staff and students for attending her March 13 opening. Moreover, she's especially grateful to Bennett sisters Gloria Horton, Alexus Warren and Sanford for their support.

She's also appreciative of her parents, Jermail and Brandi Shelton, her grandmother, Cynthia Woodley, her Aunt, Shafon Scott, her Godmother, Althea Thompson, and her visual director, Braxton Langston-Chapman for their support.

Shelton, from Stone Mountain, Georgia, learned about Bennett from a family friend who's a graduate of the Institution. She said she fell in love with Bennett after a visit to Greensboro.

"I've made bonds with some Bennett women that I know I'll keep in contact with for life," Shelton said. "And I love my major and my professors."

It appears her professors are just as impressed with her.

"Janiyah Shelton's photography exhibit showcased her extraordinary work ethic," Lipscomb said. "She spent many nights working in the studio executing her plan, and many more hours poring over hundreds of photos to make her vision a reality. In the exhibit, she also created a community of young people who could bond over shared experiences and talents. I can't wait to see what she will take on next."

Shelton's post-graduation plans are to become a freelance photojournalist or to work for a major magazine or news station, which will allow her to travel the world taking photographs.

Chances are she'll one day be able to check that off her list too.





“Bennett College’s Journalism & Media Studies Department is a leader in preparing the next generation of communication professionals and scholars. JMS classes taught by outstanding faculty members expose students to cutting-edge technology while providing hands-on media experience.”

JOURNALISM AND MEDIA STUDIES NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART STUDIO

On January 9, a robust crowd including representatives from a U.S. Congressman's office attended the unveiling of Bennett College's new, state-of-the-art TV and photography studio.

Housed inside the Julianne Malveaux Journalism Building at the corner of Washington and Bennett streets, the new studio will enable Bennett College students to be on the cutting edge of media production. Journalism and Media Studies is one of the top five majors at Bennett College, and Bennett's JMS students are known for producing top-quality work.

Keonte Coleman, interim dean of Professional Studies and an assistant professor of Journalism and Media Studies, could hardly contain his excitement as he asked attendees to crowd into the nearly 500 square feet studio before turning on the lights to reveal an anchor desk with a 50-inch 4K monitor, a 70-inch 4K monitor, a flexible set with interchangeable panels, a light panel through which different color lighting can be displayed, a green screen, white and black backdrops for photography and cushioned chairs for interviews.

The studio was the brainchild of Coleman, who says Bennett Belles deserve to work in a professional studio that rivals studios on college campuses across the country. Coleman has taught at Bennett for seven years and is a former news producer at WXII in Winston-Salem, an NBC affiliate.

"What we have in this space is very flexible," Coleman said while addressing the crowd during the unveiling. "That was the mandate we gave the companies we worked with. We have a mobile set with walls that pull apart. None of this is attached to the structure. We also have a monitor on wheels…"

Coleman worked closely with Tamara Jeffries, interim chair of the Journalism and Media Studies Department and an associate JMS professor, and Tom Lipscomb, an assistant professor of Journalism and Media Studies, to bring the studio to fruition. Jeffries, an award-winning journalist, served as executive editor of Essence magazine from 2000 to 2004. Last April, Jeffries wrote an Essence cover story on TV icon and billionaire Oprah Winfrey.

Coleman emphasized that while the studio was created with Journalism and Media Studies students in mind, the entire Bennett campus will have access to it and will benefit from it.

"The reaction from the students was priceless," Jeffries said after the unveiling. "They're already planning photo shoots and talking about the shows they're going to produce. They've been doing great work using virtual sets and recording on their smart phones. Now they can take their work to the next level."

Lipscomb, owner of Tom Lipscomb Productions, works with Bennett's Journalism and Media studies students to produce a popular segment called The Weekly Ring, which catches viewers up on pertinent news about Bennett College students, staff, faculty and events. For the past two years, he's taken JMS students to the annual convention of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ.)

"The studio is going to make a big difference in how our students learn and in what they produce," Lipscomb said. "This studio represents a great day for Bennett College."

