

# The BATTERING RAM



Winston-Salem State University National Alumni Association

Issue 86

Summer 2025

*“Linked together in unity.  
Serving together with purpose.”*

This newsletter is an official publication of WSSU National Alumni Association  
S. G. Atkins House  
Winston-Salem, NC 27110  
TheBatteringRam@wssunaa.org

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Dear WSSU Alumni Family,



I hope this message finds you well and enjoying a safe, restful, and joyful summer. As we reflect on the first half of this year, I am filled with immense gratitude and pride for all that we have accomplished together. Your continued dedication to our beloved Winston-Salem State University and to the mission of the National Alumni Association has truly made a difference.

Thanks to your support, engagement, and Ram spirit, we've seen meaningful growth in Alumni participation, successful chapter initiatives, and impactful support for our students and Alma Mater. Whether you gave your time, talents, or resources — you are a part of this progress, and for that, I sincerely thank you.

As we look to the future, there is still more to build. Our collective strength lies in our unity and our commitment to excellence. I encourage each of you to continue helping us grow — especially by recruiting fellow Rams to join or rejoin our Alumni community and strengthen our local chapters. Every member adds value, and every chapter helps extend our reach and impact. Let's keep the momentum going. Together, we can build an even stronger network that uplifts our University and inspires the next generation of WSSU Rams. Enjoy the rest of your summer. I look forward to connecting with many of you in the months ahead.

With Ram Pride,  
*Reginald D. McCaskill*  
National President  
WSSU National Alumni Association

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Ramdition Archway Preparation Ceremony

Date: Saturday, August 16, 2025 | Volunteer Arrival: 6:45 AM – 7:00 AM |

Ceremony Time: 7:00 AM – 8:00 AM

Location: Donald Julian Reaves Student Activities Center (Rooms 100 A & B)

### Annual Breast Cancer Awareness Event

When: Monday, October 20, 2025 | Time: 11:00am – 2:00pm

Where: Donald Julian Reaves Student Activities Center(DJR) Hall A&B

More event information can be found at <https://wssunaa.org/naa-news/>



# Chapter News

## Winston Salem Chapter

### ANNUAL BREAST CANCER AWARENESS EVENT

The event is FREE and open to the public as well as the campus community. If you can attend as a vendor, please email attending. Be prepared to share educational material in English and Spanish, if possible, breast cancer apparel, imaging, breast models, etc. Please share this event with your network. If you know of other vendors that would be interested in participating, please email me. Come to enjoy your day as RAMS GO PINK!!!

When: Monday, October 20, 2025 | Time: 11:00am – 2:00pm

Where: Donald Reaves Student Activities Center(DJR) same location Hall A&B INSIDE. The university will provide tables and chairs.

Parking: Lot U the gate will open at 10:00am. All vendors please arrive no later than 10:30am.

Camps Map: <https://map.wssu.edu/index.html>

Also, on Saturday, October 25, 2025, we are planning a walk/run at the Anderson Conference Center on campus in the parking lot starting at 9am – 1pm. Let me know if you are available to attend as a vendor. Please email us if you are able to attend on Monday, Saturday, or both events. Please wear PINK!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

### Ramdition Archway Preparation Ceremony

Date: Saturday, August 16, 2025 | Volunteer Arrival: 6:45 AM – 7:00 AM | Ceremony Time: 7:00 AM – 8:00 AM

Location: Donald Julian Reaves Student Activities Center (Rooms 100 A & B)

This ceremony marks the official beginning of our incoming freshmen's journey at WSSU. It is the culminating event of Ramdition, a week-long orientation experience that has been held annually since 2009, initiated by Michelle B. Relefeld. Ramdition traditionally takes place during the second week of August, aligned with the move-in schedule set by Housing and Residence Life.

**Fall 25 Move-In**

**SAVE THE DATE**

<p><b>NEW STUDENTS</b></p> <p><b>SATURDAY, AUGUST 9, 2025</b>  <b>FRESHMAN: BROWN, COVINGTON, MOORE</b></p> <p><b>SUNDAY, AUGUST 10, 2025</b>  <b>FRESHMAN: ATKINS, MSX, MOORE</b></p> <p><b>MONDAY, AUGUST 11, 2025</b>  <b>TRANSFER: ALL ASSIGNED HALLS</b></p>	<p><b>OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING</b></p> <p><b>TUESDAY, AUGUST 12TH, 2025</b>  <b>METRO-VILLAGE TOWNHOMES</b></p> <p><b>FRIDAY, AUGUST 15TH, 2025</b>  <b>THE FLATS @ WSSU</b></p> <p><b>SATURDAY, AUGUST 16TH, 2025</b>  <b>THE STATION TOWNHOMES</b></p> <p><b>SUNDAY, AUGUST 17TH, 2025</b>  <b>THE STATION TOWNHOMES</b></p>
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**CONTINUING STUDENTS**

