



## **David King, Alabama State University- c/o 2018, Political Science with a concentration in Public Administration**



**Name :** David King

**Your HBCU :** Alabama State University

**Graduation Year :** 2018

**Major :** Political Science with a concentration in Public Administration

**Minor :** Public Policy and Administration

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

I am from Gary, Indiana, located in Lake County, Indiana, the northwest region of the state. I participated in March-April of 2013 in an HBCU Tour, where I was exposed for the first time to historically black colleges and universities. On this tour, I toured Morehouse, Claflin, FAMU, Alabama State, Tuskegee, and several other institutions. Morehouse was actually my first choice, and I received acceptance, however, I could not afford to foot the bill to attend the school. This college tour hosted by the G.E.M.S organization in Gary which has been led by Mr. James Piggee for over thirty plus years. He personally took me in to meet with Morehouse recruiters, helped get my application fee waived and even put in great words for me to get accepted into the institution.



David King, Jr., a senior political science major though unsuccessful in his 2017 run for SGA President of Alabama State University, he remains the most productive SGA Senator, having authored and presented more than 40 plus bills on student issues, etc.

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

So believe it or not, after I could not afford to attend Morehouse, I wrote HBCUs off as being incompetent and not being for me because I wanted to be diverse, I wanted to have exposure and experiences. I didn't want to be babied and I wanted to be challenged. Therefore, I had begun to look at HBCUs as not being a place I could receive the best education. So I started my first two years at Indiana University, a PWI. However, my girlfriend, who started at Purdue University wanted to attend Alabama State, and ASU happened to be on both my list and her list when we first went on the college tour, where we met and started dating. However, I tried over and over to talk her out of going because I was convinced she was making a mistake, but I was interested in going with her just to be with her. But when I got here, though the feel was different and it was a culture shock for me, it was what I needed and missed the entire time. So, I can honestly say, I didn't choose ASU, I believe God designated me to be at ASU and be here for a special time and special reason. But in being here I learned that my decision to come here with my girlfriend completely changed my life and made me a stronger and better person.

### **3. What is the story of your "experience" at Your HBCU given its heralded status as a**

### **stellar and prestigious institution?\***

My experience has been an uphill challenge of learning, growth, and development. Though I originally thought that I would transfer back to Indiana University, there is NOTHING like an HBCU experience. This experience has taught me so much about growing and maturing, and that any person can change when they become enlightened. From being able to serve in Hall Council as President to now serving as the Editor-in-Chief of the Hornet Tribune Newspaper, the Executive President of the University Programs and Activities Board, and the 2017-18 White House HBCU All-Star Student Ambassador, I have learned about the importance of serving others, getting an education for those around you, and taking what I learn here and going back to my community and investing the knowledge there. My experience has been one of excitement and expansion in myself and my talents, and I believe that I have learned about our people and have gained a greater love and appreciation for being black and attending a beautiful institution.

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

I can't help but think back to my first days when my only meals were served in the dining hall, or when I stayed in the freshman residence hall as a transfer student. Getting on the Megabus in Chicago and traveling to Atlanta, and then Montgomery with everything I owned, and only \$12 dollars in my pocket and traveling for more than 36 hours, I can remember that the beauty of the campus I remembered from two years earlier was still the same. Being able to have faith, even though I was not enrolled in classes, had no financial aid, and no prospects of a job, that I was going to go to classes, meet with professors, and work with them to get my work done and stay on task. And then things fell into place, I became Hall Council President, I was voted as Campus Programming Board President, I was nominated to serve as Editor for the newspaper, I got my first work-study job in King Hall, and then I was elected as senator in the SGA. And it was all because the first thing that I heard when I arrived at ASU was "Opportunity is Here" and I believed that, and I took that very seriously. And every day I wanted to keep moving forward to make sure I maximized opportunity.

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

Some of the professors who have impacted me include Dr. Andre Jackson, one of the first professors I had when I stepped on this campus and my political science professors, Dr. Alecia Hoffman, Dr. Byrdie Larkin, Dr. Regina Moorner, and Dr. Sharon Herron-Williams. Each of these professors in some way positively made contributions to my educational experience and growth. Whether it was making personal financial investments in helping me attend national research conferences to present original research or helping me navigate through developing solutions to issues at the university as I continued to obtain leadership positions, each of these individuals played significant roles in who I have become academically and socially. I know that every one of them have done things that have helped shape me and how I see things, and they have given me keys to doors of opportunity that at a PWI, I would never get.



David who is ASU's 2017-18 White House HBCU All-Star gathered two dozen students to travel to

the 2017 Congressional Black Caucus Legislative Conference in Washington DC in September. During the trip students not only participated in Congress...

#### **6. What is your major? and Why did you choose it?**

My major is political science with a concentration in public administration and I chose it because I believe that our society is too influenced and dominated by individuals who take advantage of the system. Being able to learn about the system, its inequalities and inefficiencies show me how to fight for the betterment of our society and the better treatment of all people. I think our system is very damaged and does not really help people as much as it hinders. I think that every person deserves the opportunity and deserves the right to be free from oppression and politics. I think that we ought to use the system of government for the better good of all people and not the benefit or damage of certain people.

#### **7. What to date has been your happiest moment @ Your HBCU?**

My happiest moment at my HBCU honestly, was recently being able to bring students and administrators to the table to talk about university issues and agree to come together on cultivating solutions for building the Alabama State University of tomorrow. I think that being able to see the cohesiveness, the communication, and the ideas that sparked in that room helped me to realize that change starts with one action and it's about continuing those actions, not just once but every day.