Bennett JMS student Ebony Duell, a sophomore from Raleigh, said she was overwhelmed by the studio unveiling turnout. The Department was especially pleased to have Julie Scott Emmons and Olga Perkins in attendance. Emmons and Perkins are the district director and constituent liaison, respectively, for U.S. Representative Mark Walker (R-N.C.)

"I think the studio is great, and I'm excited because I'll be able to work in it for another two and a half years before I graduate," said Duell. "I'd like to applaud Mr. Coleman, Ms. Jeffries and Mr. Lipscomb because they really put a lot of thought into the studio and they really look out for us students."

Nancy Martins of Raleigh, a sophomore biology major who's minoring in Journalism and Media Studies, said she's glad students from other majors attended the unveiling. Martins hopes to become a pediatrician and ultimately consult for a show like "The Doctors." She says the new studio will help her accomplish that goal.

Bennett College President Dr. Phyllis Worthy Dawkins greeted attendees at the unveiling and praised the College's talented JMS students. After the unveiling, she said she looks forward to the good work Bennett Belles will produce in the studio, which was paid for with funds from a SAFRA grant.

"Bennett has some very sharp Journalism and Media Studies students," Dawkins said. "I'm sure the new studio and the expert instruction they get from Mr. Coleman, Ms. Jeffries and Mr. Lipscomb will only increase the quality of work they produce."



Keonte Coleman, Tom Lipscomb and Tamara Jeffries sitting at new JMS studio desk

TOM LIPSCOMB, A PROFESSOR FOR THE AGES



Professor Tom Lipscomb

There's an adage that says, "Students don't care how much you know until they know that you care." Perhaps that's why many of Bennett College's Journalism and Media Studies students gravitate to Tom Lipscomb.

He demonstrates his care for Bennett students from working extra hours to help students create near-perfect news segments to using his limousine to transport them to off-campus events.

"Tom makes himself available to help students create media projects morning, noon or night," said Keonte Coleman, interim dean of professional studies and an assistant JMS professor. "He has a selfless spirit, and he places the students, the department and the College before himself."

Lipscomb, a native of Lynchburg, Virginia, came to Bennett after teaching a few classes in video production at UNC Greensboro. When he initially toured Bennett, the JMS Department was housed in a trailer and had only a handful of Mac computers.

"I met a couple of students who were very eager to learn how to edit media," Lipscomb said. "Even though I was new to the field, I'd gotten pretty good at editing and thought it'd be really fun to teach a class in addition to doing my own work with my video production company." Lipscomb was hired part-time at Bennett and fortunately became full-time along the way.
"Mr. Lipscomb is one of the hardest working men I know," said Ebony Duell, a sophomore JMS major from Raleigh. "I've had a lot of great professors at Bennett, but Mr. Lipscomb is a professor and mentor to me. He stays extra hours most nights to be around for students who need help outside of class."

Duell said Lipscomb sometimes comes to campus on weekends to assist students and knows many of them by name – not just those majoring in JMS.

"Mr. Lipscomb works hard, is there when you need him and never asks for any recognition," Duell said. "He's helped me throughout my Bennett experience, and I'm not sure there's enough time in the day to say how amazing he is."

No matter how much praise is heaped upon Lipscomb, don't expect it to go to his head. Last year when he was voted Outstanding Faculty Member by his colleagues, and later when he received the Faculty Service Award from the Bennett College National Alumnae Association, he seemed almost embarrassed by the attention.

And though he worked in concert with Coleman and Interim Department Chair Tamara Jeffries to bring a state-of-the-art TV and photography studio to the College, he seemed reluctant to stand in a photo with students at the January unveiling, saying he didn't want to steal their thunder.

"Professor Lipscomb works tirelessly to ensure our Journalism and Media Studies students are well prepared," said Bennett College President Dr. Phyllis Worthy Dawkins. "Last year I was interviewed by a fresh woman JMS student, and I was very impressed with her questions and preparation. I'm sure Professor Lipscomb, who accompanied her on the interview, deserves some of the credit."