**ALL ASSIGNED HALLS**

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2025**  
**THURSDAY, AUGUST 14, 2025**  
**FRIDAY, AUGUST 15, 2025**

TIMES & DETAILS BY FLOOR NOW AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE

1892 MOVE-IN EXPERIENCE

#### Volunteer Roles Include:

- Assisting students with tying their ties as part of their formal presentation.
  - Clasp ing locket s and handing each student a commemorative rose to mark the occasion.
  - Offering warm welcomes, words of encouragement, and helping usher students into the WSSU family with pride.
  - Serving as a Line-Up and Usher Guide for those interested – this role involves supporting the organization of students outside the Donald Julian Reaves Center and guiding them along the designated walk route to the C.E. Gaines Center for the program.
- Your presence at this event is more than symbolic – it reinforces the legacy, community, and pride that defines the Ram experience. Whether you are a recent graduate or a long-time supporter, your involvement will leave a lasting impression on our new students. The volunteer form will be updated weekly to identify specific duties for volunteering. Thank you!

Sign up to volunteer here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0A48A4AE2DA4F5CE9-57439206-ramdition#/>

# 2025 Miss & Mr. Alumni CANDIDATES



## DENEEN CLARKE

### BRIEF CAMPAIGN STATEMENT

With a heart grounded in service and a passion for education and empowerment, I am running for Miss WSSU Alumni to advocate for enhanced student

support through gap scholarships and to inspire a renewed spirit of alumni engagement. Through my Deneen4Queen platform and the Women of Winston (WOW) movement, I aim to build a lasting philanthropic legacy that uplifts our students and empowers alumnae to lead with purpose.

### EDUCATION

Winston-Salem State University, B.A. in Political Science, Concentration in Public Administration – 1997

### EMPLOYMENT

Human Resources Professional with 16 years of expertise in employee relations, talent development, organizational leadership, and DEI strategy.

### PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated, Life Member
- WSSU National Alumni Association, Lifetime Member
- HORN\$ (Helping Our Rams Navigate Success), Active Member

### COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Founder, Women of Winston (WOW) – a dynamic alumnae movement designed to unite, empower, and mobilize WSSU women.
- Creator, Deneen4Queen platform – supporting the creation of gap scholarships and service-centered student initiatives.
- Mentor, Speaker, and Community Strategist, dedicated to increasing access and opportunity for underrepresented students.

### AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

- Leadership Awards, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

Join the Movement!  
Scan the QR code below to:  
• Join the Women of Winston community

- Access the Deneen4Queen Linktree for donations, volunteer sign-up, and merchandise



### HOW TO SUPPORT MY CAMPAIGN

#### Ways to Give

- CashApp: \$DeneenClarke (Memo: Miss WSSU Alumni)
- PayPal: @Deneen4Queen (Memo: Miss WSSU Alumni)
- Zelle: DeneenQueen@gmail.com (Memo: Miss WSSU Alumni)
- Ad & Sponsor Opportunities
- Full-Page Ad – \$225
- Half-Page Ad – \$175
- Quarter-Page Ad – \$75
- Patron Listing – \$74 or less

#### Corporate Sponsorships:

- Platinum – \$10,000
- Gold – \$7,500
- Silver – \$5,000
- Bronze – \$2,500
- Reception Sponsor – \$2,000

Support WOW with Official Apparel!

Visit our shop through the QR code above to support my campaign and spread the spirit of sisterhood.

Make checks payable to: WSSUNAA (Memo: Deneen Clarke)

Mail to:

WSSUNAA

c/o Deneen Clarke

5310 Ventura Drive

Greensboro, NC 27406

Deadline for donations and ads: August 1, 2025

Contact: deneen4queen@gmail.com

Follow Us: @Deneen4Queen | @WomenOfWinston

# 2025 Miss & Mr. Alumni

## CANDIDATES



### ORIELLE HOPE

#### BRIEF CAMPAIGN STATEMENT

I, Orielle Ellis Hope, am honored and excited to announce my candidacy for Miss Alumni. My journey began at Winston-Salem State University, where I gained not only an excellent education but also lifelong relationships, cherished memories,

and a deep commitment to service that guides me to this day.

