



## **Raegan Johnson , Tougaloo College- c/o 2019, History**



**Name :** Raegan Johnson

**Your HBCU :** Tougaloo College

**Graduation Year :** 2019

**Major :** History

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

I am from the beautiful Gulf Coast City of Gulfport, MS. I come from a lineage of HBCU graduates and was encouraged to attend one for undergrad. However, my Aunt Diane and cousin/future professor/academic mentor Daphne Chamberlain introduced me to my beloved Tougaloo College.



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

I chose an HBCU over a PWI for the rich experience that I knew attending an would HBCU offer. Coming from a predominantly white high school, I wanted an outlet in which I could not only find myself, but actively assert my Blackness.

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

My experience at the historic Tougaloo College is one that will forever be embedded in my memory. I truly believe that all of the experiences that I have had at Tougaloo have made me into the woman that I am today. In high school, I lived by the motto of "turning my hurt into work" and I continued to do so throughout my matriculation through the Eagle Queen. The most impactful experience of my four year journey through Tougaloo College comes from the moments that I had to overcome adversity. In the end, overcoming adversity allowed me to soar as the Eagle Queen groomed me to do. From serving as a student leader, to mentoring my fellow sisters on campus, I can truly say that I would not trade any experience that I have had on those hallowed grounds.

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

There are so many first time experiences that I have made at my Eagle Queen. However if it had to narrow it down to two experiences it would be the following: 1. Meeting Angela Davis 2. Participating in a fashion show

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

There are three professors that have impacted my life both in and out of the classroom. 1. Dr. Daphne Chamberlain- She serves as my professor and academic mentor. Through her, I have

acquired knowledge that will guide both my professional and personal life. She is my motivator and role model. 2. Dr. Miranda Freeman- I met Dr. Freeman my freshman year while enrolled in her Effective Communications course and she has left a lasting impact on me ever since. She assisted in my application to the UNCF/Mellon Mays Program and other academic ventures as well. Dr. Freeman serves as a listening ear and great confidant. 3. Professor Kimberly Morgan-Myles- We grew close during a trip to Brown University in the spring of 2017. Since then, she has served as a mentor for both my academic and personal ventures. Professor Kimberly Morgan-Myles is one of the most down to earth women that I know and for that I love her.



## **6. What adversities (hardships) have you overcome to become the strong person that you are?**

The date is March 28th 2018. With tears flowing down my face, I scroll through my memories on Facebook and see my post from a year ago announcing my election as the Student Government Association Vice President for the 2017-2018. Shortly before this, I received news that I was indefinitely disqualified as a Miss Tougaloo College candidate. This was a dream of mine since my freshman year and now it was unattainable. The emotions surging through my body at that time are honestly indescribable. However, as I sit and reflect on how God has brought me through that tough time, I am reminded of how loved I truly am by my Heavenly Father, family, and friends. Fast forward a few months later and my post announcing my disqualification now serves as a reminder to keep persevering. It reads: "Last year at this time I was overjoyed. Overjoyed because I was able to serve an institution that I loved dearly. Overjoyed because I held the title of SGA Vice President. But most importantly, I was overjoyed because I had defeated my only competition for the title: fear. Fast forward a year later and now I am facing the fact that I was defeated. However, in this context I have chosen to turn the negative connotation of "defeat" into a positive. This evening, I was informed that I was indefinitely disqualified as a Miss Tougaloo College Candidate for the 2018-2019 school year. Though I am saddened by this decision, I am reminded of God's grace and how far He has brought me since the moment this photo was taken. I have defeated toxic friendships, toxic habits, and have gained a deeper understanding of the world around me. I would like to thank my family, my campaign team and everyone else who had a part of my platform to "Unmask the Throne." This isn't the end, this is only my beginning. And as we say during Mardi Gras, "Let the Good Times Roll." A day after this post, I was informed that I was one of twelve awardees chosen to participate in Princeton University's ARCH Program. I was also given the opportunity to participate in the African American Literatures and Culture Institute at the University of Texas at San Antonio as well. The moral of my story: I could have easily given up faith in God, but I had to realize that sometimes God's plan for our lives does not align with what we might have in mind. Going through adversity made me grow as a woman and I am thankful that God revealed His plan for the course of my senior year.