Virginia State University held off a strong second half rally to defeat the Shaw Bears, 77-66, in the 2019 Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Men’s Basketball Championship game on March 2 at the Spectrum Center in Charlotte, NC.

“I take my hat off to Coach [Lonnie] Blow and Virginia State on a wonderful season,” Shaw coach Joel Hopkins said. “They did a great job.”

The Trojans were led by Jahmere Howze with 28 points and 12 rebounds. He was named to the All-Tournament Team and Tournament MVP for his efforts. Teammate Jalen Jackson registered 16 points and eight rebounds while Wiggins tallied 11 points, six assists, four rebounds and three steals. Andrew Corum would round out the double figure scoring for the Trojans with 11 points and eight rebounds.

“It wasn’t perfect, but it doesn’t matter how many you win by,” said Blow, who has won three CIAA titles as a coach.

Did you know?

In January 2018, alumna Daun Sessoms Hester became the first black city treasurer for the city of Norfolk.

Men’s Basketball Team Captures CIAA Championship

Virginia State University women’s indoor track and field team earned the title of 2019 CIAA Champions on February 11. The last time the women secured the 1st place indoor title was during the 2011-2012 season. In addition to the Trojans championship, they earned three prestigious honors in addition to a single regular season honor. Kenya Warner’s consistency in her respective field events not only earned her the regular season MVP Field award, but also the 2019 CIAA Indoor Field Athlete MVP. Warner is a junior from Windsor, Conn. On the track, Kyla Frank, a junior from Washington, D.C., paced the competition, ultimately giving her the title of the 2019 CIAA Indoor Track Athlete MVP. Head Coach Wilbert Johnson’s leadership throughout the season earned him the CIAA Women’s Coach of the Year title.
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Mr. Michael E. Walker, Class of 1978, is a devoted and longtime supporter of VSU. Through his athletic booster membership, he supports the VSU Athletic Fund and the VSU Trojan Athletic Club Fund. Additionally, he has also supported other worthwhile causes including the Class of 1978 Endowed Scholarship Fund and the Annual Fund.

Mr. Walker, a lifelong resident of the City of Petersburg, majored in business information systems. His favorite instructor was Professor Ruby Hayes, who taught accounting. Currently, he works for the Petersburg Area Transit, a division under the Department of Public Works.

Last month, Mr. Walker traveled to Charlotte for the CIAA Basketball Tournament to cheer on his beloved Trojans. This trip marked his 30th consecutive year attending the tournament.

"I believe in education and supporting students. I was helped by the generosity of others and want to help others achieve their goals."

Congratulations to Trojan Kennedy James, who won a $5,000 scholarship as part of the 2019 CIAA Essay Contest. Kennedy is a senior majoring in computer engineering from Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Men’s Head Coach Lonnie Blow, Jr. earned his fourth Coach of the Year honor in five seasons. Coach Blow led the men's basketball team to a conference best 16-1 record in league play and a 24-4 overall record this season. Under Blow's leadership, the Trojans have been nationally ranked for much of the season. Under Coach Blow's leadership, the men's basketball team were ranked No. 1 in the Northern Division for the second consecutive year.

Women's Indoor Track and Field Head Coach, Wilbert Johnson, was named CIAA Coach of the Year. His leadership throughout the season and finishing up with VSU being named Women's Indoor Track and Field Champs, earned him the title.

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Why does Mr. Walker give to VSU?
Miss VSU: Family Ties

Many students decision to attend VSU was based on familial atmosphere offered by faculty, staff, and fellows Trojans. However, for the 90th Miss Virginia State University Ja'Scotta Jefferson, the feeling of being at home at VSU goes beyond campus life and involvement.

Jefferson, of Manassas, Virginia, is one of eight children — four of whom have received degrees or currently attend VSU.


Including herself and a younger sister, Ja’Neese, who is a sophomore, half of the Jefferson siblings are VSU educated, making Jefferson’s experience all the more meaningful.

“My siblings strongly influenced me to attend VSU,” Jefferson shared. “I was exposed to this lovely campus at a young age and I would always visit until I started my own journey at VSU.”

The decision to attend for each of the Jefferson siblings has left powerful impact that lasts beyond the undergraduate experience. Among the siblings, one is currently enrolled in VSU’s doctoral program and a former residence life assistant, VSU Gospel Chorale members, two siblings are members of The Betterment of Brothers and Sisters organization, a Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. member, and two members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

“Although we all chose the same school, we chose different paths to leave our legacy throughout campus,” Jefferson said.

With certainty, Jefferson can say that both she and her siblings time spent at VSU allowed them to learn and grow.

“It is an amazing feeling to have this many family ties at my institution,” Jefferson said with a glee in her eyes. “Virginia State University has truly shaped us into the people we are today. We are a Trojan family indeed!”

VSUAA-Prince George's County (MD) Establishes Endowment

The Prince George’s County (MD) chapter of the VSU Alumni Association recently established an endowed scholarship fund at VSU.

Did you know?

