

ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY

MR. ALUMNI  
*Coronation*

THURSDAY, THE TWENTY-FOURTH OF OCTOBER  
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FOUR  
SEVEN O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING



NATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INCORPORATED

2 0 2 4

# *Class Reunion*

CELEBRATIONS

*1974*

*(50th Year Anniversary)*

*1984*

*1994*

*1999*

*2004*







# *Congratulations*

J. Donté Prayer  
*2024-2025 Mr. Alumni*

# Welcome

A LETTER FROM  
THE CHANCELLOR

*Dear Alumni and Friends,*

Greetings from Elizabeth City State University! On behalf of the entire Viking family, I extend my warmest congratulations to J. Donté Prayer, our newly crowned Mr. Alumni 2024-2025. His achievement reflects not only his dedication and hard work but also the love and support of our alumni community.

I want to personally thank him for his willingness to serve in this capacity. His role as Mr. Alumni is more than just an honor - it symbolizes the spirit of giving back, unity, and leadership that defines our university's legacy.

A special word of gratitude goes to Donté and all who participated in the campaign efforts. The funds raised during this journey will undoubtedly help propel our institution forward, directly impacting the lives of our students. Your commitment to raising these vital resources highlights the power of alumni partnerships and the shared responsibility we all hold to uplift the next generation of Vikings.

Your partnership with Elizabeth City State University is invaluable, and I look forward to working together as we continue to build on our successes and create more opportunities for our students. May your reign as Mr. Alumni inspire others to follow in your footsteps of service and generosity.

Thank you once again for your dedication, leadership, and unwavering support. Together, we are making a lasting impact.

With Viking Pride,

*Catherine Edmonds*

Catherine Edmonds, Ed.D.  
Interim Chancellor







# Greetings

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE ECSU  
NATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION,  
INCORPORATED



## *Fellow Vikings and Friends,*

It is my esteemed honor to welcome you this evening to the Mr. Alumni Coronation. It gives me great pleasure to celebrate Mr. J. Donté Prayer ('20), Vice President of the Greater Charlotte Alumni Chapter, as our ECSU NAA Mr. Alumni 2024-25. I would also like to thank Ms. Samayah Ellerbe ('24) as the 1st runner-up, representing the William T. Bowser Alumni Chapter, and her efforts in supporting the National Alumni Association's largest fundraising endeavor. To our individual supporters and sponsors, please know that these funds will be

used in concert with the University Foundation to support the student experience here at ECSU. It is with great pride that we bid farewell and celebrate our outgoing Ms. Alumni, Mrs. Katherine White Felton ('71), who served in this role over the past year. She has represented the National Alumni Association with dignity and grace during her reign and has served in whatever capacity she was asked. Thank you for all that you have done in representing the NAA and Elizabeth City!

Finally, I would like to thank the Homecoming Committee under the leadership of Mrs. Shalon Hawkins Sharpe for their hard work in pulling all the alumni activities together. Every year a different dynamic is introduced, but the committee works diligently to make sure this is a memorable experience that will last well beyond the weekend.

Enjoy the evening, travel safe, and I look forward to seeing each of you over the next few days.

Viking Pride!

*James W. Cherry II*

James W. Cherry, II '96  
ECSU NAA President

# Greetings

FROM THE HOMECOMING CHAIR



*Dear Fellow Alumni & Supporters,*

Welcome to Homecoming 2024! We are all excited to be here to enjoy another festive homecoming weekend, which is being kicked off with the Mr. Alumni Coronation.

Tonight, we are saying farewell to Katherine White Felton, Ms. Alumni 2023-2024. She has represented us in a marvelous fashion during the past year. Thank you, Katherine, for a job well done! It gives us great pleasure this evening to extend congratulations to J. Donté Prayer '20, who has achieved the honor of

representing the ECSU National Alumni Association, Incorporated as Mr. Alumni for 2024-2025. His efforts have been extraordinary, and we applaud his success in winning the coveted crown.

