
THE CORONATION OF
The 45th
Miss
Bennett
COLLEGE
D'Aria
TYSHEA
COUTHER
BENNETT COLLEGE
1873
1926
GREENSBORO, NC
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2024 • 6:00 PM • ANNIE MERNER PFEIFFER CHAPEL



Purpose

MISS BENNETT COLLEGE is one of the official representatives of the student body at Bennett College, one of two Historically Black and women's colleges in the nation. She reigns for one year serving the Bennett community and the Greensboro community at-large. In addition to being active in the Pre-Alumnae Council, Miss Bennett assists in orientation and recruitment efforts. She is also responsible for initiating and completing a campus improvement project for the fall and spring semesters, ultimately completing a minimum of 75 hours of community service during her tenure.

Former Miss Bennet College *Queens*

2022-2023	Callyce Tucker-Reves
2022-2023	Ja'Nylah Lottie Johnson
2021-2022	Katiya Laster
2020-2021	Hannah Marie Ross
2019-2020	Taylor Kristian Adkins
2018-2019	Brooke Ashley Kane
2017-2018	Niquia Harris
2016-2017	Sallena Thompson
2015-2016	Kee'Aera Hood
2014-2015	Jasmine Marye Beckwith
2013-2014	Brenda J. Keels
2012-2013	Brielle Jasmere Kenney
2011-2012	Keyona F. Smith
2010-2011	Charnee Pearson Starling
2009-2010	Tiffany A. Johnson
2008-2009	Janine Quarles
2007-2008	Chemaye Herring
2006-2007	Johnette Reed
2005-2006	Latisha Wright
2004-2005	Carah L.B. Herring
2003-2004	Christine Pendleton
2002-2003	Crystal Henderson
2001-2002	Monica Graymon
2000-2001	Tanna Watson
1999-2000	Mattea Hill
1998-1999	Willacin Gholston
1997-1998	Takiyah Starks
1996-1997	Jasmine Canady
1995-1996	Jennifer Farris
1994-1995	Deirdre Pecchioni
1993-1994	Kelly Kniffley
1992-1993	Monica L. Hawkins
1991-1992	Natisha Hoskins
1990-1991	Yvette R. Williams
1989-1990	Kenyatta W. Scott
1988-1989	Sonja D. Hendrix
1987-1988	Summer Houston
1986-1987	Alicia McCollum
1985-1986	Penny Hill Speas
1984-1985	Rhonda C. Jackson
1983-1984	Nedra C. Crosby
1982-1983	Gloria C. Nunnally
1981-1982	Terri Lynn Philips
1980-1981	Rosalyn J. Scott
1979-1980	Kathy Crosby Wells
1978-1979	Rose M. Hudson

Program

PRELUDE ..... ANGELA SCALISE, VIOLINIST
JULIUS PRESCOTT, CELLIST
Courtesy of Indigo Strings

THE ROYAL OPENING

THE ENTRANCE OF THE OFFICIAL READER ..... Ms. Jasmine Faison '10
Assistant Director, Student Experience, Poet Laureate

THE ENTRANCE OF THE SGA EXECUTIVE BOARD AND CLASS OFFICERS

WELCOME AND THE OCCASION ..... Ms. Shelby Fogan '25
President, Student Government Association

THE ROYAL PROCESSIONAL OF PAST BENNETT COLLEGE QUEENS

THE ROYAL PERFORMANCE ..... BELLE BRIDGERTON ENSEMBLE

THE ENTRANCE OF MISS BENNETT COLLEGE 2023 – 2024 ..... Ms. Callyce Tucker-Reves '24
Former Miss Bennett College

THE ROYAL DANCE ..... SENIOR BALLERINA, THE EDUCATEDANCER STUDIO

The Entrance of the Royal Court

Miss Freshwoman • Ocean Pierson
Miss Sophomore • Munira Morris
Miss Junior • Taylor Coleman
Miss Senior • Alize Walker
Miss Royal Blue and White • Raven Sumner

The Entrance of Miss Bennett College
MS. D'ARIA TYSHEA COUTHER '25

THE ENTRANCE OF THE CROWN ..... Mr. Robert Walton
Grandfather of Miss Bennett College

THE PRESENTATION OF THE CROWN ..... President Suzanne Elise Walsh, JD

THE PRESENTATION OF THE SCEPTRE ..... Mr. David Richardson
First Gentleman

THE PRESENTATION OF THE SASH ..... Ms. Raven Sumner '26
Miss Royal Blue and White