I am running for Miss Alumni because I believe in giving back to the place that gave so much to me. My career in human resources and my dedication to community service have always centered on people helping them grow, find purpose, and succeed. I want to bring that same spirit of encouragement and support to our alumni family and, most importantly, to our students.

#### EDUCATION

- Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology, Winston-Salem State University
- Master of Science degree in Human Resources (Business and Industry), North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
  - Inducted into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi for achieving a 4.0 GPA, top 10% of graduate students

#### EMPLOYMENT

- Quality Management and Compliance Analyst at a North Carolina managed care organization
- Human resources roles in mental and behavioral health care and senior living communities
- Assistant Vice Chancellor for Human Resources Operations at North Carolina A&T State University

#### COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Volunteer and board member, Clemmons Food Pantry
- Active board member, The Parenting Path

- HR Committee Chair, Pivot Ministry
- Career counselor to professionals in transition
- 2023 graduate of Leadership Winston-Salem

#### PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Winston-Salem Society for Human Resource Management (WSSHHRM)
  - 2013 President
  - Various Board of Director roles
  - Current SHRM Foundation Director and Webmaster
  - 2011 WSSHHRM President's Award recipient
  - 2014 HR Professional of the Year Award
- North Carolina SHRM
  - Previous SHRM Foundation Co-Director
  - Current Co-Chair of the State Conference Programs Committee
- Professional in Human Resources® (PHR®) designation holder
- Member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

#### HONORS AND AWARDS

- Race Progress Promoters Program Business Award, Efforts Club of New Bethel Baptist Church
- Winston-Salem State University's Inaugural 40 Under 40 Distinguished Alumni (2013)
- 2024 Alumni Achiever Award for the School of Social Sciences
- 2025 HR Impact Award, Triad Business Journal

#### PERSONAL

- Resides in Clemmons, North Carolina with her husband David
- Enjoys puzzles, family time, and supporting professionals through career counseling

# 2025 Miss & Mr. Alumni CANDIDATES



## LADIA RUTLEDGE

### BRIEF CAMPAIGN STATEMENT

As a proud alumna of Winston-Salem State University, I've dedicated myself to embodying the spirit of service, leadership, and excellence that WSSU instills in all of us. Over the years, I've worked tirelessly to give back to our university and its community in ways

that reflect my passion and commitment to our shared mission.

In partnership with the Young Alumni Council, I have been humbled to receive the Forty under 40 honor and to serve as Co-Chair for both the Forty under 40 initiative and the YAC itself. My journey of service has also extended to the Piedmont Triad Chapter, where I've proudly held roles including Recording Secretary, Chair of Recruitment, Vice President, and President. Each position has further reinforced my belief in the power of leadership and collaboration.

As Miss Alumni, I pledge to build on this foundation of service, leveraging every resource, relationship, and opportunity to support our alma mater and inspire the next generation of Rams. This campaign is not just about me—it's about us, our shared commitment to WSSU, and the bright future we continue to create together.

### EDUCATION

Winston-Salem State University, 2007

### EMPLOYMENT

Adoration Home Health-HR Specialist

### PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Active and Financial Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Member of the Business Committee of TranZition MinistrieZ

### COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Street Clean-ups
- Mental Health Awareness Walk
- Homeless Shelters
- Helping and Advocating for Seniors
- Organizing community events and fundraisers
- Community planning
- Volunteering at polling places
- Tutored adult students for GED classes

### AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

- 2021 Hall of Distinction Recipient
- 2017 Forty under 40 recipient
- Everyday Hero
- Unsung Hero

### HOW TO SUPPORT MY CAMPAIGN

#### DONATE TO:

1) CASH APP-\$LADIARUTLEDGE

2) VENMO-@LADIA-RUTLEDGE

3) ZELLE AND PAYPAL-LADIA4MISSALUMNI@GMAIL.COM

MAIL DONATIONS: 6147 BURLINGTON ROAD PO BOX 162 SEDALIA, NC 27342

# 2025 Miss & Mr. Alumni CANDIDATES



## BRIAN MCLAUGHLIN

### BRIEF CAMPAIGN STATEMENT

When I started at WSSU in 2000, I had absolutely no direction and no clue what my life was supposed to be. I walked into a Ram family that taught me, nurtured me—and by the time I (eventually) “turned my tassel” in the Joel Coliseum, I’d been transformed into the individual I am today: a successful host & entertainer, husband, and

father of two.

As I now “Depart to Serve,” it is my duty to pay it forward and assist the next generation of Rams whose lives will undoubtedly be changed by making the best collegiate decision imaginable—Winston-Salem State University. My campaign is driven by gratitude, purpose, and the desire to uplift. With over two decades of experience as the “Voice of the Game,” I aim to use my influence to amplify our legacy, celebrate our culture, and energize a future full of opportunity for all Rams.