Alumna Dr. Tammy L. Kernodle, Class of 1991, is the second African-American woman to hold the office of president for the Society for American Music. Kernodle is a professor of musicology at Miami University.
Honoring the legacy of VSU Women

In honor of National Women’s History Month, the University celebrates women trailblazers who are at the forefront of VSU’s legacy. Whether pioneering voters’ rights, composing art or revolutionizing institutions, these women are noted catalyst for changing history.

**Mary E. Branch**

In 1897, Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute now VSU received its first graduate Mary E. Branch. A champion of racial and gender equality, Branch organized and advocated voter rights and registration drives throughout the Ettrick and Petersburg communities. Her tireless labor came to fruition in 1920. As a result of the 19th Amendment, Branch and eight other women faculty members qualified and were granted the right to vote. Setting her aspirations on educational advancement, Branch progressed to become president of Tillotson Teachers College in Austin, Texas. Branch Hall, a female residential hall, is named in her honor.

Virginia State, Virginia State, Hail, Hail, Hail….. We all know the words of alumna Felicia Dorothea Anderson. Anderson who wrote the music and words to our beloved alma mater in 1923. Anderson received her master’s degree at Columbia University later returning to Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute as chair of the Department of Drama. Her renowned plays gained nationwide attention with her 1926 masterpiece Player’s Guild. Anderson is a staple in the performing arts industry. The Anderson Turner Auditorium located in Virginia Hall is partially named in her honor.

**Dr. Florence S. Farley**

A trailblazer true to form, Dr. Florence S. Farley experienced many firsts in her lifetime. Graduating from then Virginia State College now VSU in 1950, Farley set high professional aspiration. She was the first licensed African-American clinical psychologist in Virginia. Breaking barriers in the medical field, she became the first African American employed by Central State Hospital located in Petersburg, VA. In 1962, Farley returned to the classroom becoming chair of the newly established Department of Psychology at VSU, ultimately serving as the dean of School of Natural Science for nearly 20 years. Throwing her hat in the political arena, Dr. Farley was elected as Petersburg’s first woman to City Council in 1974. A decade later in 1984, she became the first woman in the Commonwealth of Virginia elected as mayor. Retiring in 2003, Dr. Farley’s contributions to not only African American history but also women’s history has been immeasurable. Featured in 2010’s African American Trailblazers by the Library of Virginia, Dr. Farley defied many odds as an educator, psychologist, and stateswoman.

We honor and thank every woman that has laid a foundation for gender equality and advancement at VSU and beyond. VSU has a rich legacy of liberal women breaking barriers, creating a better future for the men and women of today. To learn more about the VSU women who blazed the paths for other women, visit library.vsu.edu.
Moguls in the Making

VSU students have done it again! Five Trojans have earned the opportunity to compete in the “Moguls in the Making” competition. Big Sean, a Detroit rapper and entrepreneur, and Ally Financial have partnered with the Thurgood Marshall College Fund’s (TMCF) Innovation and Entrepreneurship (I&E) Program to find the best and brightest entrepreneurial minds among publicly-supported historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

VSU students will participate in a two and a half day business competition beginning March 29 in Detroit. Students will be tasked with developing solutions to economic problems facing various industries, and then pitch their ideas to a panel of expert judges comprised of entrepreneurs, small business owners, executives, venture capitalists, and other investors.

VSU is one of ten historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) selected. The Trojans who will represent VSU are as follows:

- Guy DeWeever II, a junior marketing major
- Corey J. Vickers, a junior marketing major;
- Xavier H. Kelly, a junior computer science major;
- Carey Hollis, a senior mechanical engineering major; and
- Tiara Jasey, a sophomore management major

VSU Campus Coordinator for TMCF Daniel Roberts, Ph.D. noted that “he couldn’t be more proud of the students selected to participate in this new competition. These kinds of experiences provide incredible opportunities for students to refine their skills and to network with extremely influential business leaders.”

Other participating HBCUs are Alabama A&M University, Elizabeth City State University, Florida A&M University, Howard University, Jackson State University, Morgan State University, Norfolk State University, North Carolina A&T State University, and Tennessee State University.
VSU Receives CASE Awards in Atlanta

On February 26th, President Makola M. Abdullah, Ph.D. received the CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) District III Inclusion and Diversity Leadership Award. This award was presented in recognition of his efforts in leading the charge in inclusion and diversity. In addition, the Office of Institutional Advancement staff received the Special Merit Award in the category of Alumni Relations Engagement Project, Event, or Program for Saint Paul’s College Day.

Outstanding Philanthropy

Each year, the Chesterfield County/Colonial Heights Christmas Mother presents a Wreath Award for outstanding philanthropy. This year’s recipient was VSU. On March 13, Bonnie Inge Bell, who serves as the Christmas Mother, presented the award to the University. During the 2018 holiday season, the University collected nearly 100 gifts to donate to children in the surrounding area.

Did you know?

Mrs. Ida Morris Harris was the first female administrator at VSU then known as Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute. She was one of only five people appointed to the faculty in August 1883 as assistant principal to then Principal James Storum. She later married the founder of VSU, Delegate Alfred W. Harris.

Upcoming Events in the Land of Troy

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