Hampton University Celebrates the Life of Dr. Mary T. Christian

Hundreds of members of the Hampton University family, city and state officials, community members, sorority sisters and the family of Dr. Mary T. Christian came together on Monday, November 18 at the Convocation Center to celebrate the life of this extraordinary woman.

Before the main service, Dr. Christian’s sorority sisters from Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. gave the Omega Omega ceremony for a final tribute to their dear sister. Delegate Jelion A. Ward was pinned by Dr. Christian in 2004. “During her service in the General Assembly, she was known as a champion for education. She was a powerful voice for those who were voiceless. She continues to be known for her thoughtfulness and for her voice of reason. She was beautiful. She was elegant. She was classy. She truly was a phenomenal woman,” said Delegate Ward.

The Celebration of Life was presided over by Reverend Dr. Richard W. Wills, Sr. from Friendship Baptist Church. Dr. Christian’s grandson, Alan Smith, II, read a scripture from the Old Testament. The Hampton University Concert Choir provided a beautiful and moving musical selection and then several members of the community were able to speak on Dr. Christian, including Hampton University’s President, Dr. William R. Harvey. “Give thanks. Don’t expect things and when people do things for you, say thank you and be genuine about it. To all of you, the staff, faculty, students and everyone else, thank you. For 42 years I’ve been able to say that and I’m going to continue to say that because it is real.”

After Dr. Harvey spoke about giving thanks, the ceremony continued with Hampton University’s First Lady, Mrs. Norma B. Harvey lighting the tree. “As we go into the Christmas season, always remember to keep Christ in Christmas. May we have peace around the world. May we love one another and may we hope that our future will be bright,” Mrs. Harvey said. “Now, it is my pleasure to light this gorgeous tree.”

Following her words, Mrs. Harvey threw a switch, lighting up the festive tree, decorated in Christmas colors. The brass ensemble serenaded as guests gathered around enjoying Christmas cookies and fruit punch.

The tree, decorated with dozens of Christmas colored ornaments can be seen near the entrance to Hampton University at the corner of East Tyler Street and Emancipation Drive.

Dr. Christian was an educator and politician. She served nine consecutive terms in the Virginia General Assembly where she championed legislation on education, healthcare and prescription drugs. Dr. Christian was among three African Americans appointed to the House Appropriations Committee. She also served on the Education and Rules Committees.

Known on campus by her students as “Dr. C.,” she was professor emeritus at Hampton University. She received numerous awards for her community and humanitarian service. In 2014, a play based on Christian’s life was performed on campus as part of her birthday celebration, titled “My Life Did the Singing.” All proceeds from the celebration benefited the scholarship fund established at HU in her name.

Dr. Christian was now laid to rest at the Hampton University Cemetery.
Hampton University Student and Alumna Named Finalists for Prestigious Rhodes and Marshall Scholarships

Hampton University student Ms. Jakari Harris and alumna Ms. José Thomas, have been selected as finalists for two of the world’s most prestigious scholarships. “Congratulations to these remarkable scholars. They truly exemplify the Hampton University Standard of Excellence,” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey.

Jakari Harris, a senior majoring in chemical engineering, with a 3.9 GPA, was invited to interview for a Marshall Scholarship, through the Commonwealth Caribbean District. Harris is a member of the Hampton University Freddy T. Davy Honors College under the University President, Dr. William R. Harvey. “These two bright, witty, outgoing and high character individuals represent the leaders that we build at this world-class institution!”

Hampton University Professor Part of Team Studying Severe Weather on Saturn to Better Understand Storms on Earth

Kunio Sayanagi, associate professor in the Hampton University Department of Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences, is a part of a team of researchers whose latest study of stormy weather on Saturn has been published in “Nature Astronomy,” a leading international weekly journal of science.

“Congratulations to Dr. Sayanagi and the team of researchers on their findings and publication in ‘Nature Astronomy,’” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey. “Their research on Saturn provides scientists with invaluable information on the creation of severe storms here on Earth which will ultimately allow the public to be more informed and overall safer from severe weather.”

