



Anitka Grayson, Shaw University- c/o 1996, Business Administration with a concentration in Management



Name : Anitka Grayson

Your HBCU : Shaw University

Graduation Year : 1996

Major : Business Administration with a concentration in Management

1. Where are you from? Who introduced you to HBCUs?*

I am originally from Dayton, Ohio and was introduced to Shaw University by my Band Director Mr. Charles Brown. I was a clarinet player in the band. At the time, there was no Marching Band yet. Just concert and jazz band. A true family!



Students during the Homecoming

2. Why did you choose an HBCU over a pwi?*

I wanted to experience the atmosphere of support and the learning environment and continuing a legacy. I am the first to graduate with a bachelors degree in my family. I was so thankful for the support from family and friends. I didn't want to go away far at first but it was a blessing because I grew up and learned so much more responsibility of making decisions and discipline.

3. What is the story of your "experience" at Your HBCU given its heralded status as a stellar and prestigious institution?*

My experience is that Shaw University was a small institution but the love and the connection that we have for each other is priceless. Our greatest experience for us is once a year and that is Homecoming. Our Homecoming is Epic. I have only missed Homecoming twice since 1991. When we come together, it is something that we cannot explain, we have to experience it. We have graduated years ago and we still keep in touch with each with phone calls, visits, and social media.

4. "First time" experiences at your HBCU?*

My first experience was coming on campus with my family and was nervous that my family was leaving me. I was excited for a new experience but also scared of what was going to be next. My family met my band director, Mr. Brown and he let my family know that I was in good hands. While in the band room, I met several band members and they were so friendly. During that day, they gave me the nickname "Red" was I was light skinned and from the Mid-West. Til this day, some people at Homecoming still call me "Red". With feeling comfortable with everyone being so nice, I was feeling like I made the right decision of coming to Shaw University. I met my roommate, who I am still friends with till this day, and she was so nice. Everyone on my hall in the

dorm was nice and helped me move in. I had a SCD, who explained things about campus and made us Freshman feel comfortable. I was ready for the start of the new journey in my life.

5. Who are the professors that have impacted your life in and out of the classroom? How did they do that?*

My biggest impact of a professor was Dr. Arlease Salley. She taught us Business Classes. Quantitative Methods. One thing about her was the fact she always pushed me regardless of what was going on in my life. She wanted me to graduate and she truly cared. We even had talks outside of the classroom and she instilled in me so much wisdom and grace of being a woman. I was truly saddened when I found out about her passing which was about three years after I graduated. I was so blessed to have her in my life. The next person would be James Underwood. Mr. Underwood was a counselor for the students but he always had an open door policy to come and talk to him. I experienced death of two of my close friends while I was in school and he guided me and helped me focus to graduate. He passed away as well. Before he passed, we reconnected on Facebook and he wanted to make sure that I followed my dreams. I will forever be thankful to both of them.



Shaw University Platinum Sound Band

6. What to date has been your proudest moment @ Your HBCU?

My proudest moment at Shaw University was May 1996 when I graduated with my Bachelors Degree in Business Administration. I am the first in my family to graduate from college. I would not be who I am today without my Shaw University experience. It taught me that loyalty and pride that we have for our school, friendships, and ourselves.

7. Name 1-2 Global Majority (“melanin-efficient”) people that have inspired you. And why? (e.g. Oprah, Malcom X, Marcus Garvey, etc.)

Mary McLeod Bethune has always been such a huge inspiration to me because she did it by any means necessary to educate students. I have always been so empowered by her strength and wisdom.

8. When and how did you discover your passion in life?

I discovered my passion when I was home from college my sophomore year. My best friend, he was working at the Girls and Boys Club and asked me to come up there and assist him. I was resistant because my mind set was always so corporate America. I thought that was what success looked like. That day coming up to the center, changed my life. I knew then that I was going to be working in the community in some kind of capacity and I am doing that today. I realized helping others didn't feel like a job but a passion and I felt fulfilled.

9. Entrepreneur? Tell us about your business.

I started my company September 2015. My company is Sparkle Career Development Group, LLC. I started the company to provide high-quality professional Career Development services that empower individuals and businesses with the right tools for effective career planning toward lifelong stability. Also, I have been apart of the Central Ohio HBCU College Fair. We have been doing the fair for almost 10 years. I am also apart of a collaboration called Determined to Rise and we are three women who bring women together to inspire breakthrough experiences that are life-changing and impactful in the community.

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