Message from the Executive Committee of the Trojan Explosion Booster Association

As we publish this 6th edition of The Explosion, we are reminded of how far we have come in our efforts to support the students and staff of the Trojan Explosion Marching Band. We started with big hopes and the willingness to work hard to provide the needs of the band and, with help from our supporters, we have accomplished much.

Our committee members are musicians, former band directors, parents, alumni, and former VSC/VSU band members. With these varied backgrounds, we are able to view committee decisions from many perspectives.

Our donors have given unselfishly. Supporters of our fundraising efforts have purchased Trojan scarves, marching bags (tote bags made by our Textile, Apparel and Merchandising Management students from retired band uniforms), alumni and band beanies and booster baseball caps. Other supporters have donated cases of water to help keep students hydrated at practices and performances. All of these forms of support have helped to make our goal of providing support a reality. For these contributions and for emails and comments of support, we say Thank You So Much!

Email: VSUBandBooster@Comcast.net
Website: band.vsu.edu

Message from Band President

Dear Trojan Explosion Booster Association,

On behalf of The Virginia State University Trojan Explosion Marching Band, students, directors, staff, and parents, I would like to thank you for your support during the 2014-2015 band season. Your donations, contributions, and whole-hearted support go a long way.

In celebrating 30 years of service, the band boosters have been here for us every step of the way - every game, every battle, and even playoff games. This year’s season has been extravagant and we have been privileged to travel with the football team and the women's basketball team as they took on the title as Champions of the CIAA. Without support from our band boosters none of this year's accomplishments would have been possible.

Thank you again for your support of our organization. We take great pride in our mission and our accomplishments, and with your help, we will remain the best band in the CIAA.

Natalie Anderson, President
Trojan Explosion Marching Band
A Mississippi native, Holden received undergraduate and graduate degrees in Music Education from Jackson State University. He participated in post-graduate studies at North Texas State University and Berklee School of Music. He has performed with B.B. King, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Michael Bolton, Solomon Burke and for Pope Benedict’s Christmas Concert. Arguably one of the top arrangers in the country, Professor Holden is known throughout the musical world as an exquisite saxophonist.

**Interim Director of Bands**  
Professor James Holden, Jr., M.M.E.

**Not pictured:** Mr. Franklin Johnson, Jr. (Recruitment), Mr. Alan Morton (Drum Major Coordinator), Mr. Perry Evans (Satin Divas Flag Coach), Mr. L. Darnell Spicely and Mr. Parris Bowles (Double-Time Entertainment - Media Production), Ms. Nicole Dunnings and Mr. William Ruffin (Equipment Managers), Mr. Deondra Edwards, Student Photographer (VSU Mass Communications) and Mr. D'Mario Hill and Mr. Maurice Bowles (Announcers).

**Band Staff**

- **Assistant Director**  

- **Assistant Director**  
  Mr. Taylor Whitehead, M.M.E.

- **Operations Director**  
  Mr. Maurice B. Jones, M.S.

**Support Staff from left to right above:** Ms. Salena Scott (Coach, Essence of Troy Dancers), Mr. Jairamie King (Choreographer, Essence of Troy Dancers), Mr. Curvey Reid and Mr. E Elisha Powell (Percussion Coordinators)
VSU Pep Band with singer Tank and a meal with Rapper T.I.

Performing at CIAA Tournament:
Mr. Kevin Tucker
Mr. Desean Bartholomeo
Ms. Natalie Anderson

Pep Band Provides Spirit for Virginia State's Basketball Teams and Are Courtside for the Lady Trojan Win

Mr. Fisher C. Reaves, II

Mr. Derrick Wilson
Trojan Explosion Awards Banquet
March 29, 2015

Pictured attending the Awards Banquet are Mr. Dion Futch, football captain and honorary member of the Trojan Explosion, Dr. Pamela Hammond, VSU Interim President, Mr. Gary Hammond, First Gentleman (not pictured), and Ms. Natalie Anderson, Band President.
May 2015 Graduates Received Their Trojan Scarves

Ms. Kelsey Nelson
(Saxophone Section Leader)
Criminal Justice
North Stafford High School
Stafford, VA

Mr. DeShon Rollins
(Featured Twirler)
Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance with Dance Concentration
Southampton High School
Newsoms, Virginia

Mr. Kevin Tucker
(Saxophone Section Leader)
Mass Communications
Norview High School
Norfolk, VA

Given as a reminder of their commitment to give back to their alma mater, graduates are presented the popular Trojan Scarf.

Awards Presented to Band Members by the Trojan Explosion Booster Association

Ms. Natalie Anderson
Junior from Richmond, VA
Social Work Major and Band President

Mr. Derreck Moss
Senior from Lunenburgh County, VA
Music Education Major
Trumpet Section Leader

Each received a $50 Wal-Mart gift card.