The main discovery discussed in the paper is that Sayanagi and his colleagues revealed a new class of storms on Saturn -- most storms on Saturn are either small and short-lasting, or enormous eruption that engulfs an entire latitude band. This new storm is of a rare in-between size, and it was associated with a long-lived vortex. It was the first time a bright storm erupted out of a long-lived (and presumably stable) vortex. The team carefully examined the motion of the vortex from which the storm erupted between 2016 and 2017 to show that the vortex was stable before the eruption of the storm.

Extreme storms on Saturn create a window of opportunity to refine fundamental understanding of how large storms form and evolve. Researching weather on other planets in our solar system contribute to refining weather forecasts on Earth in the future. Atmospheric scientists learn a great deal from the study of weather on other planets because the same physics governs these storms on all planets, and we can learn how these “weather events” work under extreme conditions.

“These extreme storms on Saturn are interesting because they attain intensity, size and duration that are never possible on Earth,” said Sayanagi. “Even the intermediate-scale storm that is revealed in this paper is much greater in size and intensity than the most intense hurricane on Earth. Progress in scientific understanding is often made by studying extreme conditions that challenge our current understanding. To study extreme events, we can either wait for extreme events to happen here on Earth, or we can continue looking elsewhere in the solar system and the universe.”

Dr. Sayanagi was an affiliate member of NASA's Cassini imaging science team until 2017, and was able to see the vortex evolution first hand as the data was sent from Saturn. The Cassini Mission ended in September 2017 when the spacecraft was deliberately crashed into Saturn when its fuel ran out. Even though the spacecraft is no longer in orbit around Saturn, the mission left a wealth of data that are yet to be analyzed, and scientists continue to gain new understanding of Saturn as well as its rings and moons today.
Hampton University Promotes Aleczander M. Whitfield to Dean of Students

Hampton University has announced that Mr. Aleczander M. Whitfield will be its new Dean of Students. He will serve under Dr. Barbara Inman, Vice President of Administrative Services.

“We are pleased to accept Dr. Barbara Inman, Vice President of Administrative Services’ recommendation to promote Mr. Whitfield to his new role. His credentials and experience in higher education make him the perfect leader for this position,” said Dr. William R. Harvey, Hampton University's President.

Whitfield, originally from Detroit, has spent the last 17 years in higher education, with the last three years serving as the Assistant Dean of Judicial Affairs and Housing for Hampton University. His career started in 2002, serving in positions at two other institutions in various areas of Student Affairs including Greek Life, Student Activities, Intramural Sports and Recreation, Residence Life, Student Orientation and Leadership Programs. He also taught music education at the high school level.

Whitfield is a member of Ogie Phi Ogie VIII and graduated from Hampton in 1996 with a bachelor’s degree in Music Education. He was a member of The Marching Force, playing flute and tenor sax. He also has a master's degree from the University of Detroit Mercy and plans on starting a doctorate program soon.

“I feel so excited and blessed. I am humbled that Dr. Harvey and Dr. Inman believe I can do this job. I’m encouraged that my opinion and experience are valued, and I’m excited to be able to come in and support my colleagues and build on what has already been accomplished,” Whitfield said. “When I realized that I wanted to pursue higher education as my career, I always envisioned the opportunity to come back to my alma mater and help develop and shape the program, so it’s mind-blowing that 17 years later, I’m here.”

In this role, Whitfield will support the areas within Student Affairs including the Offices of Student Activities, Judicial Affairs and Housing, Residence Life, Freshman Studies/Pre-College, Student Success Center and Intramural Sports.

“I am excited that Mr. Whitfield will serve the university as the new Dean of Students. We had approximately 40 very qualified candidates to submit their credentials for the position. Mr. Whitfield’s experience in student affairs and his ability to assess and implement programming will be an asset to the division,” said Dr. Inman.

Whitfield has been married to the beautiful L. Whitfield for 21 years and has three wonderful daughters. His office is located on the second floor of the Student Center.

Hampton University’s Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications Welcomes Nikole Hannah-Jones-New York Times Investigative Reporter and Creator of ‘The 1619 Project’

The Hampton University Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications welcomed New York Times Investigative reporter and creator of the landmark ‘1619 Project’ – Nikole Hannah-Jones to campus to meet with students, and discuss with a packed audience this important project. Her visit was part of the Caldwell Café Lecture Series.

