



## **Kionne Johnson, Virginia State University- c/o 2012, Communications with a focus in Public Relations**



**Name :** Kionne Johnson

**Your HBCU :** Virginia State University

**Graduation Year :** 2012

**Major :** Communications with a focus in Public Relations

**Minor :** Sociology

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

(I'm from) Detroit Michigan. My family introduced me, I had a few family members who attended HBCU's.



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

I chose my HBCU over a PWI because I wanted smaller class sizes, I didn't want to be just a number and I wanted to go far away from home.

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

My four years at Virginia State were eye-opening, I learned so much in and out of the classroom that I find myself using to this day. I remember being taught history from professors with ties to the Black Panther party. I had Journalism professors who excelled at the top Communications schools in the country. Everyone at VSU felt like family, it's not unusual to walk the campus and see someone wave at you and you wave back. From my "Aunties" in Financial Aid to "Mama" in the Cafe to "Unc" the security guard at the front gates, even though I was 12 hours from home, I felt at peace.

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

A few of my first-time experiences at VSU include: -Being stranded in a major city and having to find a way back to campus with my best friends - Writing a 20-page paper and then having it balled up and tossed in the trash with a note saying "I demand excellence" from a professor - First time having to create a budget and living on my own.

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

A lot of people come to mind but the three that stand out the most are Dr. Cherlyn Johnson, Dr. Zoe Spencer, and Dr. Ishmail Conway. Dr. Johnson was my academic advisor and she pushed me

the most to excel in my career, she treated me how the "real world" would, by giving tough love and strict deadlines. Dr. Conway was the first professor to rip up my work and toss it in the trash, but that's because he saw more in me than I saw in myself. As an African-American male, he demanded that I work twice as hard and go twice as far. Dr. Zoe aka "Auntie Z" opened my mind up and brought me to "consciousness" I credit her for not only being the second professor to rip my work up and toss it in the trash but also setting the foundation for my expectations of what graduate school looks like. She taught me and many others to be free and independent researchers and thinkers by always asking questions.



**6. What sports do/did you play at your HBCU? What positions?**

I was a short sprinter on the Track and Field Team.

**7. Best restaurants on/near campus? Best dishes?**

Ettrick Deli! Best dish is the 10 Wing Combo w/Fries. "Fill Your Belly at Ettrick Deli"

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

I joined an all-male mentoring organization during my time at VSU called "The Men of New Water Organization Inc."