



Candice Jackson, Tougaloo College- c/o 1997, English



Name : Candice Jackson

Your HBCU : Tougaloo College

Graduation Year : 1997

Major : English

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

I am from Jackson, Mississippi. I was introduced to HBCUs by my family. My maternal grandmother and three aunts attended Jackson State, my uncles attended MVSU, my mother attended Tougaloo College. My paternal grandmother attended MVSU, and my father and his brothers all attended Tougaloo College.



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

I applied to a good mix of HBCUs and PWIs (Georgetown, NYU, Spelman, Tougaloo) and was accepted to all of them. But the difference for me was the faculty. I knew the legends of the Tougaloo Faculty, namely Jerry W. Ward, who became my mentor and so many others. I knew that not only would I become whatever I wanted, but I would also know who I am.

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

I entered thinking that I would eventually practice law, but Dr. Ward gave me an assignment that made it clear that becoming a lawyer wasn't my life's purpose. I earned a prestigious fellowship through the UNCF/Mellon Programs to prepare for graduate school and to "transform the Academy." The academic foundation at Tougaloo prepared me for the rigors of graduate school coursework but also the micro-aggressions that scholars of color face in academia. At Tougaloo, we learned our history and our responsibility to add to that legacy and mission. We had our fun but there was always a commitment to studies and social justice.

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

Going to Chapel/Convocation every week. Every. Week. Ritual and ceremony is very important at Tougaloo and the tradition continues to this day.

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

Jerry Washington Ward has served as my mentor since my first year at Tougaloo. Firm, yet compassionate, Dr. Ward forced me to interrogate the world, read analytically, and write clearly. But he was there for us as students and as people. He made sure that we attended conferences and dinner parties, served on search committees, etc. He was preparing us for the work of the Academy--scholarship and service. When I selected my dissertation committee, I asked Dr. Ward to serve as my external member. He still pulled no punches, but I knew that he had my best interest at heart.



6. Ghost stories involving buildings or spots on campus?

Tougaloo College was built on a former slave plantation. There's always been a legend that there was a spirit in the Chapel. Considering that before its restoration, architects couldn't figure out how the building was still standing and we have a few cats on the campus...

7. What to date has been your proudest moment @ Your HBCU?

As a student, my proudest moment was being accepted as a UNCF Mellon Fellow, which opened so many doors for me. As a faculty member, one of my proudest moments was when two of my students were getting married who met in my class and they asked me to participate as an honored guest.

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

I was in the Literary Club and a sorority.

9. What and where are the historical places on campus?

The historical Woodworth Chapel and the Boddie Mansion.

10. Are you a member of a sorority?

Yes. I am a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

