



Chaquetta Walker, Grambling State University- c/o 1996, Special Education



Name : Chaquetta Walker

Your HBCU : Grambling State University

Graduation Year : 1996

Major : Special Education

Minor : Elementary Education

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

I was born and raised in Pontiac, Michigan about 25 miles North of Detroit. As stated previously, my oldest sister was an Alumni of an HBCU as well as some of my favorite high school teachers.



Chaquetta Walker, proud HBCU Alum of Grambling State University (c/o 1996) | Image Credit: Chaquetta Walker

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

I never intended on attending a PWI. My oldest sister attended and graduated from Tennessee State University and I knew I would follow in her HBCU footsteps. Felt Like Home - Feel free to elaborate...Although my sister graduated from TSU, I always knew I was going to Grambling State. They had a great College of Education program that I knew would afford me to reach my professional goals. Grambling is located in the very small town of Grambling, Louisiana and I believed not being in a major city would allow me to stay focused on my goals, grow independently, as well as gain the Black college experience I was seeking.

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

The story of my "HBCU experience" allowed me to meet friends that were from near and far. Even more than 20 years later, we still manage to make time to get together at least once a year outside of homecoming. My experience allowed me to grow independently without my parents being there to guide me hands on, I was able to keep my eyes on the prize with other African American students who were all there for the same purpose, and create everlasting friendships. My "HBCU experience" is one that I will forever cherish and hopefully pass on to my children.

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

N/A

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

Dr. Jagers introduced me to the world of Children's Literature in which I have a love for today. Dr. Thomas inspired us by connecting his students to such greatness as Dr. Lorraine Monroe, Marva Collins, and Juwanza Kunjufu. Learning about the impact these people have made in the field of Education, made me yearn to do the same. I hope as an Educator, I have equally made the same impact on my students. Dr. Newman was the most compassionate and passionate professor I've had. Her desire to produce productive Educators showed how much she cared not only for the profession but for us. She took the time to know us outside of the classroom as well, which proved how authentic she was in showing us that she cared for us. Expecting greatness from each and every one of her students made me work harder to be the teacher she "trained" me to be. Ten years after graduation I arrived at homecoming early just to make sure I could visit her. When she opened the door, she greeted me by my first and last name. That brought tears in my eyes just to know that she still remembered me and not just my face.



Dr. Loretta Walton Jagers won the NAFEO award | Image Credit: thegramblinite.com

6. Best restaurants on/near campus? Best dishes?

I remember us going to Ruston for the buffet at Shoney's quite often. However, the best place to eat near campus was none other than Tasty's Chicken. Where else could a broke college student get a 2 piece and a roll for \$1.25?? (Sadly, after 2010 Tasty's closed down!)

7. College crush?

Hmmmmm this is interesting. I will withhold his name but I will say I ran into him at homecoming this year and I felt like a little freshman all over again. LoL

8. What is your major? and Why did you choose it?

I was a double major in college. My major was Special Education and regular Elementary Education. I've always wanted to be a teacher since I was a little girl so going to college, my mind was already made up on the direction I wanted to go.

9. Where are the spots to go to if you wanted to cuddle with your boy or girlfriend?

I don't remember any specific place, but my sophomore year we finally fought and won the opportunity to have opposite sex visitation in our dorm rooms (with the doors opened)! LoL

10. What are the chants heard most often at the sporting events?

GS-GS-GS-GS-U.....(drum beats).....I THOUGHT YOU KNEW! Of course we always sung the alma mater and the fight song which EVERYONE still knows by heart!!

11. How are you positively active on campus? (e.g. clubs, SGA, etc.)

I was a member of the CAP program (Campus Aids Prevention), Vice-President of Kappa Delta Pi International Honors Society in Education, Earl Lester Cole Honors College, Michigan Club, and

the Student Government Association.

12. How did you overcome your nervousness about going to college?

I don't think I was nervous at all. I have an extremely close relationship with my mother and sisters and I was missing them more than anything. I remember crying everyday for the first two years! LoL

13. How did your HBCU prepare you for a diverse workplace?

My HBCU prepared me immensely for a diverse workplace. First, I did half of my student teaching in a predominantly white elementary school a few miles away. I was able to work with other Educators who showed me that they equally cared for children and the love of learning and educating had no color. Also, Grambling State's population at the time was made up of fifty-percent of out-of-state students. I was able to collaborate with colleagues from different backgrounds but who also shared my same beliefs and philosophies. Currently, I am a fifth grade teacher in the Middle East working for Abu Dhabi \Educational Council. I teach English, Math and Science to the local students here. Living and working in a different country has been an adjustment, but since I'm a GRAMBLING grad, I have had no problems dealing with the cultural differences. Is this diversity or what?

14. What advice would you give high school students filling out college applications for the first time?

My advice would be to research the HBCU that catered to your future profession. Do not choose a school based on the band, athletics, or hear say. This will save you a lot of time in the long run because I know many people who changed majors reluctantly only to find out their school did not offer their intended major once they arrived.

15. If you could only speak two sentences to the youth coming after you what would you say?

I only get two sentences? LoL "College graduation day was the BEST DAY of my life! DO NOT miss out on the opportunity to fulfill your greatest potential! "

16. How did your HBCU help you to transition into your careers workforce?

Grambling had a phenomenal career center which offered resume writing opportunities catered to your field. Throughout my tenure starting in my freshman year, I had the opportunity to visit many classrooms and observe great teachers who I learned from.