THE PRESENTATION OF THE BELL ..... Kamiyah McDonald, Tiara Befford, Kamerin Bradley
Little Sisters of Miss Bennett • Class of 2028

THE PRESENTATION OF THE BIBLE AND
THE PRAYER OF CONFIRMATION ..... Minister Rachel D. Pridgen
Interim Chaplain, Executive Director, Student Experience

THE ACCEPTANCE SPEECH ..... Ms. D'Aria Tyshea Couther '25

THE ROYAL STROLL ..... Ms. D'Aria Tyshea Couther '25

CLOSING REMARKS ..... President Suzanne Elise Walsh, JD

THE ROYAL RECESSIONAL ..... Bennett College Royal Court

D'Aria Tyshea Couther '25

The 45th Miss Bennett College

D'ARIA TYSHEA COUTHER is a senior, education studies major, from Baltimore, Maryland. She grew up alongside her four older brothers—Allen, Darius, "little" Darius, and Darien. Her parents, Trina and Dante Couther, along with a supportive "village" including her grandfather Robert Walton, great-grandmother Lucy Crowder, and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins, have played a crucial role in her upbringing.

From a young age, D'Aria has been dedicated to service. Every weekend and summer, she joined her great-grandmother for church events and helped organize gatherings for her great-grandmother's Eastern Star chapter. This early exposure to community service ignited her passion for volunteering, which she continues to nurture by giving back to her high school and local organizations in Baltimore.

Despite facing significant academic challenges from grades 6 through 11, D'Aria's determination never wavered. Her GPA and academic record during this time did not reflect her true potential, making the college admissions process a struggle. In her senior year, she faced numerous rejections before being accepted to Philander Smith College.

Determined to seize this opportunity, D'Aria began her college journey at Philander Smith College just a week after high school graduation. Enrolling in a rigorous 12-credit summer program, she excelled, achieving a 3.75 GPA. This success, coupled with the independence of living away from home, marked a turning point in her academic career.



However, financial constraints led her back to Baltimore, where she attended community college. The familiar environment and social distractions impacted her performance, prompting D'Aria to seek a new direction to achieve her goal of becoming an educator. Her aspiration to attend Bennett College, kindled during a campus tour in 2017, was realized when she enrolled at Bennett in the fall of 2021, after reaching out to the admissions office just two weeks before move-in day.

At Bennett, D'Aria has embraced opportunities to build relationships, focus on her academics, and make a meaningful impact. She was nominated for the Enterprise Holdings ROAD Forward Scholarship, receiving $50,000 for her education. Her passion for education earned her the role of Ambassador of Pedagogical Studies in the Education Department and an ambassador position for the United Negro College Fund. As a member of the ninth cohort of the HBCU White House Scholar recognition program, she has been recognized for her academic, leadership, and civic achievements. As an HBCU Scholar, she served as an ambassador for the White House Initiative on HBCUs, connecting with HBCU students nationwide.

D'Aria dedicates much of her time to community service. She is a member of the Continental Societies Incorporated, a nonprofit organization focused on issues affecting underserved women and children, where she teaches young children about reading, nutrition, and hygiene. Additionally, she became a member of the "Oh So Fly" Zeta Xi chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated, serving in various roles, including President.

D'Aria's campaign for Miss Bennett College centered on enhancing the campus experience and inspiring her peers. She aimed to showcase her leadership skills while encouraging fellow Belles to realize their own potential. D'Aria advocates for confident self-expression and the preservation of Bennett's traditions, while welcoming new ones. She is committed to ensuring that every Belle enjoys a supportive sisterhood and remains dedicated to serving the Greensboro community and beyond.

D'Aria's favorite quote, from John C. Maxwell, encapsulates her philosophy on leadership: "Leadership is not about titles, positions, or flowcharts. It is about one life influencing another. A leader knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way."

Raven Sumner '26

Miss Royal Blue and White



Raven Sumner was born on June 4, 2003. She is a junior journalism and media studies major from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and was raised by Tyeisha Cooper and the Late Marcus Sumner. Raven dedicates her journey to her father, who passed in 2019, a loss that has fueled her drive to succeed and make a lasting impact.