Lipscomb hails from a family of educators. His mother, Elizabeth Lipscomb, is a retired professor from Randolph Macon Women's College (now Randolph College), where she taught for more than 40 years. His brother, Bill, is a Rhodes Scholar who works in Climate Science in Boulder, Colorado. His brother, George, is a professor at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina.

Working at Bennett where the faculty-student ratio is 9:1 affords Lipscomb the chance to get to know his students.

"I really like our JMS students because they're very loyal," Lipscomb said. "I put a lot of energy into encouraging them to commit themselves to learning new technologies so they can produce. I want them to be curious and to have the strength to follow through on their ideas."

Apparently, Lipscomb has always gone above and beyond – even for students with whom he was once in competition.

UNCG Professor Matt Barr taught Lipscomb three classes in the University's MFA program and said he was always gracious to his classmates.

"Our MFA Program at that time admitted about 12 students, who did their own projects but relied on their cohorts to help in the entire process of filmmaking ranging from pre-production to production to editing," Barr said. "Tom gave selflessly to his fellow students, to an unusual degree. I think his attitude was, the more I give the more I learn."

Barr said he thinks Lipscomb's passion for education comes from his father, Lloyd, a retired minister.

"I think the educational part of the ministry rubbed off on Tom," Barr said. "He deeply believes in the core mission of teaching and wants to help each student do her or his best. As a professor myself, I've learned that motivation is a key factor in student success. Tom works tirelessly to motivate his charges."

Just as he loves inspiring students, Lipscomb also loves playing soccer. In fact, he and his brother, George, won a Soccer Six National Championship in 2016.

That he's an avid soccer player is fairly well known around Bennett, and almost virtually everyone on campus knows about his three-wheeled elliptical bike and limousine. He purchased the bike after hip replacement surgery several years ago and now rides it five to 10 miles daily.

He bought the limo for use on personal special occasions but has taken Bennett students to off-campus functions in it, including a media workshop at Wake Forest University and a Learning Communities trip to watch a Tyler Perry movie.

Lipscomb credits his success at Bennett, in part, to his colleagues. "I've never enjoyed a working team more than Professor Jeffries and Keonte Coleman," he said. "They've been instrumental in bringing out my best work and ideas and giving me encouragement in challenging situations as well."

Coleman said the Department is fortunate to have him.

"Tom secured a programming spot on Sirius XM's HBCU channel 142 and has been the driving force behind the JMS Black History Month Media Festival the last three years," Coleman said. "He's also stepped up to spearhead Bennett College's transition into online learning. I don't know how many hours Tom sleeps, but I know he devotes a lot of his waking hours to trying to help JMS majors reach their full potential."



Lipscomb assisting two Journalism and Media Studies students with capturing footage at an event on-campus

DR. GIBSON ENJOYS TEACHING AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN BELLES' LIVES



Dr. Willietta Gibson

Winston Churchill famously stated, "We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give."

Dr. Willietta, Gibson, associate professor of biology at Bennett College, has spent the past seven years making her living at Bennett while simultaneously giving back and paying it forward for students throughout the Triad.

In addition to her course load at Bennett, Gibson serves as Project Director of the Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP). A National Science Foundation (NSF) program, LSAMP is committed to helping students of color complete undergraduate Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) degrees and increasing the numbers of students entering STEM graduate programs – particularly students from underrepresented populations.

And that, Gibson said, is why she teaches.

"I feel like teaching is a way to help students ensure their career and their livelihood," she said. "I feel like I'm making a difference in their lives by ensuring they're reaching their future goals."

Gibson, a native of Durham, North Carolina, hails from a family of scientists and science educators. Her mother is a retired math and science teacher. Her father is a former chemist. Both of her sisters chose STEM careers, with one earning an M.D. in pediatric nephrology and the other a Ph.D. in energy and mineral engineering.

"Education was strongly emphasized by our parents," said Gibson. "And all of us went to a Historically Black College. We had a choice, but I wanted to go to an HBCU for undergrad."

