GUERLAIN PAUL
VUU Alum capturing the moments and stories of NBA stars and more!
‘DISTINGUISHED PRESIDENTIAL LECTURE SERIES’ PROFESSOR MICHAEL ERIC DYSON

With the election only days away, the VUU “Presidential Distinguished Lecture Series,” sponsored by the Center for the Study of HBCUs, continues with an important and timely session by author and Professor Michael Eric Dyson. The conversation will cover the Election, racial justice, Black Lives Matter and his new book Long Time Coming: Reckoning with Race in America on Wednesday, November 4.

As HBCUs and businesses adapt to the changing environment, the ‘Presidential Distinguished Lecture Series’ powered by the VUU Global initiative provides learners with access to world-class lectures on a diverse range of topics and disciplines vital to our world today taught by distinguished thought leaders across multiple industries.

Roland Martin kicked off the series with two sessions titled, “The Past, Present and Future of Black-Owned Media.” Martin also discussed racial injustice in the United States, the importance of HBCUs and the “3rd Reconstruction.”

Distinguished lecturers still to come include notable personalities Larry Miller, Former President of Jordan Brand, Nike, Inc.; prominent attorney Will Stute; gospel recording artist and musician Charles Jenkins; athlete and sports analyst Jalen Rose.

Mission: To develop a global learning platform that enhances student achievement and prepares students to be successful in education, the workforce, and to become the Best in Class in a global society of professionals.

Learn more at www.vuu.edu/VUU-Global
The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission (SACSCOC) has approved Virginia Union University to offer 4 new master degree programs set to debut spring 2021.

The Masters of Arts (MA) in Political Science is a 30-credit hour program with a thesis and non-thesis options in the areas of American government, American legal system, and international relations. Students in the thesis option are required to pass an oral examination of the thesis through a three-member faculty committee. The non-thesis option requires two research papers the student must defend through faculty committee-led oral examinations.

The online M.S in Hospitality Management is focused on the theoretical and practical application of the Hospitality industry; whereby, learners will be able to analyze problems from a diverse perspective, develop effective solutions; in order, to make meaningful executive decisions. Learners will be able to use advanced communication skills; assesses cultural differences in domestic and global business environments and make quality operational and strategic level decisions. The program is designed for bachelor-prepared individuals who wish to develop and enhance their operational, organizational, leadership, hospitality analytics, revenue management, decision-making and data analysis research skills. The program encompasses the study of assessing and evaluating various business entities; in order, to understand the impact of how social, cultural and ethical decision-making may also affect cross-functional environments and the profitability of the hospitality management industry.

The eMBA program is housed in the VUU Sydney Lewis School of Business (SLSB), and was designed to address shortfalls in graduate school enrollment rates, especially among African Americans and people of color. The new eMBA program adds to the growing suite of graduate programs in high-demand fields offered at Virginia Union. The 33-credit hour program has five specializations: (1) general MBA (2) entrepreneurship (3) global supply chain management (4) hospitality management and (5) church management. Giving VUU competitive advantage in this space, the eMBA program will be offered entirely (100%) online via state-of-the-art technology, Wi-Fi capabilities, web-based services, and more.

The MS in Biology is a 39-credit hour program, offering both a thesis and non-thesis option. The thesis option requires an oral examination through a 3-member faculty committee. The non-thesis option requires advanced coursework in a specified sub-discipline. The Department of Natural Sciences within the School of Arts & Sciences has developed into a premiere, award-winning academic unit of VUU, recognized for the groundbreaking research of its faculty and staff. The MS in Biology is supported by fully equipped laboratory facilities, state-of-the-art curriculum, and upon graduation, positions our students for leadership in science, health, and biological/biomedical or related fields.

This announcement comes on the heels of the unveiling of Virginia Union’s new Bachelors of Arts in Health Science and bachelors in Hospitality Management. The addition of these programs brings the total number of degree programs at Virginia Union to nearly 40 bachelors, 8 masters, and doctoral degrees. For more information, please contact The Division of Academic Affairs, Office of the Provost, at academic_affairs@vuu.edu or (804) 354-5609.
JOEY GRAHAM PLACES SECOND AT PINEHURST

Joey Graham, a freshman on the Virginia Union University Men’s Golf Team, placed 2nd at the 2020 Hurricane Junior Golf Tour Tournament. The tournament was played on November 7-8, 2020, on the course known as Pinehurst No. 5 located in Pinehurst, NC. The Pinehurst No. 5 course has a par 72, 6,715-yard layout with a challenging rating (72.6) and slope (132). Graham played in the Tiger Woods’ Division for Boys, ages 16 to 18 years old. The Tiger Woods Division consisted of 27 golfers from all over the United States. Graham had a two-day total of 148 (72/76).