GPA Awards

Ms. Kayla Hicks
Sophomore from Emporia, VA
Music Major
GPA 3.0

Mr. Elijah Bass
Freshman from Prince William, VA
Management Info. Systems Major
GPA 3.8

Each received a $50 Wal-Mart gift card.

GPA Awards

Ms. Kayla Hicks
Sophomore from Emporia, VA
Music Major
GPA 3.0

Mr. Elijah Bass
Freshman from Prince William, VA
Management Info. Systems Major
GPA 3.8

Each received a $50 Wal-Mart gift card.
Franklin Johnson, Jr., Band Recruiter (left), and Jairamie King, Essence of Troy Choreographer (right), are surprised with a gift card and certificate of appreciation by James Holden, Jr. When the singer cancelled the day before, Jairamie stepped in, learning the words and singing “Going in Circles” for the 2014 Homecoming halftime show. Franklin drives from Maryland every weekend to support the band at events.

The Superlative Awards below are special because fellow band members vote to select the winners.

Most Improved since Band Camp Tubas

Flag of the Year – Ms. Joi Smith

Twirler of the Year - Mr. DeShon Rollins

Best Marching
Mr. Desean Bartholomeo
Ms. De’Erica Slayden

Most School Spirit
Mr. David Briscoe
Ms. Nia West (Not Pictured)

Most Disciplined and Best Marching - Saxophones

Dancer of the Year - Ms. Bria Bowers
Bandsmen of the Year – Mr. Desean Bartholomeo

Most Disciplined
Ms. Kelsey Nelson and Mr. Desean Bartholomeo

Most Improved – Mr. Matthew Raton

Best Musicians
Mr. Reginald McCoy and Mr. David Briscoe

Trumpets
Section of the Year
Best Playing Section
and
Most Spirited Section
To honor the trumpet section, whose members garnered three awards, Mr. Bill McGee presented each member of the section, on behalf of the Trojan Explosion Booster Association, a CD compilation of some of his chosen selections. Mr. McGee is a trumpeter, recording artist and alumnus of VSU.

Several of the selections on the CD feature Mr. Holden, Director of Bands.

The photo on the CD label is the VSU trumpet section sporting their pink gloves for cancer awareness.

**Congratulations**

**to all Award Winners**

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**Distinguished Service Award Winners**

**Mrs. Nellie Spann and Mr. Harold Allen**

This award is presented for exceptional service to the Trojan Explosion Marching Band.

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**Operations Director,**

Mr. Maurice B. Jones, is surprised with a gift as a thank you for all of his hard work. Mr. Jones is responsible for ordering uniforms and other clothing and supplies, for planning the logistics of moving the band from one location to the next, arranging for meals and lodging when traveling and many other tasks needed to keep the band operating with maximum efficiency.
For thirty years Mr. Holden has worked in the music department at Virginia State University. He came to VSU in 1984 with Mr. Harold J. Haughton, Sr., newly hired Director of Bands, to serve as Assistant Director of the marching band. For 28 years he served in the role and taught courses in the music department. VSU has been the beneficiary of his talents as one of the top arrangers in the country and an exquisite saxophonist. Two years ago Mr. Holden was named Interim Director of Bands and has worked diligently to strengthen and increase the membership of the marching band. He has also served as Director/Faculty Advisor of the VSU Gospel Chorale since 1992.

A surprise video tribute was prepared for Mr. Holden by Mr. Maurice Jones in recognition of his years of service, unselfish dedication to the band program and love of music. The background music featured favorite selections of Mr. Holden's. Also featured in the presentation were photos and greetings from numerous fellow band directors across the country. To say this was a surprise would be an understatement. Never have the band members and staff seen Mr. Holden so surprised and emotional.

In the photo right, Mr. Jones shows the jacket, which was personalized for Mr. Holden with his name, director of bands and the symbols for his fraternity, Omega Psi Phi.

SURPRISE!!!
Our TAMM partners joined us for the Awards Banquet

The evening gown made from retired uniforms was displayed.

Partnership Chairperson, Ms. Stephanie Smith, shared information about the partnership and showed the tote bags designed by our TAMM Partners.

Ms. Marnae Brown, Ms. Nicole Dunning and Ms. Aliyah Hoye welcomed guests to the Awards Banquet. They are pictured displaying their love for Tau Beta Sigma National Honorary Band Sorority, Inc.

Dr. Andrew Kanu, Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, shared a few closing remarks.
What Does It Take to Make It As A Drum Major?

Over the years, the men (and now at many schools, the women) who blow the whistles, call the band to attention and direct their every move is the drum major. Being a drum major is much, much more than bellowing a few commands. It is also teaching and leading, conducting and making decisions. A good drum major can lead a group to perform its best.

