



## **Rochelle Quarles, Tuskegee University- c/o 2016, Elementary Education**



**Name :** Rochelle Quarles

**Your HBCU :** Tuskegee University

**Graduation Year :** 2016

**Major :** Elementary Education

**Minor :** N/A

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

I am from the small town of Cedar Bluff in Cherokee County, Alabama. HBCUs were introduced to me through my family. My grandmother attended Alabama A&M University.



Spring 2014 Initiate of the Epsilon Theta Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated

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

I chose an HBCU over a PWI because of the rich, beautiful, and pure history that is embedded in its campus and community. With that being said, I chose Tuskegee University because it is a very illustrious university and one of the best HBCUs in the nation that offers more than academics--I knew that Tuskegee was going to prepare me for the world and workforce better than an experience elsewhere.

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

Coming from a high school that was predominately white to attending an HBCU for undergraduate studies, I had no idea what to expect. Social media platforms made it easy to connect with my #TU16 classmates so that we could get to know each other before starting school and this made the transition so much easier. My 4 years at Tuskegee grew me and groomed me to be the woman and educator that I am today because of the unique and meaningful events and people that I came into contact with. Nevertheless, there were many obstacles that I had to face and growing pains that I had to endure. I made the most of things and ventured outside of my comfort zone by becoming extremely active on campus with various community service, social/political, and student government organizations. Being the social butterfly that I was allowed me to network and learn many new skills to help me be successful in classes and in personal escapades. While at Tuskegee, I became a member of Alpha Tau Mu Coed Service Fraternity, Incorporated--Alpha Chapter-- in the Spring of 2013 and having both brothers and sisters to continue my journey with was an amazing feeling. We utilized our time wisely and made our presence known on campus and in the Macon County Community by completing community service events, volunteering, and being of service to those who needed us. I started off as Treasurer and I was fortunate to be elected as President right after we gained our Incorporated status. This allowed me to be the first

woman president of the Incorporated Alpha Chapter, which was a huge accomplishment for me. Everybody loves the Poodles right? We are smart, vibrant, pretty, and our lean is mean. In Spring 2014, I was initiated into Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority--Epsilon Theta Chapter. Even though our quantity was not superfluous, our quality was plentiful. It is an honor being a part of an immaculate sorority where there is SisteRHood, Scholarship, and Service. We were very visible on campus then and we still are today. We make sure that we uphold our motto of "Greater Service, Greater Progress" by actively serving our school and the surrounding communities. I started off as treasurer and I moved to vice president and completed college holding that position. EEE-YIP! Mother Tuskegee enchanted me and I fell in love with her and she became my home, a place that is near and dear to my heart. Tuskegee allowed me to create so many fond memories, join the greatest sorority, make wonderful, life-long friends, and have an unforgettable, intangible experience that I would never change that for anything in the world. I know that I would not have been able to obtain that experience at any other institute of higher learning.

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

There were so many "first time" experiences for me at Tuskegee University considering I came from a little town in Northeast Alabama. A few of them that I would like to highlight are: The Shed during football games, you could more than likely find me in Section #1 with my frat brothers and sisters. NPHC Greek Life, step shows, and stroll offs were definitely a first for me. Seeing them all on The Yard for the very first time was mesmerizing and very entertaining. Being around individuals that looked like me, had the same perspectives as me, and had passion, drive, and ambition just like me was a first. I loved every bit of the experiences!

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

A few professors that have impacted my life both inside and outside of the classroom are my professors from the College of Education--Dr. Alicia Curry, Dr. Virda Lester, Dr. Henry Findlay, Dr. Emma Haley, Coach Johnny Mitchell, Professor Deborah Gunn, and the late Dr. Melvin Gadson. All of these professors instilled a love for learning and education into my life and helped me to understand the principles and concepts of being an effective educator. They helped me to learn how to be selfless, brave, and to always pursue my dreams. During my professional education training, they taught me to always pay attention to detail, to be professional, kind, organized, creative, dedicated, and to give my all in whatever I do. Teaching our youth is not an easy task by any means; however, they showed me the way to make this career and working with students of all ages, learning styles, and exceptionalities effortlessly. Before I entered Upper Division in the School of Education, there were a handful of professors that impacted my life. Dr. Bill Ndi, who taught me how to be concise with my writings and to always share my story; Dr. Brett Coppenger who taught me how to step outside of self and view various perspective by showing me that it is okay to venture outside of my comfort zone and test my mind and its boundaries. Overall, every professor that I came in contact with during my tenure at Tuskegee University impacted my life in some way and I will always utilize the academic and life skills that they gifted me with.



Dedicated, enthusiastic, creative, and caring elementary educator.

### **6. What is your major? and Why did you choose it?**

My major was Elementary Education and I chose this major because I am excellent at working with children and I am all about making learning fun and meaningful for our youth. It is important to me that children are afforded an equal opportunity to learn and are encouraged and inspired to do their very best so that they can go far in life with whatever they would like to pursue. Also, I am a third-generation educator. My grandmother, her sisters, and my uncle were/are educators; with that being said, it is literally in my blood.

### **7. What life-changing books would you recommend to others to read?**

A life-changing book that I would like to recommend to others to read is "The Four Agreements" by Don Miguel Ruiz. This is a Toltec wisdom book and a guide to personal freedom. "The Four Agreements" gives four principles to practice in order to create love and happiness in your life. Adopting and committing to these agreements is simple. Actually living and keeping these Four Agreements can be one of the hardest things you will ever do. It can also be one of the most life-changing things you will ever do.

### **8. If you could only speak two sentences to the youth coming after you what would you say?**

Be kind because you never know what other people could be going through in their life; an act of kindness can go a very long way! Learn something new every single day because knowledge is power and your knowledge can never be taken away from you!