The Hurricane Junior Golf Tour (HJGT) was founded in 2007 with the intention of providing junior golfers between the ages of 8-18 an opportunity to play exceptional courses in a competitive environment. The tour’s vision is to provide superb hospitality and make every event a memorable one. With play open to both males and females, nearly every junior golfer is eligible to participate on the Hurricane Junior Golf Tour. Currently the HJGT is the largest junior golf tour in the United States hosting more 2-day nationally ranked events than any other tour. The HJGT has been able to achieve this goal by running the most professional events and providing an exceptional value to all of our players and families over the last 14 years.

“Joey’s level of play, during these very challenging times, demonstrates his continued commitment to excellence and, with a 3.5 (Mid-Term) GPA, his strong scholastic achievement, too!”, said VUU Head Golf Coach E. Lee Coble. “Despite the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on athletics, our student-athletes are making every effort to stay fit and competitive. Congratulations, Joey!”

DR. GEORGE ACKERMAN

Dr. George Ackerman joined Virginia Union University in the School of Arts & Sciences as Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice. He received his Ph.D. from the School of Public Service Leadership at Capella University, a Juris Doctor (JD) from the Shepard Broad Law Center, Nova Southeastern University and Police certification from Miami-Dade College School of Justice. His current research focuses on under-served populations, such as families of homicide victims.

Outside the classroom, Dr. Ackerman enjoys running charity 5K races, basketball, family time, and volunteering for www.togetherforsharon.com, which he founded in loving memory of his mother for Parkinson’s Awareness and hope for a cure.

Dr. Ackerman expresses his excitement about joining the VUU faculty.
Dr. Carleitta Paige-Anderson ‘03 Appointed to Serve as a Fulbright Scholar Alumni Ambassador

Virginia Union University is proud to announce that Alumna Dr. Carleitta Paige-Anderson has been appointed to serve as a Fulbright Scholar Alumni Ambassador.

Alumni Ambassadors represent the best of the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program and were selected through a competitive process. Ambassadors serve two-year terms and present information on their Fulbright experience at multiple events on college campuses and academic conferences each year.

The Fulbright Scholar Program, funded by the U.S. Department of State, supports more than 800 U.S. faculty and professionals each year to teach or conduct research in over 135 countries around the world. The Fulbright award is a prestigious honor that brings distinction to the faculty member and their institution. A key priority for the State Department is to increase the diversity and quality of the scholars who participate in the program and the range of U.S. higher education institutions that are represented overall.

Dr. Paige-Anderson graduated from VUU with a B.S. in Biology. She earned a Ph.D. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from Wake Forest University School of Medicine and completed a post-doctoral fellowship at Johns Hopkins University’s Center for Tuberculosis Research. Dr. Paige-Anderson has published and presented over 50 papers, as well as been awarded nearly $1.5 million in research grants.

A webpage featuring Carleitta Paige-Anderson’s Fulbright experience can be viewed at: https://www.cies.org/grantee/carleitta-paige-anderson.
VVU FEATURE STORY: 
GUERLAIN PAUL

As a result to the rapid spread of COVID-19, the National Basketball Association (NBA) suspended the 2019–20 season in order to protect the health and safety of its players and NBA staff members. While the sport-world stopped, mass protest were taking place around the nation in light of the events surrounding social justice.

Following months of unrest, on June 4th the NBA Board of Governors voted 29–1 in favor of returning to play. Subsequently, the National Basketball Players Association agreed to negotiations with the NBA Governing Board and in that instance, the NBA was set to return.

Along with the excitement came a great deal of uncertainty including everything from how successful the bubble format would work to how the return would impact and influence the social justice movement. The bubble hosted more than 1400 players, personnel, and essential staff members and among them, 1 was a product of Virginia Union University.

That “one” was Guerlain Paul, a 1996 graduate of VUU.

As we fast-forward to 2020, Paul is a critical member of the NBA despite his colossal 5 foot 8 inch tall stature. The following will chronicle Paul’s journey from 1500 Lombardy to a nearly 20-year (and counting) NBA career.

Q: To begin the interview, tell me a bit about where you grew up, where are you from and what was it like growing up?
A: Growing up was blessed. I’m from Freeport Long Island, it was the best. I grew up in a very diverse area, I knew had friends from all sorts of backgrounds. I knew Blacks, Whites, Asians, Spanish, I had friends from all types of cultures. I have absolutely nothing to complain about, I’m a kid from the suburbs and I loved it.

Q: Being a kid from Long Island, how did you get to Virginia Union?
A: One of my best friends from high school went the year before me, his name’s Tamarat Makonnen. I was going to go to VCU for Art but Virginia Union accepted me for Biology. My best friend was already there so it was a smooth transition. He had his sophomore friends, I had my freshman friends. We all came together and it was perfect!