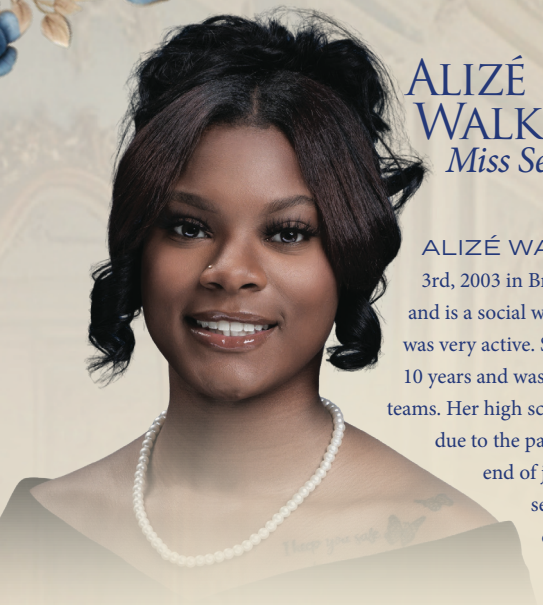
During her freshwoman year, Raven was honored to serve as Miss Freshwoman, representing the first royal court to return to Bennett College after the COVID-19 pandemic. This experience sparked her passion for leadership and advocacy, which she continued to nurture through an internship at City Hall, working under Councilmember-at-Large Isaiah Thomas in his communications department. There, Raven gained invaluable skills in communication, campaigns, and leadership, preparing her to advocate for change in every space she enters.

Currently, Raven serves as the event coordinator for the Your Health Our Hope organization, where she uses her creativity and leadership to bring her peers together. Known as the "goofy sister," Raven is passionate about building genuine connections with every Belle she encounters, ensuring that joy and companionship are always present in her community.

Through her involvement and dedication in various capacities, Raven is not only a leader but also a source of light and support to those around her. As she prepares to officially fulfill her duties as Miss Royal Blue and White, she carries with her the lessons learned, the memories cherished, and the drive to create lasting change for her sisters and her college.







Alizé Walker '25
Miss Senior

ALIZÉ WALKER was born July 3rd, 2003 in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and is a social work major. Growing up, she was very active. She was a cheerleader for 10 years and was also on the dance and step teams. Her high school journey was cut short due to the pandemic, so she finished the end of junior year and her entire senior year online. Alize's college decision process was very hard. She didn't choose Bennett College. Bennett chose her.

She is extremely grateful to have her mom, sisters, grandparents, and uncles in her life. Growing up, she experienced many challenges, but she never gave up. Recent discoveries and diagnoses have not stopped her from stepping out of her comfort zone and pushing through.

In the Spring of 2024, she took a significant step by deciding to participate in the Miss Ebony Soul Pageant. The preparation and day of activities proved to be incredibly busy, and at times, she felt like giving up. Despite the challenges, she persevered, maintaining a composed and spirited demeanor throughout the show. Her dedication and enthusiasm paid off, earning her the title of Miss Ebony Soul Runner-Up. With confidence, a kind spirit, and a great sense of humor, she was poised and eager to make her mark.

Through her campaign for Miss Junior, Alizé aimed to inspire her sisters and others to persevere in pursuing their dreams, encouraging them to embrace challenges and strive for excellence. Thanks to her experience at Bennett College, she has transformed from the girl she once was into a determined woman committed to inspiring young women to overcome obstacles and reach their full potential.



Taylor Coleman '26
Miss Junior

Hailing from Washington, D.C., TAYLOR COLEMAN is not a stranger to the Belle Experience. She follows the legacy of her mother, Belle Diarra (Day-R) Toye, class of 1997, and her aunt, Adera Carter, class of 2016.

Taylor is a proud alumna of Calvin Coolidge Senior High School's first Early College Academy, finishing with a 4.11 GPA. Demonstrating exceptional academic dedication, she accomplished the remarkable milestone of graduating with both a high school diploma and an associate's degree in general studies from Trinity Washington University at the age of 18.

As a student at Bennett College, Taylor received the Illustrious Belle Award in the amount of $20,000. Taylor has maintained a 4.0 GPA and has been recognized for her academic achievements on the President's List, Dean's List, and Honor's List. Taylor proudly serves as Miss Junior and is excited to serve her campus community. She is also an active member of the marketing team for the business club 'Bosses in Pearls' and serves as a student ambassador for the Society for Financial Education and Professional Development. During the summer, Taylor had the opportunity to intern with RTI International as a small business analyst, where she quickly mastered the intricacies of federal contracting and networking skills at a small business trade fair where she represented RTI with distinction. She also led in drafting procurement documents, contributing directly to business success.



Beyond her academic achievements, Taylor is passionate about a variety of hobbies. She enjoys creating art and dedicating time to her entrepreneurial pursuits in hairstyling, photography, and nail design. Taylor is known for her unique style that blends modern trends, classic looks, and one-of-a-kind accessories inspired by art, music, and culture.

