



UMW Alumna Retires After 38 Years of Service to Institution



Sallie Washington Braxton, a Culpeper, Va., native, enrolled at then Mary Washington College for two simple reasons: it was close to home and affordable. She had been accepted to other schools, but those reasons made Mary Washington her choice. Braxton transferred to UMW in the fall of 1975 after receiving her associate's degree from Germanna Community College. When she arrived, she was very familiar with the campus because she had a sister who attended UMW, as well.

Braxton went on to receive a BA in English in 1977. Her first job was serving as a job counselor for VA Employment Commission. But she was only there briefly when she was recruited back to work at her alma mater by the Admissions Office in the fall of 1978. She was hired as a recruiter to help increase the minority student population, especially African-American student, population on campus. Little did she know then that this new position would lead to a lifetime of service at Mary Wash. When asked if she thought then that she would have been at UMW for 38 years, Braxton stated, "Never!"

Braxton took her job seriously and her responsibilities with the students she recruited to heart. Her title was Assistant Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid. She counseled students regarding financial aid matters and provided academic advising support. In addition, Braxton implemented various programs for African-American students and became a mentor to all of the minority students, eventually becoming advisor of the then named Afro-American Association. Even though the job required a lot of travel, she always made sure the students could contact her and know she was there for them.

About six years into the position, Braxton played a key role in resurrecting the UMW Cheerleading Squad. She credits the success of that effort to receiving a lot of support from then Athletics Director, Edward Hegmann II. This is how the Cheerleading Club, after about a 30-year hiatus, revived its membership and is now a vibrant student organization on campus.

In talking with Braxton, it was amazing to learn that while she was working as a recruiter full time and advisor to at least two student clubs, she also managed to find time to go back to school to get a master's degree. She attended Virginia State University, where she earned an M. Ed. degree in Educational Administration and Supervision, with a concentration in counseling.

After 10 years as a recruiter, Braxton resigned, but then accepted the job of Director of Academic Advising for the BA/BS program. Her duties included student advising, registration, assisting with Orientation, and serving on the probation/suspension committee. In addition, she co-authored the Dictionary of Academic Regulations, which was used throughout campus to help students, faculty, and staff navigate the curricular process.

Braxton would later become the Director of Advising and Student Services in the Division of Continuing Education at the James Monroe Center (now known as the Stafford Campus). Meta Braymer, then head of the Graduate and Continuing Education program, was her supervisor. During the next few years, as the institution went through a few organizational changes, Braxton's job title and duties would change to reflect the different student populations she served. She became the Director of Advising and Academic Services, Director of the Bachelor of Liberal Studies (BLS) program, Associate Dean of Advising and Academic Services, and Associate Dean for Advising Services for the College of Business, which is the position she held when she retired on March 24.

In addition to the assiduous work she accomplished in these positions, Braxton was a significant contributor to many other co-curricular programs and activities on campus. She created the first special Diversity Weekend visit program for the Admissions Office, was the first co-director of the Student Transition Program (STP), coordinated Project SOAR, mentored Upward Bound students, and was instrumental in laying the foundation for the current-day James Farmer Multicultural Center.

Reflecting on her many years working at UMW, Braxton stated her fondest memories include "working with the students, putting on Gospelfest for Black History Week, meeting famous entertainers (e.g., Ramsey Lewis and Maya Angelou), and working with Dr. Braymer in getting the Stafford Campus up and going." She said "I will most miss the students and interacting with them, hoping with each one that I am making a difference in their lives." Braxton's plans in retirement include traveling to new places and finishing a book she started four years ago chronicling the life of her grandfather.

Her love and commitment to UMW as an alumna and employee have definitely continued in her family. Not only was her sister an alumna, but her daughter and only child, Lyndsey, is a graduating senior this year at UMW.

Senior Recognition Program Class of 2016

The Senior Recognition Program is an annual awards ceremony created to recognize seniors at the University of Mary Washington and their accomplishments in the promotion of diversity and social justice. Members from the faculty, staff and student body, as well as family and friends of the honorees, attended this distinguished program.



During the program, honorees shared key moments and experiences which shaped their time at UMW. Reed Kingsmen started the evening with an introspective look on his journey in finding peace, becoming a stronger student leader, and finding a voice that could speak for others. Brittany Clayborne acknowledged the James Farmer Multicultural Center and interactions with Dr. Marion Sanford and Greta Franklin as a student in the RISE Peer Mentoring program and leader in UMW's Praise Dance group. Lastly, Lila Spitz gave a farewell address where she thanked her peers, professors, and JFMC staff for making UMW a home away from home. The 2016 senior honorees are: Bianca Brown, Brittany Clayborne, Brittany Hylander, Reed Kingsmen, SooHyun Lee, Jackie Morillo-Vigil, Tiffany Osuanah, Lila Spitz, Alex Taggart, Dahlia Somers, Jessica Wu.

Cultural Groups Engage in Philanthropic Acts

Throughout the year, as different plights of humanity were being exposed in our society, a couple of UMW multicultural groups wanted to not only spread awareness about these issues, but be active agents of positive social change to help make a difference in resolving the problem. The Black Student Association and Women of Color student clubs discussed and agreed to take funds that were raised during the year from different events on campus and donate toward agencies that were assisting those communities.

An example of their philanthropic act was directed towards the water crisis in Flint, Michigan. It was brought to the nation's attention last summer that many families in Flint did not have access to clean water that is free of contaminants due to the decision making of local and state officials to cut costs by switching the water source to the city from Lake Huron to the Flint River, which had long since been determined not safe for human consumption. The tragic results of these decisions were individuals who developed Legionnaires' disease and other various illnesses which led ultimately to several deaths.

Members of BSA and WOC, along with other students, were outraged at this news and the actions of the state officials that put the lives of so many citizens at risk. President of BSA, Davarien Sayles, stated, "We felt that we wanted to help out in some way and decided that donating towards improving the current conditions in Flint, Michigan was the most feasible way for us to help out. We (BSA & WOC) hope that this contribution will aid in the process of providing water that is safe for the citizens of Flint to use for their basic human needs."

Upcoming Summer 2016 Events

- Commencement—May 7, 2016
- Reunion Weekend— Friday, June 3 – Sunday June 5
- Summer Orientation—Thursday, June 16—
- Transfer Student Orientation—Friday, June 17
- Move-In Day—August 24

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