



Markeith Johnson, Southern University- c/o 2012, Sociology



Name : Markeith Johnson

Your HBCU : Southern University

Graduation Year : 2012

Major : Sociology

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

I'm from a small town in Louisiana called Opelousas. My uncle was a local two-sport star athlete who was offered by many SEC teams, but decided on attending Southern University. He was almost the fastest guy in high school, second only to Devery Henderson who played for the New Orleans Saints. My uncle made me aware of Southern University by his decision to attend.



2014, HULT Business School, Resident of Dubai, UAE-A Southern University Jaguar abroad

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

My choice to HBCU over a PWI wasn't very deep initially, but it would become foundationally important to my identity later on. I was first accepted to Northwestern State in the summer of '06 to study aviation after serving nearly a year on Active Duty in New Orleans immediately following Hurricane Katrina, but I changed up last minute because I really wanted to go to the school my star uncle attended. I had always sort of followed in his path since my youth. That was the start of who I am today. I stayed and ultimately chose my HBCU.

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

I suppose my HBCU experience could be summed up as home-like and unique. There wasn't any pressure at Southern University to be someone I wasn't. The fact that the students around me felt familiar made it easier for me to get to know myself and who I was as a person; and also settle my identity not only as a new young adult, but as a black male in the world. Some of my most memorable times were the celebrity performances at Spring Fest, BET on the yard, and oh my god, homecoming week was absolutely unparalleled! With the comedy show, the celebrity concert, the greek show, the football game, the battle of the bands, it was always the most amazingly spirited week of the school year to me! School spirit was super thick, and that was super important to me. Not to be outdone academically, there was this one little kid whom I found very peculiar as I followed his story of being accepted into Southern Timbuktu Academy at only 14 years old, which I found incredibly remarkable. His name is Polite Stewart, son of two professors. Even with us having no previous relationship, I messaged him some years after our graduation to see if he might be interested in working on a mechanical idea I had for a business solution; (he was completing his second degree at Southern, M.S. in Mechanical Engineering). He agreed work

together and we built a small team to work on that project, making great strides to realization. I believe I could pick up the phone and collaborate with just about anyone from SU in that same way, as it should be. When I look back at all of the friends and the networks I've made at Southern University A & M, when I look at where we all are today, I always feel incredibly proud and blessed to be able to say I'm a part of such an accomplished and tight-knit family. We bleed our gold and blue!

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

Some first time experiences at my HBCU were probates, spring fest, "Pretty Wednesdays," (rarely took part in, but always observed) homecoming week and the Human Jukebox. They are so famous now, but I remember hearing them play "Neck," that is so widely mimicked at other institutions, including PWIs, which shows how talented and influential they are. I remember the SGA elections, the Miss Southern University runners, the football games. Seeing Willie Quinn run was a special thing to witness!

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

Several professors of Southern have impacted my choices and course in life. One in particular was Dr. Ollie G. Christian. She was the real deal in her field and the knowledge she imparted in every class was worth gold. I very keenly remember a story she told the class one day about a former student of hers who was, then, studying at Harvard University. I thought to myself, "wow..Harvard from Southern.." To make a long story short: I graduated from Southern in 2012, landed a well-paying job before graduating, accepted my commission as a Military Officer from Southern in early 2013, left the states late 2013 to attend Hult International Business School (ranked 64th best b-school in the world and recruited me while I was at Southern), before I graduated from there I was accepted to Stanford University in 2014 to complete a graduate certification in Advanced Project Management. Today I'm an Army Captain and practicing professional with an MBA and several other certifications. I believe that what I heard that day from Dr. Christian, consciously influenced me to reach high as I did and believe I belonged, because I did. Everything else was easy after that.



2014, Hiking, Southern California-Post Masters