



Cherie Meador, Shaw University- c/o 2000, Mass Communications



Name : Cherie Meador

Your HBCU : Shaw University

Graduation Year : 2000

Major : Mass Communications

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

I am from Chicago, Illinois and grew up on the South Side of Chicago. I attended a predominantly black high school and was in the concert and marching band for 4 years during that time. During the 90s most people would say it was one of the best high school bands in the city. Through that experience I was exposed to HBCUs. Particularly my high school band director, Mr. Michelangelo Taylor. He introduced me to the idea of attending an HBCU and participating in the band in college. At the time I didn't realize that learning to play an instrument could actually result in a college scholarship to attend an HBCU. I definitely wanted to attend an HBCU not only for the strong history they each possess, but also for the ease of assimilation. I was introduced to Mr. Charles Brown, band director at Shaw University. He was persistent in his recruiting of me. I absolutely have no regrets with my decision to attend Shaw U!



In Chicago at work in my office

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

I wanted to attend an HBCU not only for the strong history and purpose for existing, but also for ease of assimilation. While, it crossed my mind to consider a PWI, I knew that I would not have that sense of family community and support that HBCUs have been known to offer it's students. I really yearned to be in an environment where there were people who looked like me, fellow students who were perhaps diverse in upbringing, but who were being educated to be able to make an impact on the world in which we live. There is no greater time for high-school students to consider attending an HBCU.

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

My experience at Shaw University was second to none. Attending the first HBCU in the south was one of the best decisions I've ever made. There were small class sizes, and the faculty and staff knew students by name. Shaw was the place where I was allowed to emerge as a leader. My participation in many activities and in organizations was a starting point of shaping who I was and would become. I was allowed to create my own experience in many ways. For instance there was not a school yearbook at the time, and the institution wanted to revive the once tradition of having a yearbook. There was a committee who would select the next editor-in-chief. I decided to apply

for the position and I was selected. I even recruited other students to join me in this fantastic opportunity, and we were given an empty space on campus to create our own workroom. It was this experience that really allowed me to lead a team of my peers to do work for the University, work that would live on for years. I also was selected as Miss Homecoming and cultivated friendships during my time at Shaw. There were some friendships that have lasted since that time. I was initiated into the Beta Rho chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated during my sophomore year, Fall 97. This is one of my greatest experiences as Shaw. I joined 6 other young women as we pledged AKA. There were so many lessons in my experiences at Shaw University and so many joyful moments that are lifelong memories. I even met my sweetheart and now husband an Alpha Phi Alpha Man.

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

My first time seeing a Greek probate "rollout" was amazing. I looked at 6 guys in all black with their faces painted and thought wow I hope to be able to pledge AKA. At the time I didn't know that the number 5 was a guy from Atlanta who I would date and later marry. Even when we began dating I still didn't know he was an Alpha.

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

Dr. Babatunde "Tunde" Oyinade was the chair of the Mass Communications Department at Shaw University during my tenure. He was always encouraging and even afforded me the opportunity to apply for scholarships that would allow me to go to a national conference in New Orleans. I ended up receiving the scholarship and was later afforded the opportunity to join with a roving reporter as we explored different HBCUs in their journalism programs. Through this sort of mentorship program, we discussed research, journalism and ways in which HBCUs could improve their mass communications programs. Then there was Ms. Evelyn Lowe, who was a mass communications instructor. I'll never forget how she would always say "what doesn't come out in the wash will certainly come out in the rinse." That phrase stuck with me throughout the years.



Cherie & Rashaan Meador, college sweethearts

6. Are you a member of a sorority?

I'm a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated and was initiated into the Beta Rho chapter in fall 97. I was the first in my immediate family to to pledge AKA and attend an HBCU.