We also extend sincere appreciation to Samayah I. Ellerbe '24. She IS THE ROYAL COURT. We thank you for your contributions. The extraordinary work of all participants will help enhance our support of ECSU students.

On behalf of the NAA and the NAA Homecoming Committee, thanks again to all. Have a wonderful evening and a safe, enjoyable weekend.

Viking Pride! Viking Pride! Viking Pride!

*Shalon Sharpe*

Shalon Hawkins Sharpe '99

ECSU NAA Homecoming Chair





# *Farewell & Thank You*

## **Katherine White Felton**

MS. ALUMNI 2023-2024

### *Greetings Viking Family and Friends,*

One year ago, when I was approached and asked to run for Ms. Alumni by raising funds to support my illustrious alma mater with scholarships, I first hesitated as I thought about the work it entailed to be a winner. I reflected on the fact that during my entire four years at Elizabeth City State University my education was financed by scholarships, Pell grants and college work study.

I realized competing in the Mr./Ms. Alumni contest was my opportunity to "give back and pay it forward" to other deserving students who like me – may need financial assistance. I immediately prayed, took a deep breath, and went to work. Upon getting a legal pad and jotting down everyone that I knew – starting with family, friends, work associates, church members, fellow Vikings, and the entire community, I am blessed to say that no one said “no.” The support was astounding and for that, I am eternally grateful. Being crowned Ms. Alumni 2023-2024 has been an honor and a privilege as I proudly represented my alma mater, Elizabeth City State University. My reign as Ms. Alumni has afforded me the opportunity to travel across NC and VA to share the awesome experience that ECSU has to offer.

I hereby salute, honor, and congratulate J. Donté Prayer, Mr. Alumni 2024-2025. I also congratulate Samayah I. Ellerbe 1st Runner-up. I pray continued blessings upon the entire Elizabeth City State University family that they will forever seek to richly enhance the lives of future students who embrace ECSU as their HBCU.

Sincerely,

*Katherine White Felton*

Katherine White Felton '71





# Coronation Program

## ***Mistress of Ceremonies***

Shalon Hawkins Sharpe '99

## ***The Procession***

Interim Chancellor, Dr. Catherine Edmonds

James W. Cherry, II '96

*President, ECSU National Alumni Association, Incorporated*

## ***Mister & Miss ECSU 2024-2025***

Talmage Turner

Heaven Brown

## ***Ms. Alumni 2023-2024***

Katherine White Felton '71

*Elizabeth City Area Alumni Chapter*

## ***2024-2025 Alumni Royal Court***

Samayah Iman Ellerbe '24, First Runner-up

## ***Mr. Alumni 2024-2025***

James Donté Prayer '20

## ***Invocation***

Arlinda Halfacre '91, ECSU NAA Chaplain





## **Greetings**

Interim Chancellor, Dr. Catherine Edmonds  
James W. Cherry, II '96

## **Awards and Presentation of Gifts to Runners-up**

Dr. Sandra S. Newsome '70  
*Assisted by Delores McClain '70*

## **Award of Trophy & Crown to Mr. Alumni 2024-2025**

Ms. Alumni 2023-2024, Katherine White Felton  
*Assisted by Interim Chancellor, Dr. Catherine Edmonds,  
James W. Cherry, II, and Dr. Sandra Newsome*

## **Expressions of Gratitude**

J. Donté Prayer  
*Remarks and Royal Stroll on the Blue Carpet*

## **Closing Remarks**

Shalon Hawkins Sharpe '99

## **The Recessional**

Mr. Alumni and Court



*Join alumni, family, and friends  
immediately following the ceremony for the*

# ***Mr. Alumni Reception***

# Mr. Alumni

2024 -2025

## J. Donté Prayer GREATER CHARLOTTE ALUMNI CHAPTER

J. Donté Prayer is a Greenville, North Carolina native currently residing in Charlotte, North Carolina. An enthusiastic alumnus of Elizabeth City State University, he is attending Morehouse School of Medicine in a dual advanced credentials program. During his time at ECSU, he actively participated in various student organizations, including serving as the president of the Pre-Alumni Club, which helped him develop leadership skills and a deep appreciation for the impact of alumni engagement on the university's growth and development.

