



## **Cordero Davis , West Virginia State University- c/o 2013, Communications**



**Name :** Cordero Davis

**Your HBCU :** West Virginia State University

**Graduation Year :** 2013

**Major :** Communications

**Minor :** Public Relations

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

I am from the Mississippi Delta and great HBCU's like Jackson State University and Mississippi Valley State University were a normal part of our culture. My high school was all Black and we had one of the best high school marching bands in the USA-The Marching 100 of East Side High School. I also had the privilege of being apart of the Upward Bound program from 8th-12th grade which gave me on-campus experience at an HBCU including free college credit courses.



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

HBCU's are the bread and butter to Black culture, Black education, and Black prosperity. As a first generation grad, I did make the mistake of choosing a PWI first but I learned shortly after that an HBCU is where I belonged. During my time at the PWI, I felt like an imposter, I did not have the educational support I needed, and majority of the campus was 80% White. This played into my growth as a student, as a Black man, and as a soon to be Black professional. I knew I needed more and I got that after transferring to my HBCU, West Virginia State University. At STATE, in a short amount of time I gained community, I had mentors/sponsors, I had opportunity, and most of all I had peace.

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

At STATE, I had the honor and privilege to serve as the 2012-2013 Mr. West Virginia State University. During my reign, I had the opportunity to found and charter the first business fraternity that provided students with access to professional development and careers post college. I also had the honor of resurrecting my Beloved and historic social fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi - Tau Chapter founded in 1923 and serving as its Polemarch/President. I also served on the SGA, PRSSA, NAACP, and the Leadership Institute. My HBCU experience was one I'll never forget and I'm forever indebted to its abundance of opportunity and growth provided throughout my time at STATE.

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

“First time” feeling like I belonged, like I had purpose, and that I would be somebody. HBCU’s show you that your Black is infinite and limitless.

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

Sharon Smith Banks - Taught me the importance of finishing what I started, ask for what I need, and to never settle no matter what I face in life. Dr. T. Ford Ahmed - Gave me the tools to persevere and cultivate my skills through public speaking, international relations, and leadership. Dr. R. Charles Byers- Empowered me to be the best leader on and off campus, supported me when I didn’t have the resources, and showed me what great leadership should look like for Black students by always having our backs.



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

While attending WVSU, I was always the student who found a solution anytime I saw a gap. It was imperative that I spoke up and found the right leader on campus to help me drive access for our student body. Due to lack of resources on HBCU campuses, this pushed me to think outside the box and build community around my ideas. These same tactics have helped me cultivate an incredible career in Silicon Valley. As a diversity and inclusion leader, it’s my job to find solutions when I see a gap for Black and Brown communities. I can not thank my HBCU enough for shaping me into the leader I am today which has in turn helped thousands around the globe feel more included and like they belong in the workplace.