Commanders of Troy

| Mr. Deonte Terry | Mr. Avery Jacobs | Mr. Samuel Jones |

Roles and Responsibilities of a Good Drum Major

- Getting the band out to the rehearsal area, into the proper formation and ready to begin rehearsal
- Taking the band through warm-up exercises
- Leading the band through practice runs
- Helping rehearsals run smoothly and productively
- Leading the band in performance
- Adding to the overall showmanship of the band during performance with his own performance as the drum major
- Setting the standard for discipline and conduct for the members of the band to follow
- Assisting in teaching marching to other members of the band
- Acting as the band’s representative at award ceremonies and special functions

Characteristics of a Good Drum Major

- Has a good understanding of music
- Plays an instrument well
- Is skilled as a field conductor
- Has clear and concise conducting pattern
- Learns the field show and commits it to memory
- Uses whistle commands
- Has developed a high level of skill with a drum major mace
- Has exceptional marching techniques
- Vocal commands are loud and easily understood
- Highly responsible and reliable
- Dedicated to having the band succeed
- Works well with the band director and members of the band
- Knows how to teach and assist other members of the band
- Has the ability to inspire the band in performance
- Is a master of meter, rhythm and time
- Respected by peers and the directors
- Disciplined and resilient personality
- In good physical shape
- Inspirational supporter of the band
- Exacting about her/his uniform
- Masters mounting and dismounting the podium or ladder
- Understands the procedure of shaking hands and receiving awards on behalf of the band
- Accepts feedback
- Trains successors and gives them the opportunity to practice
An Interview With Avery Jacobs, Virginia State University’s Head Drum Major

TEBA (Trojan Explosion Booster Association): From which high school did you graduate and where is it located?
AJ (Avery Jacobs): I graduated from Lafayette High School in Williamsburg, VA.

TEBA: Were you in the band in high school? Were you a drum major?
AJ: I did band all four years during high school. I was not a drum major but a section leader of the drum line for two years.

TEBA: Do you play an instrument? Which one(s)?
AJ: I am a percussionist. I marched Quint drum my first two years in the Trojan Explosion.

TEBA: Why was Virginia State University your college of choice?
AJ: My high school band director, Chris Smith, is an alumnus of VSU. He marched trumpet in the band and would tell me all about VSU and the band. During my senior year, he took me to the 2011 Explosion Day and I was immediately hooked on the program. Coming from a core style marching band, the high stepping style, music selection, and showmanship of the band attracted me to the program.

TEBA: What is your major?
AJ: Music Education with a concentration in percussion.

TEBA: What do you believe are the major requirements to be a good drum major?
AJ: To me, the NUMBER ONE requirement to be a good drum major is to be an OUTSTANDING BANDSMAN. In order to be a great leader, you must know how to follow. Nobody is born a leader. You have to go through the position as a bandsman to know how the program operates. You have to have a discipline and humble mindset in order to gain respect from your fellow bandmen. Doing these things as a bandsman will help you understand the Drum Major position better.

TEBA: For you, what was the hardest part of becoming a good drum major?
AJ: For me, the hardest part of becoming a good Drum Major was the transition into the position. There were a lot of adjustments I had to make within myself as far as my personality. Normally, I am a friendly, funny, laid back guy. But when I stepped into the band room for practice, I WASNT ANYBODY'S FRIEND. I was the enforcer. I had to make sure all 110 people were doing what needed to be done. If I had to yell commands, run laps, do dozens of push-ups all day to get the band to do the job, then that’s what I did.

TEBA: What leadership skills have you developed as the head drum major?
AJ: Some skills I've developed would be public speaking, planning and organizing, creativity, and discipline.

TEBA: Upon graduation, what will you miss most about VSU?
AJ: The Band!!!! The Trojan Explosion has been a major part of my college experience. A lot of the relationships I've made at VSU were because I was in the band. Most of my best college memories were with this band program. I pledged Kappa Kappa Psi National Honorary Band Fraternity Inc. I came into VSU with nothing but my love of music. Now looking back, I have learned and grown so much as a man, an individual, a musician, a brother, a leader. I’ve obtained lessons, relationships, and memories that I will keep with me forever. I have and will always love the TROJAN EXPLOSION!

TEBA: The best part of my experience in the Trojan Explosion has been - - -
AJ: Being able to perform in the 2012 Honda Battle of the Bands my freshman year! That is an experience I will never forget. That was when the band was its largest out of the years I’ve marched. The preparation for the battle was full of long practices and late nights but the final product was all worth it. Being able to perform in the Georgia Dome was incredible! Hearing our band and all of the other HBCU bands was a great experience.

TEBA: Do you feel that it is your duty to give back to your alma mater and are you committed to do so?
AJ: Absolutely. Like stated above, this institution has made me a better individual over the years. It is my duty to give back in any way possible.

