



Marissa Jackson, Benedict College- c/o 2019, Music



Name : Marissa Jackson

Your HBCU : Benedict College

Graduation Year : 2019

Major : Music

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

Toledo, Ohio originally so my family culture stems from there, but I moved to South Carolina in 2000.



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

To be honest it was a last resort. I originally wanted to go off to New York, but something was telling me to start somewhere close and that maybe it wasn't a bad idea to get an HBCU experience.

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

My story may be the same as everyone else's but it might also be a little bit different. I wasn't very accepting of the fact that I would be attending an HBCU, but somehow meeting people who share the same values as me and knew my interest based on similar backgrounds so that I could be intrigued in learning new things, is something that I grew to appreciate very quickly. It made connecting with others so much easier because I'm doing the nine times out of 10 they identified with me. Everything from music, clothing, literature, movies, sports, history; All of these things that make black culture what it is just made the experience something that I never thought would make such a big impact on my life. Especially when your entering your 20s, a time of learning life lessons day after day feeling like the world is against you when actually it is just molding you into the powerful being that you are. Everyone loves to be related to, because when you find people that are relatable you become more open to exchange of knowledge which I feel is one of those important yet very essential keys of what makes this world go round. I wouldn't trade my first college experience for any other path, this is what I needed.

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

All of my best first experiences revolve around music. My first year with a college choir was very educational. My first time being a part of a jazz band was so incredible, because it was my debut of performing as a lead singer on a tour! My first homecoming tailgate experience was filled with unbelievable gratitude. The alumni were so gracious and supportive of our homecoming

celebration. My first pledging experience as a Kappa Diamond was one for the books. I cannot thank God enough for the immeasurable journey that I've been on since I've started attending Benedict College.

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

Many. There have been many. One that stands out is Mr. Wade H. Johnson, band director of the Benedict College Band of Distinction. He has instilled so much joy in me as far as my love for music. It was already my first love, but sometimes you have to watch someone love something so that you can know how to nurture and care for it yourself. That's all I'm gonna say about that, because I could go on all day about the way he has lead and is still leading me into a path of musical accomplishment!

