



Justin Key, LeMoyne-Owen College- c/o 2006, Mathematics



Name : Justin Key

Your HBCU : LeMoyne-Owen College

Graduation Year : 2006

Major : Mathematics

Minor : N/A

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

I'm originally from Rossville, TN. My first introduction to HBCUs was 'A Different World.' My love, appreciation, and obsession grew with each new season of the show. That introduction was then cultivated by my African American History teacher, Ms. Hunt, while I attended Fayette-Ware High School. She shared my love for HBCUs and educated me on their rich history my entire high school career.



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

I chose an HBCU because I wanted to know more about my history without bias, my people unapologetically, and to connect with like-minded students. The first time I stepped foot on the campus of LeMoyne-Owen College (LOC), my soul felt at peace at just 17 years old. I knew LOC was precisely the place where I was meant to be.

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

LeMoyne-Owen College was the beacon of hope that I did not realize I needed that still impacts me to this day in my life and career. It provided numerous opportunities that I perhaps would not have had at any other institution. While at LOC, I was Mr. Freshman, Mr. LeMoyne-Owen Owen College, SGA Vice President, President of Alpha Kappa Mu National Honor Society, President of DuBois Scholars Honor Society, and other organizations all while maintaining a 3.8 GPA. This wasn't because I was some brainiac or gifted kid; it was because my HBCU family, like all HBCUs, demanded nothing but the best because they knew what we were capable of even when we did not. LeMoyne-Owen College laid the foundation for the career I have now, and I will always be grateful as well as generous with my time, talent, and checkbook.

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

My very first move-in day was something out of a Black fairytale. Every organization was on campus to help the freshmen move in. It included all the greeks, the gospel choir, campus ministry, all the athletes, and even the academic organizations. They were all friends with each

other, and it was evident. They were all so genuinely nice. They also put me up on game while moving me in. I would learn and observe a few months later that the same energy from Move-in Day carried on my entire matriculation of undergrad.

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

Mrs. Ruby Hardy-Minter. She was my English professor who sternly encouraged me to run for Mr. Freshman. I was a very quiet, nerdy freshman with no hopes of getting into the spotlight. She helped me to perfect my speech, appearance, and brand. It's no surprise that now I'm a working actor in Hollywood and international speaker. Dr. John Harris. He was and is my mentor. Dr. Harris taught most of the upper-level mathematics courses. He wrote my recommendation letters for grad school, and we still talk every month. Once math nerds, always math nerds. The faith and belief he has in me still baffle me to this day. In his eyes, there is nothing I can't accomplish. Dr. Meenakshi Rajagopalan. She was the most feared professor in all the Mathematics department. The day I got the email that she personally requested to be my academic advisor, I became terrified. Soon I would find out that her brilliance, compassion, and determination to see her students succeed would erase all the fear I had once harbored. Whenever I visit the college, I stop by her classes to let the students know she's the best and they need to listen to every word she says.



6. Are you a member of a fraternity?

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

7. Entrepreneur? Tell us about your business.

After getting my MBA in Entrepreneurship, I now travel around the world speaking to colleges/universities, organizations and businesses on how to incorporate the entrepreneurial mindset into any career field. This is especially important for HBCU students and Black people overall as our position in America (and the world) is a very unique one where strategy is essential for success.