TEBA: What advice will you leave for Sam and Deonte (the remaining drum majors)?
AJ: To the current Commanders of Troy, Keep a strong essence of effort, pride, tradition and love instilled in this band program. Keep pushing and encouraging the band members to reach levels they don't think they can reach. In order to be great, make every day better than the previous one. Treat every practice, every performance, every game, every battle like it's your last. Commanders, lead your troops to a victorious season!!!
Alumni Drum Majors Return to Virginia State and Show They Can Still Step High

Left to right: Isaac, Bruce and Joezell as alumni band members. They still have that drum major presence!

In addition to designing tote bags from retired band uniforms for the booster fundraising efforts, TAMM student Kristen Scott designed an evening gown from the uniform pieces. Pictured above is Kristen modeling her creation. Drum Major Samuel Jones, left, and Head Drum Major Avery Jacobs, right, pose for the cover of the TAMM magazine.
Virginia State College’s First Drum Major Passes Away at the Age of 90

Mr. Andrew Roosevelt Cooley, 90, of Ettrick, passed away on Monday, February 16, 2015. He was born on July 6, 1924.

Mr. Cooley attended elementary school on the campus of Virginia State College (VSC) and was a graduate of Daniel Webster Davis High School, also on the campus of VSC, now Virginia State University. He entered the United States Army and served from 1943-1946. After the war, he matriculated at Virginia State College where he earned a B.S. in Physical Education. He is proudly remembered as the first Drum Major for Virginia State College. While at VSC, he played basketball for the Trojans and won sharp shooter awards as an U.S. Army ROTC Cadet. He was commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant and served at Fort Lee, VA.

He jokingly referred to his sitting area at Southpark Mall, Colonial Heights, as his office. A letter expressing the band and university’s sympathy was delivered to the funeral home for Mr. Cooley's family. Along with the letter was a photo of eleven Trojan Explosion drum majors, (signed by the three current drum majors) taken at the 2014 Homecoming Game.

Gardner William Smith ’63

Born in Salem, VA, Mr. Smith attended Virginia State College and was a member of the ROTC, a basketball player, musician, and drum major of the Marching 110. He served 24 years in the army and retired as a Lt. Col. After military life, he returned home and served in several administrative positions in Roanoke County, VA.

Upon his death in March 2015 at the age of 74, his family requested that Virginia State University or Veterans of America he made the beneficiary of donations in lieu of flowers.

Honoring Two Former Drum Majors

From left: Maurice Bowles, III, Alexander Thomas, Adrian Robertson, Alan Morton
Current Drum Majors: Deonte Terry, Avery Jacobs, Samuel Jones
Cordero Leonard, Franklin Johnson, Jr., Bruce Ayers, Jr., Isaac Lee

Mr. Smith leads the band into the stadium. Behind him is Mr. Claiborne Richardson, Assistant Band Director.
Building On Our History

The Marching 110 band members represented Virginia State College at professional football games up and down the east coast in the 1960s. The photo below is from a performance for the Philadelphia Eagles. At right is the cover of the game program and a part of the program page featuring information about the band.
**Explosion 2015** brought 480 high school students to campus to participate in a day of learning. Interest options for students included marching band, concert band, jazz band, choir, and workshops for dancers, flags, twirlers and drum majors. Workshops on conducting and percussion techniques were offered for directors. A session on financial aid and campus tours were offered to parents, as well as an opportunity to meet with the Band Boosters.

Students met with various band sections around campus to learn techniques and music. After lunch and additional practice, the entire group marched to Daniel Gymnasium for a closing performance. Students demonstrated their skills before a large audience of staff, high school directors, parents, boosters and other supporters.

Below: An enthusiastic audience enjoys the performances.
TEBA Holds Spring Meeting

Mr. Holden takes some time from Explosion Day 2015 to meet with the band boosters. During this meeting, plans were begun for the upcoming marching season. Familiar fundraising items are still available and a few new items will be introduced in the coming months.

All alumni, parents and supporters of VSU are encouraged to donate to the Trojan Explosion Booster Association.

Below are items for sale.

- **Beanies** $10
- **Booster Caps** $25
- **Tote Bags Made from Retired Band Uniforms**
  
  To purchase these tote bags and two other styles, go to band.vsu.edu/boosters/

  Click on the TEBA Fundraiser link at the left of the page.

- **Reversible acrylic scarves** – warm and washable $20
A donor event is being planned for September 2015. It’s not too late to become a donor.

Contact Information:
Email: VSUBandBooster@comcast.net

Professor Holden, the band staff and students are taking a little break for the summer, but will be back providing musical Trojan Spirit for the next marching season.

Band camp starts in August!