



## **Jessica Ransom Pessu, Tuskegee University- c/o 2006, Electrical Engineering**



**Name :** Jessica Ransom Pessu

**Your HBCU :** Tuskegee University

**Graduation Year :** 2006

**Major :** Electrical Engineering

**Minor :** Mathematics

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

I'm originally from Atlanta, GA. I am a proud graduate of Frederick Douglass High School's Center for Engineering and Applied Technology Magnet School. Because of my high school's focus in Engineering, I was introduced to several HBCUs to pursue for academic success.



The day I became TU royalty!

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

I can honestly say I thought I would have either graduated from Duke or The University of Miami. Although I was accepted to both, with a scholarship, I chose an HBCU over a PWI partially because of my mother's experience. My mother attended two large PWIs, and albeit her educational experience was good, she often spoke of the lack of feeling included. Also, since the age of about 4, I was always on the campus of Spelman College attending their dance program for kids. I marveled at the students around the AUC and loved when I could catch them filming "A Different World". I experienced the AUC all throughout my life in Atlanta, whether it was a summer camp at Clark, band camps at Morris Brown, or technical dance training on the campuses of Spelman and Morehouse. All of that into consideration, I began seeking smaller schools, but away from home for a change of scenery, and eventually landed in the small country town of Mother Tuskegee.

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

I made THEE MOST of my "Tuskegee Experience," which makes it easy for me to always want to come back and spend some time there. The city of Tuskegee is definitely a place that a 'true city person' can easily dismiss. But for me, I took it as a time to appreciate the most significant things in life. I gained family while I was at Tuskegee because I kept myself involved. I was in the band, on the dance team - which meant long, early summers in the south. I was a member of the Air Force ROTC, so I've had the opportunity to meet several of the living legends, The Tuskegee Airmen. I joined many clubs, was on the basketball dance team, had a church family, and I pledged two sororities. Finally, I'm forever recognized as Tuskegee Royalty. That has been my

most honored privilege because I was an ambassador for all the prestige of our institution and the Tuskegee legacy.

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

The biggest first time experience that comes to mind is learning how to drive. Ha! I had no interest in driving like most teenagers do, but the university is literally all that's in Tuskegee. So if you needed to really grocery shop, apartment shop, SHOP (lol), you had to be able to get around.

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

The person who impacted my life the most from Tuskegee is actually not a professor, she's the Dean of the College of Engineering, Mrs. Toya Dean. She helped mold my educational path, and even some personal paths. She kept me motivated and encouraged; always giving me excellent advice. Now I couldn't ever get her to give me any additional scholarship money when I stayed an extra year and was on the struggle bus (lol), but she provided in so many other ways that I'm forever grateful to her.



I met my husband 16 years ago on Tuskegee University's campus. It only took us 13 years to "unveil the ignorance" and realize we were meant to be.

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

When I applied for Tuskegee, I originally had myself as an Electrical Engineering Major. But right before school started, I received a call about becoming a Math major based on my SAT scores. I thought that might not be a bad idea since I wanted to take life down a notch after graduating from an engineering magnet high school. I figured majoring in Mathematics and get a teaching certificate would be a breeze since math always came easy to me and I honestly just wanted to produce tours for Janet Jackson...extreme studying wasn't on my radar. Then I received a call about being a computer science major. After researching salaries, I was all confused. So my 1st year of school I actually wasted a lot of money as an Undecided Major. My teacher-mother was not happy to say the least lol!! She basically told me to get over my Janet Jackson and teaching dreams to secure a lucrative career. I eventually gave in and received bachelors degrees in both Electrical Engineering and Mathematics.

#### **7. Are you a member of a sorority?**

While at Tuskegee, I loooong awaited to pledge Delta Sigma Theta, Inc.'s Glorious Gamma Tau Chapter. I entered Tuskegee in 2000 and the Delta's returned to the yard in 2005. I was proud to be in that number as #9, the jewel of my line. Prior to pledging Delta, I joined Tau Beta Sigma National Honorary Band Sorority in 2003. I was in the band three years and served as Co-Captain of the Piperettes.