Gibson earned her B.S degree in Molecular Biology from Winston-Salem State University and her Ph.D. in Biomedical Science from the Medical University of South Carolina. She also completed a postdoctoral fellowship studying breast cancer treatments at the Biomanufacturing Research Institute and Technology Enterprise (BRITE) at North Carolina Central University.

After a stint teaching at Hampton University in Virginia, Gibson came home to North Carolina to teach at Bennett. It's a smaller liberal arts institution, but Gibson recognizes its historical importance and the critical role it continues to play in educating future game changers.

"Even though Bennett is a small campus, you can make a great impact," she said. "I like that its mission is to educate women and that I play a role in teaching and mentoring our future scientists and doctors."

Gibson's teaching and mentoring is not limited to Bennett. She has also given back and paid it forward through a program at her alma mater titled Girls Empowered in Math and Sciences, or GEMS. As part of the program, Gibson used strawberries to teach elementary and middle school students the fundamentals of DNA. She said they thoroughly enjoyed her presentation.

Gibson also spent part of her summer working with students in WSSU's SURE (Summer Undergraduate for Research Experiences) program, and she taught in Bennett's HBCU-UP Summer Academy. Sponsored by an NSF grant, HBCU-UP aims to strengthen STEM teaching and learning through the development and implementation of effective and innovative teaching and learning strategies with a thematic focus on Computational Science.

Gibson said she most likely would be a researcher had she not become an educator.

"Starting out I wasn't sure if I was going to go into academia or if I was going to go into the industry and work in R&D. It was between the two, but I felt more strongly about teaching."

Still Gibson, a tenured Bennett professor, commits a significant portion of her life to research and has conducted research and published journal entries on both prostate and breast cancer research. Her research interests are examining breast cancer heath disparities in women of color and natural products that are chemo-preventative agents in cancers.



Dr. Gibson poses with Belles in front of Virginia Tech's graduate school building during their visit

She currently serves as the Principal Investigator for a collaborative NSF grant with educators from North Carolina A&T State University and Elon University, titled Improving Undergraduate STEM Education. The researchers seek to improve laboratory instruction through implementation of case studies that emphasize the core scientific concepts students grapple with in class. From their research, the team has published several conference papers as well as an article in The Journal of Stem Education. Gibson said she recently submitted a case study that was accepted into a national science database, the Center for Case Studies Teaching in Sciences.

Her work on the IUSE grant and her work with LSAMP speak to Gibson's "by any means necessary" philosophy of making sure students who've decided to pursue a career in the sciences will, in fact, have a career in the sciences.

And while she understands the obstacles, she wishes the larger society would do more to instill in young students a love of STEM subjects.

"The lack of exposure to STEM opportunities at a young age and a lack of STEM role models and mentors are two of the biggest obstacles students face," Gibson lamented. "A lot of students have intentions on becoming a doctor or a lawyer when they get to college because that's what their family wants them to be or because those are the professions that are given more emphasis in schools."

Though fictional, Gibson was thrilled to watch a young person of color holding her own as a researcher, inventor and multi-faceted STEM expert in the recent blockbuster movie, "Black Panther," which featured many actors and actresses who graduated from Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

"Shuri was one of my favorite characters," Gibson said. "Having an African-American female scientist on a big screen in a movie seen across the globe is extremely important for younger minority females to see."

When asked about her most rewarding experiences as a Bennett educator, Gibson didn't hesitate.

"When students go on to graduate school and come back and ask me for assistance, just seeing how much they've grown is priceless."

YOUNG ALUMNA SHEMIAH K. CURRY SAYS BENNETT PREPARED HER WELL



Shemiah Curry '16

After deciding she wanted to transfer from the University of Missouri, Shemiah K. Curry heard about Bennett from a family friend who had attended the Institution.

"I expected an overflow of sisterhood because that's one thing she talked about all the time," Curry said. "I expected it to be a place where I could sharpen my leadership skills. She also said I would develop a deeper relationship with God while I was at Bennett, and Bennett exceeded all of my expectations."