“What an amazing turnout to hear the incredibly talented journalist Ms. Nikole Hannah-Jones speak to our students about our ancestors’ first steps onto the shores of Virginia 400 years ago,” said B. DaVida Piummer, Dean of the Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications “We appreciate her speaking candidly about enslaved Africans and hope that audience members were able to take something away from her powerful knowledge.”

After speaking in a journalism classes and meeting with students one-on-one in a roundtable discussion, Hannah-Jones took the stage of the Scripps Howard Auditorium to answer questions from facilitator, student Randall Williams.

“I knew I wanted to come to Hampton University because this is where it all began. Point Comfort in Hampton is one of the places where the enslaved began, where the four parts of enslaved people crossed over the bay at Point Comfort and said that they wanted to be free and were treated as war contraband. Our story has always been a story of people trying to enslave us, and the fight to liberate ourselves,” Hannah-Jones said.

Hannah-Jones has been thinking about the year 1619 since high school. She was exposed to Black history in college and kept asking for more books to continue learning about it.

“I came across a book called ‘Before the Mayflower’ by Lerone Bennett and on page 29 of that book is the first time that I ever saw the year 1619, and I just remember being shook by the fact that every child I knew, knew about the Mayflower and the Mayflower was 1620 and here’s this ship called the White Lion that carried, I would argue, far more momentous cargo than the Mayflower but we had never heard of that date. I knew even as a 16 year old, that there was a reason for that. We were not supposed to know this story. As the 400-year anniversary was approaching, I understood that most Americans had never heard of the year 1619 and just like everything else about the Black experience, that this anniversary would pass without any notice or acknowledgement in most places. Here I am at the New York Times, the largest and most important journalism platform in the world, and I have to do something about it.”

That’s when she pitched the idea for The 1619 Project, which can be found in the August 18, 2019 issue of The New York Times Magazine. The issue includes ten essays, a photo essay, and a collection of poems and fiction by sixteen plus writers.

There were over 200 students, faculty, staff and members of the community in attendance to hear Ms. Hannah-Jones speak.

“I feel like we need to have more events like this when people come to talk about the past, because the past always repeats itself,” said Roderick McLean, senior journalism student from New York.

“I found her to be very interesting. I agreed with her points, especially those that pin pointed slavery and how people are so patriotic to a country that historically doesn’t like us,” said Aminah Muhammad, junior, strategic communications major.

Hannah-Jones is an award-winning investigative reporter who covers civil rights and racial injustice for The New York Times Magazine. She has also worked at ProPublica in New York City, where she spent three years chronicing the way official policy created and maintains segregation in housing and schools. Hannah-Jones has a bachelor’s degree in History and African-American Studies from University of Notre Dame and a master’s degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

For more information about Nikole Hannah-Jones, visit https://nikolehannahjones.com/.

Hampton University Student Center Food Court has Added New Attractions

The Hampton University Student Center food court has added a full-service Chick-fil-A, a Pizza Hut, Pirates Café is now serving Starbucks and Planet Smoothie has upgraded its equipment.

“We have upgraded our Chick-fil-A to be fully serviced and in addition, we now have a Pizza Hut Express. This is a great attraction to complement our illustrious University under the leadership of our Gourmet Services Resident District Manager, Kerwin Cromartie,” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey.

“We are student driven. We listen to our students to figure out which entities will work best for this campus. We have had an express Chick-fil-A on campus for thirteen years, and now it is fully serviced. We have an express Pizza Hut with plans to do more with the franchise on campus as far as catering opportunities, delivery opportunities and we plan to offer Pizza Hut at athletic events. We have received an overwhelmingly amount of positive responses. We made sure to do things strategically,” said Gourmet Services Resident District Manager, Kerwin Cromartie.

For more information, please contact Dr. Barbara Inman, Vice President of Administrative Services at 757-728-5736 or email Barbara.inman@hamptonu.edu.
The Black College Football Hall of Fame (BCFHOF) announced its 11th Class today – the Class of 2020. This year’s class features two inductees that were instrumental in Hampton University’s past success both on and off the field, former Head Football Coach Joe Taylor and former Director of Athletics Dennis Thomas.

