



## **Brandon Edwards, Paine College- c/o 2016, Media Studies**



**Name :** Brandon Edwards

**Your HBCU :** Paine College

**Graduation Year :** 2016

**Major :** Media Studies

**Minor :** N/A

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

I am from the beautiful city of Augusta, Georgia. A country boy from a single parent (plus Auntie & Granny) household. I've known of the Purple Palace - Paine College- since I began middle school. My grandmother would narrate stories of the summer excursions my mom and aunt experienced as children as members of the Paine College Upward Bound program. Her narrations often, if not always, ended in a demanding lecture of me being a member one day. Well, by September of my sophomore year of high school, I found myself seated in a desk across from Earnestine H. Bell - LEGEND and then Director of Paine College Upward Bound- being interviewed and soon after accepted as a member. Being in Upward Bound, I became extremely familiar with Paine's campus. I have no doubt by my senior year, my peers and I could have given a descriptive, detailed oral presentation of everything between Haygood-Holsey Hall and the Gilbert-Lambuth Memorial Chapel. I spent at least three out of four Saturdays each month in a classroom, expanding my mind academically and culturally. My summers were spent in the dorms - my first two summers in Hollis Hall and my final summer in Grey Hall- experiencing the college dorm life. Of course spending so much time on this campus throughout high school, surely I was NOT enrolling into actual college at the same institution. But there's a man... with a plan... who knows your life's span... and HE said... you're a Lion. LOL! Praise the Lord saints. (insert audience clap response here)



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

A Different World. The Cosby Show. The End... lol. Seriously though, these two shows were vital components of my life. I didn't realize it then, but watching these characters provided a visual example of what I could do and who I could be. BUT, I dare NOT to forget the physical, tangible examples I had around me - one being my Aunt, a graduate of Augusta Technical College who became a successful Office Manager at a local doctor's office and my uncle, a graduate of Paine College, who later attended seminary school and later became an engineer and pastor. I was born a creative. I lived vicariously through the characters I admired on my favorite shows. From age 7 to 10, I just knew I was the red Power Ranger- yes, it is capitalized. RESPECT IT. From 11-15, I was the only male member of Destiny's Child who could only be heard in harmonizing in the shower. You get it! But I've always had a weird connection to Dwayne and Ron from A Different World. Dwayne was the smart, "wait, let's think about this", "I'll see you guys later, I have to study", dependable friend. Ron was the potentially smart, cram for a test, "what am I wearing to the party?", socialite who knew everybody. I was a mixture of the two-30% Dwayne , 70% Ron! I had "Dwayne Wayne" potential, but I found tapping into my Ron side was more fun. But, I digress... I chose MY HBCU over any PWI after feeling the vibe through the screen. I needed to find MY Hillman... and Paine College was that and so much more.

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

As cliché as it may sound, my HBCU molded me into the Brandon R. Edwards I am today. Paine College broke me down and put me back together for the better. Let's do some math, shall we? 2016 (I graduated at the top... of the stairs on the left side of the stage. HA!) - 2009 (I skipped onto campus eager to be eager and not so eager to learn) = 7 YEARS OF STRUGGLE, GROWTH, SELF-DISCOVERY. Yes, I was a student for SEVEN YEARS y'all. But, won't he do it!? As I said before, I was born a creative. I knew this long before enrolling into #MYHBCU. I wanted to be on tv. I wanted to be an entertainer. I wanted to make people feel good for a living... but I didn't believe in it. As a freshman, I followed the advice of everyone but ME. I selected Early Childhood Education as my major- "I like kids, I love math, and there will always be jobs available for teachers. I can just do what I really like on the side." Yeah. Sure. As time progressed, I found myself extremely unhappy. Then, one day- I remember it well- one of my instructors told me to wait after class because she wanted to talk to me. We had just received mid-term grades and... well, I didn't make the honor roll. As my last classmate exited the classroom, she said- "So when are we going to change your major? Your grades look sadder than you do when you come to my class." WHEW CHY! THE DIRECT HIT! THE CONVICTION! GOODNESS GRACIOUS! But... I collected what was left of my face, put myself back together, and changed my major to Media Studies. I wholeheartedly doubt that I would have received the same type of attention at a PWI. And this has nothing to do with race. An HBCU, for me, meant family away from family. And though my HBCU just so happened to be located in my hometown, in many ways, I was still "away". The fact that she paid that much of attention to me that she noticed the change in my characteristics and normal personality, I cherish to this day. TO THIS DAY! (Insert Deontay Wilder meme here) Did I answer the question? Close enough though, right? LOL

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

Paine gave me so many experiences, I'd be here for DAYS writing about them all. One of my favorites would be my very first probate. Of course being a lover of television, I had seen the movies and shows, I had watched Drumline one hundred times, but I had never experienced the vibe of a real HBCU College probate. Lord! The gym was packed with people, EVERYBODY was sweating, the stands were full, I had to stand in the corner. That Delta line was about 15 deep and those girls gave me chills, seriously. I know they are supposed to be "lit" with steps and chants... and it was DEFINITELY LIT... but you couldn't help but feel- at least I couldn't- the ladies' energy and emotions. You actually saw the connection from a daughter's eyes to her mother's eyes crying tears of joy and "I did it Ma". Tears everywhere! Hair everywhere! RED EVERYTHING. They had accomplished something many of them had probably been waiting almost all their lives to do. It was deep for me. But chy... I would've never guessed, years later, that I would be sitting at MY LITTLE SISTER'S probate... crying like the proud brother I was. It was the UGLY CRY too! SHOUTS OUT TO ALL THE LOVELY LADIES OF DST, ESPECIALLY THOSE PAINE COLLEGE DELTAS!

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

Prof. Watson Prof. Burnett Dr. R Mr. Woodson Dr. Entinge Ms. Connie Ms. Brown in the cafe Ms. Wilson Mr. Cody Ms. Brunson Mrs. Carlyle Ms. Dixon Thank you. I love you... forever.



