



## **Dr. Sonya Okoli, Fisk University- c/o 2004, Social Science Education**



**Name :** Dr. Sonya Okoli

**Your HBCU :** Fisk University

**Graduation Year :** 2004

**Major :** Social Science Education

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

I am from Charleston, SC and would honestly say my introduction to HBCU's wholeheartedly came from watching "A Different World".



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

As a First Generation College Student who grew up in the deep south racial tensions were high and educational disparities even higher. I was looking for an experience of connection, camaraderie, and comfort. Moreso comfort because unlike many I was never exposed to "College". Thus I needed each and every aspect of the HBCU in order to thrive not just in college but into and through it to become not just degreeD up but gainfully employed.

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

My story is absolutely amazing times two. I entered Morris Brown College on a wing and prayer as I graduated at the lowest end of my high school class. Giving me a chance sparked a desire in me to never let up. While there I made it to the Dean's list and met professors who challenged me to reach for the top. We all know the MBC story after being rejected transfer admission to several institutions with absolutely no where to go but back home. I received a call that literally changed my life. An invitation to not only transfer but without starting over along with financial assistance to help me complete my degree. Soo you see to me HBCU's gave me a chance to grow within their doors because they were more concerned with my potential than my "profile"....and look at me now!!!!

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

First time I felt smart, academically supported and like I had the aptitude to be truly successful.

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

My MBC professors in the Sociology Department helped me find my light "switch". This was done through support, encouragement. Then my Fisk professors gave opportunity by bridging the real-

world into our major triggering an burning desire to take on the world.



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