Her diverse interests complement her commitment to education, leadership, and community service. She strives to uplift her peers and make a positive impact on campus and beyond.



Munira Morris '27
Miss Sophomore

MUNIRA INTISAR MORRIS is an interdisciplinary studies major with a concentration in finance and a minor in entrepreneurship. As the second youngest of five siblings, Munira is driven to excel, drawing inspiration from her accomplished family while forging her own path. Growing up in a Somali American family in Prince George's County, Maryland, she was homeschooled by her mother alongside her younger brother. This foundation instilled in her a strong sense of discipline, determination, critical thinking, and a love for God and knowledge, shaping her into a thoughtful and driven young woman.

Her name carries significant meaning. Munira, which means 'light,' and Intisar, meaning 'victory,' reflect her journey in life—illuminating every path she walks while turning obstacles into steppingstones toward triumph. From a young age, Munira displayed ambition and focus. She recalls playing with her dolls and siblings, already planning her future career and life goals with determination and clarity.

Munira's academic journey reflects this ambition. While still in high school, she was dual-enrolled in community college, taking a full course load to get ahead. Her passion for finance aligns with her dream to create wealth, not just for personal gain but to provide resources for helping others. She aspires to work in corporate finance, ultimately aiming to leave her mark on Wall Street, where she hopes to make a lasting impact on the financial world.

Attending Bennett College was a transformative experience after years of homeschooling. Initially shy, Munira embraced new challenges, blossoming into a leader. As a Strada Scholar, she conducted tours for prospective students, joined multiple campus clubs, and held executive board positions. Her academic excellence is demonstrated by maintaining a 4.0 GPA. Munira also completed an internship with HBCU First and ran for Miss Sophomore, an endeavor she never imagined taking on in her first year at Bennett.

Her professional experience includes a prestigious summer internship with Fortune 500 company Constellation Energy. Recently, Munira became a student ambassador for the Society of Financial Education & Professional Development, where she promotes financial literacy. She also joined Common Cause, a non-partisan organization advocating for voter registration and education.

As Miss Sophomore, Munira's campaign slogan—Inspire, Unite, and Innovate (IUI)—guides her leadership. She is dedicated to inspiring Bennett women to develop leadership skills and self-confidence. She plans to organize workshops on resume building, public speaking, and professional presentation to empower her peers.

Reflecting on the words of Martin Luther King Jr., Munira believes that "no matter how insignificant anyone tends to feel, each of our lives carries great significance." With quiet strength and resilience, she aims to create positive change while pursuing her dreams. Her faith, rooted in the Bible verse "I can do ALL things through CHRIST who strengthens ME," drives her to achieve her goals and uplift those around her.

Ocean Pierson '28
Miss Freshwoman

OCEAN SOLEI PIERSON was born on April 10th, 2006, in Valparaiso, Indiana, to her parents, Samara Stewart and Antoine Pierson. She is a Freshwoman biology major from Los Angeles, California, and she plans to become a labor and delivery nurse in the future.

In addition to her innate drive to be great, she subscribes to the belief and faith of her Lord and Savior. It is through His favor that prompted her to be a servant to her church community.

Ocean is a transformational youth leader, choir member, and soloist. Her participation in these activities has taught her valuable lessons, such as being a positive example for young children, working cooperatively, public speaking, and, most importantly, relying on God for guidance. In April 2022, she earned the "Servant Pandemic Warrior" Award for her committed service to her church. Even through a major event, Ocean stayed committed to God's cause and His work.

As a young girl, Ocean had the opportunity to acquire a second language. Her experiences as a Spanish Language Learner taught her very early to communicate with others outside of her culture, respect all people, and never judge a person by their outward appearance.

In addition to her commitment to the church, Ocean is committed to the arts. Ocean is a gifted singer, dancer, and actress. She majored in dance and was a cheerleader at Hamilton High School in Los Angeles. Hamilton High School is a respected institution known for shaping talents such as Kyla Pratt and Nipsey Hussle, to name a few. In addition to her commitment to training at Hamilton High, she appeared in a number of musicals with Amazing Grace Conservatory, founded by actress Wendy Raquel Robinson.



As your newly elected Miss Freshwoman, Ocean plans to channel the same energy, focus, and dedication to this position as she gave to her church community and arts.

Ocean's passions extend beyond her professional and artistic endeavors. Her inner spirit is filled with light and joy, and she basks in any opportunity to share that with others. Ocean's being is good for the souls that meet her because she strives to see the positive in people, which she shows through encouraging words.



BENNETT COLLEGE

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