Q: You have a degree in Biology, but you are currently working with the NBA, what was the job route that got you to your current role?
A: Initially I wanted wasn’t what I wanted to do anymore. So, I really just followed my calling. All through high school, me and Tamarat use to make videos. I was the first one on the block with a VHS recording camera. We would make Yo MTV Rap type videos at first, any class report I had to write, I would record them instead. Fast forward to college Tamarat was always making films and I was alway there to help him out. He ended up working on commercials and music videos. He convinced me to work on a film for free, and that’s where I learned art direction. That’s where I learned how to cut slate, working with camera departments and learned the lingo. From there I started getting paid gigs and from 97-2001, I worked with some of the best directors around. I’m still friends with all of them today. I helped on all the hip-hop videos that were shot in New York City. Biggie, Lil’ Kim, Jay-Z, R. Kelly, Changing Faces, all the hip-hop videos that were popular in the 90s, I learned so much from working with them. I was a production assistant when the NBA started calling me. The first thing I worked on was the 50th Anniversary with Denzel Washington. In 2000, I said “I want in” and I began to apply to positions with the NBA, and I finally got hired in 2001.

Q: Once you were hired in the NBA, what was the trajectory to your current position?
A: Working with the NBA has molded me to what I am now. It never feels like work, that’s how I know it’s my passion. I get to tell players stories for a living. I started as a production assistant in marketing and sales completing footage request. From there I began doing internal videos with former commissioner David Stern. After doing that for a while I started working on the show "NBA Action", then to producing highlights for NBA TV. Once they found out I could shoot video, they asked if I could do a Single Person Capture (SPC), they were reducing production teams, so rather than having the sound guy and the big cameras,
we were all transitioning to a single camera with the mic. I started building relationships with the PR Departments of different teams and the players and eventually I took off. The bonds are what keeps the longevity ‘till this day.

Q: Having the opportunity to meet and network with so many people, what’s the biggest lessons you learned working in the NBA??

A: You have to be on point, you have to be professional, and you have to be ON TIME! Everything is time sensitive. There is no room to be late. Everything is meticulous and on point, everything is on a schedule. I also learned that if you’re not a people person, you aren’t going to make it in this industry. I was so appreciative of this moments I could just talk to people. I always try to exhibit positivity, I’m always smiling and laughing with everyone and just having a good time, again it doesn’t feel like work. I had to watch what I posted to social media when I was in the bubble because I didn’t want people to get the idea that I wasn’t working while I was there.

Q: Speaking of the bubble, explain what life was like in the NBA Bubble.

A: The bubble was one of the most amazing experiences I’ve ever had in my life. I tell people it was like being in college again. It was so surreal. I could walk outside and see LeBron riding his bike, coaches jogging around the complex, It was like Jurassic Park but instead of dinosaurs, it was with NBA players. We were there so long seeing each other every day, that everyone started to build a real rapport with one another. Over time we started eating together, playing ping pong together, there was a court that the players would go to every day, it was a moment we will never forget.

Q: Prior to the NBA coming back, there was a lot of question surrounding how the return would impact the social justice message both positively and negatively do you remember your feelings heading to Orlando?

A: I didn’t know what to expect, but from a business aspect, I wanted to work. Once I got down there and saw how the players were using their platform. I was happy they used it to continue to shine light on the situation. I was there for the Doc Rivers sound bite; I filmed that. It was just an honor to be there and help tell these players tell their stories. The NBA gives the players an opportunity to speak their minds and not be frowned upon. Those lines of communications are always open. With everything that is going on in the country, I am proud to be part of an organization like the NBA that is in the forefront. They allow the players to voice their opinions and they are supportive of the message the players try to get across.

Q: With this years bubble successfully in the books, and plans for the upcoming season tentatively in place, what do you have planned for the immediate future?

A: Before Covid, the NBA never stopped. After the championship we would go overseas to do global games. The players are going overseas to do camps. It is nonstop all year. I plan to spend some time with the family. Being in the bubble is the longest I’ve been away from home, and thats hard being a parent.

Q: How is it balancing that schedule with being a parent?

A: Well, I am divorced but my ex-wife and I are great friends and super parents. I’m on the road 90% of the time, but that’s how my whole life has been. I’m on the road for a couple weeks at a time then I’m home for a few days. Its difficult in regards to how long I’ve gone for any given period of time but my son understands what I do and the demand of the job.

Q: Do you ever get tired of the travel?

A: No! That’s how I know its my passion. It doesn’t feel like work.

Q: What are some of your goals for the near future in the NBA or personally?

A: Well, with the NBA I’ve been to 5 different continents. Australia and Antarctica are the only two I haven’t been to so one goal is to be able to say I’ve seen all 7 continents. Another thing is I want to get more people from HBCUs in the field. I would love to talk to some of the communication classes and just answer questions and give advice on some of the things they need to know to make it in the industry. When Chris Paul was wearing the NBA gear in the bubble, I’m the one that got him hooked up with Union and they sent him a nice little care package, and I made sure throughout the bubble I wore my Union facemask and stuff because I want to bring more attention to HBCUs especially mine. So, to get more people in is definitely something I’m looking into.
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