



## **Jae Rivera, Fayetteville State University- c/o 2003, Business Management**



**Name :** Jae Rivera

**Your HBCU :** Fayetteville State University

**Graduation Year :** 2003

**Major :** Business Management

**Minor :** Business Marketing

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

As a military brat, I am from everywhere and nowhere! I was born in Oakland, California, lived in a plethora of states, moved overseas, and came back to graduate high school in Fayetteville, North Carolina. My initial introduction to HBCU's is through life as a latchkey kid! I was practically raised by The Cosby Show and A Different World. It was the latter that really gave me the desire to not only go to college, but to a Historically Black College. Once I was identified as a North Carolina scholar, I was offered quite a few chances to visit North Carolina HBCU's and fully immerse myself in the experience.



Bronco Express under Dr. Harold Bray

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

As a military brat, I had the ability to experience the cultural melting pot of Department of Defense schools. I transitioned from a predominately black high school to a fairly mixed high school my sophomore year and truly missed the atmosphere of family and village that came with my initial High school. E.E. Smith wasn't that far from Fayetteville State, so naturally, we mimicked a lot of the behaviors of the bands and college life. I aspired to fulfill my dream of attending an HBCU (just like Denise Huxtable and Whitley Gilbert) as well as get more than just a taste of what it's like to immerse yourself in the HBCU experience.

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

My molding began the moment I stepped on campus in 1999. There were a lot of things that were up and coming, Bronco Square was in the works of being built and there were so many bright and beautiful people from all around with amazing dreams! I was lucky enough to come in during a time when Cheer Phi Smoov originated and earned the title of Original Cheerleader. As #28 Sparkle, I wrote the Cheer Phi Prayer and was the co-creator of The Funky Bronco Show! Lastly, I was one of the founding members of "The Stable". We truly partied like it was 1999, but we partied with scholarship and intention! Our Bronco Pride was Bright and Blue; White and Right! PROUD AND LOUD! It was all about Hello Cheers, Fifth Quarter, Parades, and taking a trip to Vick's down the street for a cup of Chitterlings!

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

I had the privilege as a Freshman to move on campus earlier (Band Camp). My roommate would end up being the sister to a group member from Shades of Blue (Formerly Afro Blue from the Sing Off)! Dr. Harold Bray was our band director. He was fresh from Alabama and he whipped us to Earth, Wind, and Fire every morning! I remember pouring sweat in a white T-shirt marching 90s to Boogie Wonderland. I still chuckle being in the heat and Dr. Bray yelling at us not to move One SOUTHERN SOLID INCH! If the mosquitos were biting us..."LET THEM EAT! I WANT YOU AT ATTENTION!" I truly had a family in my band members at FSU and quite a few "Mothers" and "Aunts" that worked the cafeteria. I was a Chancellor's Scholar, so I was lucky to avoid the pains of financial aid, but late Band Practices often forbid me from getting to the cafeteria on time to eat. I had a very gracious lady in the Cafeteria that would lay me a plate to the side and all the cereal I can carry back to my room! The last memories I have are the biggest: The huge Snow Fight on Campus all up and through Honors Hall and across campus, Most of the freshman class failing Critical Thinking (especially those who had Dr. Radford Curry), and most of the freshman class getting a UTI due to large overdoses of ORANGE SODA and when MISTIC was carbonated! (How's THAT FOR A THROWBACK?!)

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

Dr. Harold Bray (RIP). I feared that man for quite some time because he was no stranger to singling you out and making you play your sheet music SOLO in front of the whole band. As I marched for him more and understood the man he was outside of his soprano saxophone, I really appreciated the level of discipline he gave us. He challenged us at every hook, step, and turn to be our very best. I often remember being in my dorm room with my roommate and section member; soaking our mouthpieces in Listerine, making sure our gloves and spats were white, and our uniforms cleaned! Dr. Bray did an inspection before we marched and if you were out of place you were likely not to march or be embarrassed in front of the whole band! Dr. Bray taught me to be early in order to be on time and being over prepared never hurt nobody! Thank you for your time and your talent Dr. Bray, I will never forget the day you picked up your Soprano Saxophone and serenaded the stadium with your skill. The Music and the Marcher in me touches and agrees with so many others. Through us - Your spirit lives on!



Cheer Phi Smoov Original Cheerleader