“On behalf of the Hampton University family, we congratulate the entire Class of 2020, especially two of our own; Coach Joe Taylor and Commissioner Dennis Thomas,” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey. “During their time here at our ‘Home by the Sea,’ these men excelled on the football field and from an administrative standpoint respectively. Not only did we win numerous championships, but the lives of so many young men and women were positively impacted by their strong character and leadership abilities.”

The all-time winningest coach in Pirate football history, Taylor compiled an impressive 233 wins overall during his standout 30-year career. His remarkable 70.6 winning percentage ranks in the top 10 in FCS coaching history. Taylor shined during his tenure as Hampton’s head coach from 1992-2007, posting a school record 136 wins while leading the Pirates to four SBN Black College National Championships. Hampton played at the NCAA Division II level his first three seasons, earning two Division II playoff appearances, including the school’s first-ever NCAA playoff win. Taylor guided the Pirates to CIAA titles in all three of those seasons and the first of his four Black College National Championships. Hampton played at the NCAA Division II level his first three seasons, earning two Division II playoff appearances, including the school’s first-ever NCAA playoff win. Taylor guided the Pirates to CIAA titles in all three of those seasons and the first of his four Black College National Championships. Hampton played at the NCAA Division II level his first three seasons, earning two Division II playoff appearances, including the school’s first-ever NCAA playoff win. Taylor guided the Pirates to CIAA titles in all three of those seasons and the first of his four Black College National Championships.

Dennis Thomas served as Hampton University’s Athletic Director from 1990-2002. During his tenure, Thomas was awarded the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics, Athletics Director-of-the-Year Award for the Southeast Region in 2002. Under his leadership, Hampton won 17 CIAA Division II championships between 1990 and 1995 and 11 MEAC championships between 1996 and 2002. In 2002 Thomas became the Commissioner of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC). As MEAC commissioner for the last 17 years, Thomas has negotiated a multi-million dollar TV contract with ESPN and deals with other league partners.

“During the engaging panel discussion, twelve representatives from various sports organizations and national sports brands shared their testimonies about how Hampton alumni presented thoughts on how Hampton students can build professional engagement opportunities with Major League Sports Organizations and National Sports Brands during this event.

“These Hampton University alumni are doing an extraordinary job in their careers. Our students should be inspired seeing our own working for these major sports organizations and brands. We want to thank these young alumni for returning back to their ‘Home by the Sea’ to engage and inspire our current students to follow their goals,” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey.

“Hampton Engages with the Majors” event was a collaboration effort between the Hampton University School of Liberal Arts and Education and the Career Center.

On Tuesday, November 12, 2019, the Hampton University Student Center Ballroom was filled with HU students, faculty, staff and alumni for the inaugural “Hampton Engages with the Majors.” Several HU alumni presented thoughts on how Hampton students can build professional engagement opportunities with Major League Sports Organizations and National Sports Brands during this event.

“Hampton University senior, Journalism major, myself. ‘I hope I can be an inspiration and role model for other Hampton students. Just know that no journey is the same and there is more to the story than what you see on TV. Hampton students were once in my shoes, and now, who are paying it forward,” said Associate Manager of Global Partnerships for the NBA, Moriah Lark (’13, ’14). “I hope I can be an inspiration and resource to others through my own personal story.”

During the engaging panel discussion, twelve representatives from various sports organizations and national sports brands shared their testimonies about their unconventional journey working in sports. Each panelist collectively shared their trials and tribulations throughout their professional career while encouraging students to network, to persevere through hardships and to always have good character in anything you do.

Major League Sports Organizations and National Sports Brands Represented:

- St. Louis Cardinals, LLC
- Carolina Panthers
- Major League Baseball
- National Basketball Association
- Beats by Dr. Dre
- New Jersey Devils
- Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc.
- Philadelphia 76ers
- Paramount Sports & Entertainment Football
- Nike
- ESPN
- Jordan Brand

“It was very inspirational to hear the different testimonies shared from HU alumni who were once in my shoes, and now, who are extremely successful in their careers. I learned that no journey is the same and there is more than one route to reaching your professional goals. They encouraged us to focus on ourselves and to run your own race,” said Hampton University senior, Journalism major, Roderick Mclean.

The Inaugural “Hampton Engages with the Majors” event was a collaboration effort between the Hampton University School of Liberal Arts and Education and the Career Center.