Curry, a Chicago native and 2016 Bennett graduate, made the most of her time in Greensboro. She served as Student Government Association President. She was a member of the campus chapter of the NAACP, the Spirit of David Dance Ministry and the debate team. She also interned at the White House her sophomore year, becoming the first Bennett Belle to do so in nearly 15 years.

Curry is a fifth grade teacher at Forest Park Elementary School in Winston-Salem, where she joined the staff in January. But she actually made her foray into teaching just months after earning her degree – when she taught for nearly a year in Rwanda, in East Africa.

She got the job in Rwanda through Young Adults in Global Mission, the Lutheran Denomination's version of the Peace Corps.

"I interviewed Shemiah specifically for Rwanda after she had been accepted into YAGM Program," said the Reverend Kate Warn. "She had a very strong resume with a number of impressive experiences including internships at the White House and MSNBC. When I asked her to talk about the experience she most valued and was proud of, she talked about her student leadership role at Bennett. I was impressed with this answer – that the hands-on work in her own community was more important than the prestige or status of the other achievements."

Additionally, Warn said she found Curry to be "very thoughtful, honest about her fears at the prospect of moving to Rwanda and a person of good spirit!"

Curry taught at the FAWE Girls' School in Rwanda, from August 2016 until July 2017. She said Bennett more than adequately prepared her for the experience.

"I think my first high point was being affirmed that Bennett had given me everything I needed to be prepared for that moment," Curry said. "Bennett doesn't have every resource other schools have, but we work with what we have and I had to work with what I had in Rwanda. I was connected with sisterhood and mentorship while at Bennett, and those same sisters carried me through while I was in Rwanda."

Though she's currently teaching elementary kids, Curry ultimately plans to become a college professor.
"Both of my parents were teachers at one point, and I grew up in a family of teachers so I knew I was gifted with helping people," Curry said. "My parents' majors in undergrad were social work and psychology, so they told me they wanted me to do something different. I knew in some capacity I wanted to teach, but it wasn't until I got into education that I thought, 'okay, I can do this.' "

Curry gives a lot of credit to Dr. Karla McLucas, coordinator of research and projects in Institutional Effectiveness at Bennett, and to Dr. Valerie Ann Johnson, Mott Distinguished Professor of Women's Studies and Director, Africana Women's Studies, for exposing her to the collegiate level of teaching.

"I always thought if I were a teacher I had to be restricted to primary or secondary grades," Curry said, "but there was a collegiate level I really understood little about until they started talking to me about it and taking me to conferences."

During her time in Africa, Curry went on a safari, slept in tents, and "saw some of the most breathtaking mountains I think I will ever see in my life."

Yet while it sounds glamorous to teach English in a foreign country, Curry experienced some challenges. She lived with a Rwandan host family in a community with limited access to water and electricity. Daily food options were limited, and Kinyarwanda, the Rwandan language, is difficult to learn.

"Daily life wasn't easy in Shemiah's host community, and the educational institutions where she worked also held many challenges," Warn said. "Shemiah rose to the challenges and was always thoughtful, faced the tough questions about poverty and culture and gender dynamics, and processed these experiences at a very deep and heartfelt level."

Moreover, she made a lasting impact in Rwanda.

"Shemiah's students loved her, and she made a difference in their lives as a role model and teacher," Warn said. "She became a part of her host family and host community, and maintains many of those relationships still. Shemiah has every reason to be proud of what she learned and what she accomplished during her year in Rwanda."

Curry said she'd consider going abroad to teach again if she can find the time.

"I'll be very interested to see how much Shemiah's year in Rwanda continues to impact her interests and aspirations," Warn said. "She'll have much to offer if she ever decides to live and work abroad again!"



Curry speaks at Bennett, sharing her experience living in Rwanda


“Students who major in Business Administration at Bennett College can also minor in Entrepreneurship, which enables them to learn everything they need to know to start their own businesses.”