### EDUCATION

Winston-Salem State University, Bachelor of Science – Mass Communications, Winston-Salem, NC

### EMPLOYMENT

On-Air Personality, Power 98 (WPEG-FM), Charlotte, NC (Current)

PA Announcer, Winston-Salem State University Football (2004–Present)

Television Correspondent, The Grio & Fox Soul

Morning Show Co-Host, 102 JAMZ (WJMH-FM), Greensboro, NC (2000–2020)

NASCAR Host, various events across the U.S.

### PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Former cast member of MTV/VH1’s Wild ‘N Out

Featured correspondent on The Grio, Fox Soul, and The Breakfast Club

Featured personality on The Breakfast Club, Fox Soul, and Kevin Hart’s Zyrtec series

Creator of #IDKMYDE, a history series sponsored by Nissan

### COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Longstanding HBCU Homecoming Host (WSSU & NC A&T), engaging crowds of 20,000+

Supporter of student mentorship and youth programming through speaking engagements and media

Advocate for youth empowerment and education through media and live programming

Advocate for cultural education, Black excellence, and community pride

Committed to using media and entertainment to uplift underrepresented voices

### AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Radio Nation’s Radio DJs Legend Award

Featured on Atlanta billboards for the 2024 Black Effect Podcast Festival

Comedy headliner at major venues including the Laugh Factory, Comedy Zone, and Funny Bone

### HOW TO SUPPORT MY CAMPAIGN

Share the message—spread the word via social media and word of mouth

Book me for events and engagements to CONNECT WITH THE COMMUNITY

MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO HELP EXPAND OUTREACH AND CAMPAIGN EFFORTS

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME AND TALENTS FOR CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

STAY CONNECTED:  
INSTAGRAM: @BDAHTTV  
TWITTER: @BDAHT  
FACEBOOK: B DAHT  
YOUTUBE: B DAHT TV

# Chapter News



## RAM SPOTLIGHT

The Richmond Metro Chapter is genuinely excited to honor one of our own, an exceptional rising senior, Kyndal Demena from the Richmond Metro Area. A standout among us, Kyndal serves as the only female drum major, gracefully leading the Red Sea of Sound on the football field since her sophomore year. Her leadership is inspiring and complemented by her passion for playing the piccolo. In addition to her musical accomplishments, Kyndal excels academically, proudly earning a spot on the Dean's List while pursuing her degree in Exercise Science. She embodies the spirit of achievement and camaraderie as a Spring 2025 initiate of the Tau Beta Sigma Honorary Band Sorority. We are immensely proud of Kyndal!



### RAMS ON THE RUN

On April 25th and 26th, Juan Corders (10') participated in the Ragnar Trail Richmond Relay Race, covering 122.4 miles to raise funds for Kids On The Move. This Sports Backers program supports youth running and fitness clubs in Richmond, Virginia, providing resources for coaches and removing barriers for children by offering free race entries, transportation, team t-shirts, and new running shoes. Juan raised \$1,200.00.

### KR SCHOLARS

Kristen Dunlap Johnson (10') and her husband established the KR Scholars in 2020 to promote educational and professional achievement for students attending HBCUs. KR Scholars offers scholarships focused on financial literacy and workforce readiness, develops programs to assist high school students transitioning to HBCUs through "The HBCU Bridge," and advocates for the future of HBCUs in higher education. Richmond Metro Chapter president, Brian Davis (09') and Kendrick Best (09') serve on the Board of Directors. This year marks the fifth anniversary of KR Scholars!



## READ ACROSS AMERICA

Clara Russell (78') and Brittany Blanks (11') participated in Read Across America 2025. The Rams had a blast reading to a class of fantastic 1st graders at Dumbarton Elementary School in Henrico, VA. They read and gifted the book *There's Only One You* by Kathryn Heling and *Ten Hungry Pigs* by Derek Anderson.



### CONGRATULATIONS!

### THE AWARD GOES TO...

Tiont "Tick" Williams (08') was awarded the 2024-2025 "Partner of the Year" from John Marshall High School for his leadership in the Richmond Young Life program, which he introduced as Area Director. This faith-based, academic-focused after-school program supports youth in under-resourced areas of Richmond, Virginia, emphasizing character development and academic intervention through small group tutoring.

Chloe Edmonds (12') joyfully welcomed a beautiful baby boy into the world. Both are thriving, surrounded by love and gratitude.