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

I previously served as SGA Senator, having written 40 plus bills in the 2016-17 legislative session where we passed about 50. I am a member of the National Society of Leadership and Success, Pi Sigma Alpha National Political Science Honor Society (Executive President), University Programs and Activities Board (Executive President), and Hornet Tribune Newspaper (Editor and Lead Editorial Writer). I also am the 2017-18 White House HBCU All-Star Student Ambassador.

#### **9. What to date has been your saddest moment at your HBCU?**

My saddest moment most definitely had to be losing the SGA Election for President in the spring 2017 election. Not so much because it was a desire of mine, but because the students lost greatly because of it. In a position like SGA President, sustainable and effective change can be cultivated, and for some of the ideas I had, I knew that there were things that needed to be discussed and talked about that were avoided. I knew we needed to talk about providing more scholarship resources, begin looking at ways to maintain current housing and build new housing units, and even about the need to take benefits out of SGA and make it solely based on people running because their hearts were in it and not because there were benefits. I think when I lost it hurt and cut deeply because all I wanted and have ever wanted was the best for this university, and I knew that we could become better than our current challenges, we just had to be prepared to tackle those issues and be the best institution we could be. So, when I look back, I think about what I could've accomplished by this point and what I believe the university would like at this point. I

think about what changes we could have sparked and what things we could have begun making steps towards, and what steps we could have taken to better this campus.

#### **10. What is your view on materialism, vanity and greed?**

Materialism and greed are very dangerous and the reasons our society suffers. It's one of the reasons that I had chosen to run for SGA President because I wanted to do away with the healthy benefits package our Executive officers get, and the benefits other officers receive so that students could receive those funds for scholarships. I wanted to show students that life and education are not about them, but about the people, they are going to encounter in life. Therefore, I challenged students to think about giving to help fellow students with financial situations, sacrifice so that others can have, and see your education as the opportunity to deposit and invest in the lives of someone outside or even inside these walls. I believe that materialism, vanity, and greed hurt too many people and just like the idea of the American Dream, it sounds good, but in reality at what expense do you get to enjoy the American Dream? Who is on the suffering end? Everything I do is for the betterment of others and I seek the same for others.

#### **11. Who was your greatest influence in your life growing up? And Why?**

My late uncle, Solomon Dye, who was a pastor was the greatest influence because he was the greatest example I had as to what it meant to be a man and most importantly a Man of God. He was someone who cared not just about his faith in the church, but his faith to the people, the community, justice, and social change. He fought for the rights of so many people, marched with Dr. King, and even fought for changes in education and the lives of youth right in Gary. His work continued to show me about this idea of servant leadership and why it was important to take care of those around you and doing things in such a way that people who were not able to speak for themselves, are still represented.

#### **12. What was your proudest moment in your life to date?**

The proudest moment in my life to date was being able to finally come to terms that an HBCU was always the best fit for me and I needed to stop trying to get away from it. I believe that when I was able to realize the uniqueness and the opportunities, and most importantly the beauty of an HBCU, I could mature and accept that though a PWI had amenities, an HBCU taught me about reality, how to survive, and how to strive in the most uncomfortable and interesting circumstances.

#### **13. What is your process when you are going through a hardship that you have never faced before?**

I normally have to take a step back and pray about the situation. In doing this, I normally seek advice and guidance from a circle of trusted advisers and friends, be it professors, my girlfriend, my pastor, or mentors. After I have done this, I normally take a step back to the table and determine my path moving forward, but always make it a point that quitting and giving up is nowhere near the option.

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

Malcolm X and President Barack Obama. Malcolm X because he was this person who believed in by any means necessary. And when I think about this, and I think about creating social change, being able to accomplish and build effective changes is about being able to remain persistent and do so by any means necessary.

**15. What's your take on love (in the philosophical sense)?**

Love is a game where neither player throws in towel but keeps finding new tricks to keep the game going. Whether you are talking romantically or platonically, every love relationship needs for two people, who are imperfect to make a conscious decision to make sure quitting and giving up is not an option but that constantly being innovative is always the final choice. Now, this does not mean being in abusive situations and relationships, however, when relationships get challenging and become a struggle, instead of throwing in the towel, being able to find new ways to solve issues is what love depends and lasts on.

**16. What do you feel is most beautiful about you?**

I think that what is most beautiful about me is my drive to keep moving forward. One of the individuals I have studied includes Walter Elias Disney, whose favorite idea was "Keep Moving Forward." Well, I think this is very relatable to that of African Americans. We have experienced so much and been challenged so often that, we have to be willing to not allow that to stop us and keep moving forward. As for me, no matter what I have encountered or experienced I keep moving forward and seeking new ways to do things. Therefore, I think that one of the most beautiful things about me is being persistent and continuing to fight on no matter what challenges I encounter because they are stepping stones to the next level.

**17. What's your take on life (in the philosophical sense)?**

Life is a canvas given to us to paint a beautiful masterpiece. When you are born, yes you are born into a situation you have no control of and you have been born into a life to which you did not ask but the one thing is that those are all tools that you have to choose to use to paint on the blank canvas God has given you. So though there are things that you were predisposed to, those things are just tools that you can use to the advantage of painting a beautiful picture or can use as a crippling tool to damage the masterpiece that you could create. It is up to you.