ALUMNAE LEAD BENNETT GIVING WITH MAJOR GIFTS AND BROAD PARTICIPATION

According to a recent survey by U.S. News & World Report, among Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) that provided data, the giving rate for their alumni is 11.2%, compared to a national average of 25.8% for private baccalaureate colleges.

However, Bennett College, with an alumnae participation rate of 35%, was touted in that July 2017 report for ranking third in giving among all HBCUs behind Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, and Claflin University in Orangeburg, South Carolina. Bennett and Spelman have the distinction of being the nation's only two all-women's HBCUs.

"Bennett College alumnae consistently step up to the plate to contribute in a major way to their alma mater," said President Dr. Phyllis Worthy Dawkins. "Since arriving at Bennett as Provost in November 2015, I've been thoroughly impressed with the way Bennett's alumnae donate their money and time to the Institution."

With three months left in the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2018, Bennett Alumnae have already donated more than $853,600 to their alma mater, including three gifts of $100,000 or more. Their benevolence puts alumnae support on target to eclipse last year's $1,000,085 contribution.

"It's not uncommon for me to get a telephone call, text or email from an alumna asking how she can help the College," Dawkins said. "That the alumnae reach out to us, rather than waiting on us to solicit them, shows they care about their alma mater, and they know we rely heavily on their support."

Bennett College National Alumnae Association chapter members like Dr. Alice Holloway Young say they will always give to Bennett College because Bennett gave so much to them. Young, a 1944 Belle and retired educator, enrolled in Bennett after hearing about the Institution from a teacher who'd taught in her elementary school. The teacher thought Young would be a good candidate for Bennett, and she even helped her fill out the academic work scholarship application.

"It really was a work scholarship, too, because I scrubbed floors, washed windows and shined brass on the doorknobs in the residence halls," said Young who lives in Rochester, New York. "The scholarship I received was for $2,500 which covered all four years."

Young has established an endowed scholarship in her name at Bennett, to which she said she gave $20,000 in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017, and $10,000 in the fiscal year before that.

"I give back because of that $2,500 scholarship," Young said. "You wouldn't be talking to me now if it wasn't for that scholarship. It gives me good joy to give back to Bennett.

Dr. Pamela Warner, a Greensboro pediatrician who graduated from Bennett in 1992, said she started giving to Bennett when she was in residency training and could finally afford to do so. Like Young, Warner is grateful for the financial assistance Bennett provided her.

"I received a full Presidential scholarship to attend Bennett," Warner said. "My parents wouldn't have been able to afford a private education for me since I had an older sister at A&T at the same time."

Warner, who said Bennett gave her "the knowledge and confidence she needed to succeed in medical school," isn't surprised that her alma mater consistently ranks in the Top Three in HBCU alumni giving.

"I know my Bennett sisters love our school as much as I do. And the friendly rivalry between the Greensboro Alumnae chapter and the Metro Washington, D.C. Alumnae chapter also helps. If we don't support Bennett, how can we ask others who aren't alums to support us?"

Shaunaray Otey '12, began giving back just four years after she'd graduated.

"I felt good giving back to Bennett because of the positive influence Bennett has had on my life," said Otey. "I lost my mother during my senior year at Bennett, and the faculty and staff, without hesitation, stepped in and helped me with small financial needs – like toiletry items and other things my mother would have provided."

Especially helpful to Otey was the scholarship coordinator at the time, Crystal Mattison. Today Otey serves as a scholarship coordinator and counselor at Bennett, and she knows how important it is for students to have "gap funds" in order to stay in school.

Executive Director of Alumnae Relations, Audrey Demps Franklin '72, said she's proud of the way her Bennett sisters have shown up for the College during the first three quarters of the current fiscal year. Every time Bennett calls, Franklin said, the alumnae answer.

"And what's really encouraging is young alums like Shaunaray Otey because they can influence other young alumnae," Franklin said. "Sometimes people think they have to wait until they're older and more established to contribute financially or to join the Bennett College National Alumnae Association, but the reality is alumnae are never too young to start giving back to Bennett. We appreciate and accept all contributions – no matter the amount."



Bennett Alumnae at their 2017 retreat

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