Today, Donté continues to remain actively involved with ECSU and its alumni network. He is an active member of ECSU National Alumni Association, Inc. and holds the position of vice president in the ECSU NAA Greater Charlotte Alumni Chapter. He has been honored as a recipient of the ECSU 40 Under 40 Society, recognizing his contributions and achievements, and serves on the ECSU Board of Visitors as secretary, where he actively contributes to the university's strategic initiatives. Donté was a member of the 2023-2024 Mr./Ms. Alumni Royal Court as first runner-up.

Beyond his involvement with ECSU, Donté is a passionate change agent and advocates for health equity, community engagement, and economic empowerment. He is a proud member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Donté loves to travel and has interests in fashion, music, and theater.







# Sponsors

J. DONTÉ PRAYER

## PLATINUM \$3,000+

J. Donté Prayer  
The Prayer Family  
Florence (SC) Alumni Chapter  
of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.  
NC AIDS Action Network  
Center for Black Health & Equity  
Sandra Jordan Willoughby  
Myron Frieson  
Tamika Groves  
Jimmeane Streeter Lofton  
Dr. Andrae L. Brown  
Unity Arc Advocacy Group, LLC

## DIAMOND \$1,000 - \$2,999

Duke Energy Foundation  
Greater Charlotte Alumni Chapter  
Olivia Garmon Thomas

## ROYAL \$500 - \$999

R.E. Harvey  
Tri State Alumni Chapter

## GOLD \$250 - \$499

Dr. Sandra S. Copeland  
Gerry N. Jackson

## SILVER \$100 - \$249

Timothy Rodgers  
Atlanta Metro Chapter  
Tyron Eason  
Andrea Sansbury  
James W. Cherry, II  
Shalon Hawkins Sharpe  
Dr. Sabrina M. Brown  
Perrin R. Williams  
Antonio Murphy  
Mikel Brabham

Cleveland Faison  
Darren P. Dixon  
Hemby-Willoughby Funeral Home  
Garrett "G-Todd" Taylor  
Maryella Ward Leigh  
Channte Keith

## BRONZE - BELOW \$100

Nichelle Francis  
Vickie Joyner  
Cedric Booth  
HBCU PUSH  
Tia Foreman  
Ralph Nixon  
Chris Beatty  
Trequita Overton  
Anthony Edmonds  
Aspasia Mines  
Dionne Blakney  
Joe Fraiser  
Gloria Burke  
Quinnesha Staton  
Carolyn Miales  
Nicole White  
Eric Bigalow  
Danielle Bowser  
Rev. Dr. Leonard Jarvis  
Jo Ann Hawkins  
Helen Taylor  
Chris Beatty  
Akeen and Gaby Hamilton  
Courtney Jordan  
Bernard Evans  
Stacy Young  
E. Faye Marshall  
Brandon C. Chapman

Kisha Dixon-Prayer  
Andre Laws  
Tasha Jones Butts  
Pedro Holley  
Colin Fitzgerald  
Felicia Dixon  
Bernard McIntosh  
Dr. Michael T. Brown  
Sonya Scott Suggs  
Gwen Sanders  
Jennifer Prayer Pendleton  
Dana Poole  
Tony Lassiter  
Rushane Jones  
Christopher R. Nowlin  
Travis P. Gleaton  
Jacqueena Wilson Hines  
Willis Lewis  
Veleria Levy  
Stacy Smallwood  
Roney Smith  
W. Chrys Jones  
Marcus Misenheimer  
Allen Mason  
Phillip Morris  
Patrick Hand  
Darryl Lester  
Jon Mangana  
Ethel Cox  
Courtney Hancock  
Seneka Powell  
Jasmine Winterdal  
Dr. Jeanette H. Evans  
Melvin Norman  
Vivian Key  
Jeffrey Crowley





CONGRATS BROTHER  
**PRAYER**

ON BECOMING  
MR. ECSU  
NAA'S  
MR. ALUMNI

**2024-2025!**



You definitely **ACHIEVE** in every field of human endeavor! We're proud to call you brother!