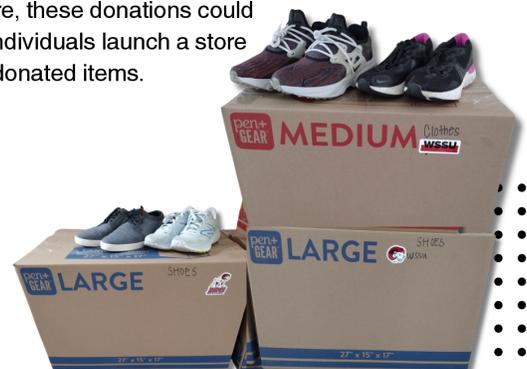


Davishia Jones Baldwin (09') received her Master's in Organizational Leadership with a concentration in Organizational Leadership and Development from Mercer University



## SOLES4SOULS SHOE & CLOTHES DONATION

The Richmond Metro Chapter has graciously contributed 30 pairs of gently used and new shoes and clothing to the Souls4Souls Organization, aiding individuals in need both at home and abroad. Furthermore, these donations could also help individuals launch a store to sell the donated items.



# Alumni News & Events



The Carolina Panthers are excited to continue a new benefit for PSL Owners. The PSL Owner Advisory Team helps tackle issues related to the year-round fan experience. Advisory Team discussions include topics such as game day operations, database marketing, PSL Owner benefits and the overall PSL Owner experience.

**Make your plans now! Book your rooms with Downtown Embassy Suites or the downtown location of the Hawthorne Inn!**



## INTRODUCING THE ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

### WSSU Alumni Spotlight

We are excited to introduce the WSSU Alumni Spotlight, a new initiative dedicated to celebrating the outstanding achievements of our alumni. Each quarter, we will highlight a distinguished graduate who exemplifies excellence, leadership, and service in their field and community. Through this recognition, we aim to showcase the impact of WSSU alumni, inspire current students, and strengthen the bond within our Ram family. Stay tuned for our first feature and join us in celebrating the success of our remarkable alumni!



Please visit our website at: [wssunaa.org](http://wssunaa.org)  
and complete the application



# In Memoriam



**Chris Caudle**  
June 20, 2025



**Vivien Johnson**  
May 17, 1936 - February 23, 2025



**Dr. Virginia Newell**  
Oct 7, 1917 - Mar 14, 2025



**Wilma Mae Weeks**  
Wednesday July 9, 2025



**Deloris Jackson**  
Class of 1957

**Not Pictured: Phyllis Yvonne Ingram Scales,**  
Class of 1957

## ASSOCIATION LOCKBOX

Reminder...

Please mail only checks to the Association's lockbox for membership dues and payments. All correspondence should be either emailed to [officemanager@wssunaa.org](mailto:officemanager@wssunaa.org) or mailed directly to the NAA office.

Note: Please do not mail extra documents to the lockbox as the bank charges per each scanned item.

Dues and all other monies should be mailed to:

**WSSU National Alumni Association**  
Post Office Box 890670  
Charlotte, NC 28389-0670

## Membership Cards

Existing NAA Members, If you would like to order a replacement membership card, please complete your contact information to order your membership card for \$10 + fee. Visit: <https://fundraise.givesmart.com/vf/22NAAJOIN>

\*\* Due to rising printing costs, we're looking to go to digital cards after this fiscal year.



## HOW TO CONTACT US



Please submit articles, suggestions, or comments to:

[thebatteringram@wssunaa.org](mailto:thebatteringram@wssunaa.org)

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### Website

[www.wssunaa.org](http://www.wssunaa.org)

### E-Mail

[alumni@wssunaa.org](mailto:alumni@wssunaa.org)

<http://twitter.com/WSSUathletics>

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## DUE DATES FOR THE BATTERING RAM

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Winter	December 1
Spring	March 1
Summer	June 1
Fall	September 1

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This newsletter is an official publication of:

**WSSU National Alumni Association**  
S. G. Atkins House  
Winston-Salem, NC 27110  
336/750-2122

**Reginald McCaskill, President**  
**Catherine Pettie Hart, Editor**  
**Natasha Young, Graphic Designer**



Dear Ram Alumni,

Thank you for supporting the activities of the National Alumni Association through your membership.

Regular membership renewal date is July 1. Alumni taking advantage of the installment plan for Life Membership must make four (4) consecutive payments to maintain eligibility without starting over.

Thank you for demonstrating RAM PRIDE through your affiliation with the National Alumni Association. Please make sure that we have your current mailing and email address so we can keep you updated with Association news.

Please renew your membership today: [Membership/Pay Dues Online](#)

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