THE CENTER FOR  
BLACK HEALTH & EQUITY



# PRESERVING **BLACK HEALTH** & UPLIFTING BLACK LIFE ACROSS THE SPECTRUM.

THE CENTER FOR BLACK HEALTH & EQUITY IS DEDICATED TO PROMOTING  
POLICIES & PROGRAMS THAT BENEFIT COMMUNITIES AND PEOPLE OF  
AFRICAN DESCENT.

"Congratulations Donté! We appreciate the way you show up for HBCUs,  
personally and professionally."







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# 1st Runner-Up

## SAMAYAH IMAN ELLERBE

WILLIAM T. BOWSER ALUMNI CHAPTER (MD)



Samayah I. Ellerbe is from Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Her childhood dream has always been to be a performer and entertainer, which led her to study Vocal Performance at the illustrious Elizabeth City State University under Dr. Walter R. Swan. She was titled Miss University Choir for the 2019-2020 and 2023-2024 academic year. Samayah has brought talent, smiles, and great ideas to the University Choir and has much more to offer in her career in music. Samayah graduated from Frederick Douglass High School in Prince George's

County, Maryland. She played a great part in the school's choir for three years and has traveled with them to perform. Her choir director, Marilyn Walls, motivated her and pushed her to put her best in all endeavors. Samayah has previous experience performing recitals.

She has been in musicals such as A Christmas Carol and played Dorothy in The Wiz. In her undergraduate career, she played Amahl in Amahl and the Night Visitors. Samayah partnered with the College of Albemarle as the understudy of the lead role of Ti Moune in Once on This Island. Samayah is not only known for her opera singing, but also her R&B music that she has been releasing since 2020, as well as her recent appearance in the newspaper for her co-written poem "Segregation."





# Sponsors

SAMAYAH IMAN  
ELLERBE

## DIAMOND \$1,000 - \$2,999

Delores McClain  
William T. Bowser Alumni Chapter

## ROYAL \$500 - \$999

Elma Brandon

## GOLD \$250 - \$499

Dr. Sandra S. Copeland  
Gerry N. Jackson

## SILVER \$100 - \$249

William Bryant  
Charlotte Brown  
Everlean Wallace  
Anthony Swain  
John H. Bias  
Alumni Chapter (MD)  
Carolyn Miller  
Alise Williams  
Pat H.  
Patricia & Tony Carter  
Patsy Newsome  
Larry R. Greer

## BRONZE - BELOW \$100

Kaala King  
Thelma Jones  
Carolyn Glee  
Dr. Jeanette H. Evans  
Robert House  
Wilhelmina Scott Pugh  
Collette Hart Wallace  
Brenda Bumgarden  
Mary E. Armstrong  
Vivian Key  
Doris Brown

Zo Jones  
Gwendolyn Bowser  
Dr. Noel Tait  
Dr. Tracey G Jackson  
Melissa McGuire  
Chandra Edmonds  
Gemell Ayemere  
Liz Bunn  
Michael Dyson Jr.  
Deborah Goode  
Earsie Lee  
Jillian Boggs  
Robert Bell  
Cheryl Bell  
Michael Eason  
Mike Spriggs  
Charles D. Robinson  
Ronald Dickens  
Cheryl Raudolph  
Carmen Carrion  
Patricia Cypress  
Joan Watson  
Cyathic Harris  
Robert Bell  
Cheryl Bell  
Abdul Sm Rasheed  
Sadie Wiggins-Bell  
Nevaeh Awkard  
Gabryelle Awkard  
Al Witcher  
Gloria Fennell  
Nakia Awkard  
Sam Harding  
Ruby Christian  
Miles Hodersty  
Barbara King

Rita Henry  
Mercies Anderson  
Diana Spears  
Barbara Moody  
Yvonne Hardy  
Ann Butler  
Al Miller  
John Phillips  
Andre Deloatch  
Cynthia Prather  
Helen Flagg  
Beverly Battle  
Joanne Finney  
Pat Neal  
Timothy Rodgers  
Ethel Cox  
T. Overton  
Atlanta Alumni Chapter  
Dr. Sandra S. Copeland  
Viola Kirby  
Nina Turner  
Calvin Wise  
Deborah Moore  
Dayna Flemming  
Terri Jackson  
Janice Sims

Ms. ECSU Alumni 2024-2025 Candidate  
Congratulations... **SAMAYAH ELLERBE** ...our new member!





***Elizabeth City State University  
National Alumni Association, Incorporated***

***NAA Homecoming Committee***

Shalon Hawkins Sharpe '99, Chair  
Jeanette H. Evans, EdD '63  
Sandra Singleton Newsome, EdD '71  
Gwendolyn Bowser '69  
Sadie J. Carter, EdD, '72  
Mary Cates '61  
James W. Cherry '96, NAA President, Ex Officio  
Sandra W. Gibson '79  
Maryella Ward Leigh '67  
Delores McClain '71  
Paul A. Norman, EdD, '81  
Davene M. Rutledge '86  
Ervin C. Simons '71  
Barbara B. Sutton '74  
Sharonne Sawyer Sutton '02  
Demetra Y. Tyner, EdD '71  
Kevin J. Wade, EdD '02  
Vonice Brown '01  
Trequita Overton '99  
Cherelle K. James '99

***Acknowledgments***

The ECSU National Alumni Association, Incorporated and the 2024 NAA Homecoming Committee express sincere appreciation to all alumni, patrons, and friends who made this event a success. We also extend our deepest gratitude to the chapters who participated in this annual fundraiser, and we give heartfelt thanks to Dr. Kevin Wade and his team for their untiring support of our efforts.

***Kudos to all!***

***Elizabeth City State University  
National Alumni Association, Incorporated***

***National Officers***

James W. Cherry, II '96, President  
Sandra S. Newsome, EdD '70, First Vice President  
Michael N. Johnson '96, Second Vice President  
Melvin Norman '77, Recording Secretary  
Abdul Sm Rasheed, '71, Immediate Past President, Ex Officio  
Courtney Jordan, Corresponding Secretary '05  
Sharonne Sawyer Sutton '02, Treasurer  
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Arlinda Halfacre '91, Chaplain

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Edward Newsome, EdD '73  
Trequita D. Overton '99  
Abdul Sm Rasheed '71, Immediate Past President, Ex Officio  
Shalon Hawkins Sharpe '99  
Barbara Barnes Sutton '74  
Dr. Jenelle Simpson '02  
Keith O. Richardson '03  
Dr. Demetra Tyner '71  
Kevin J. Wade, EdD '02, Ex Officio





# *The Alma Mater*

*To thee Dear Alma Mater,  
A tribute song we sing,  
Of thy true worth to all of us  
O may we honor bring.*

## *Refrain*

*Hail to thy lovely halls, ECSU  
We'll hear when duty calls, ECSU  
Faithful and ever true, we'll be to you.  
For in our hearts, we'll still love thee  
ECSU.*

*So now we'll join together  
For thee O'State to work  
Let none of us be faint at heart  
Nor any duty shirk.*





**ECSU**

ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY

FOUNDED 1891

ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY IS A CONSTITUENT INSTITUTION  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM