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THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

TELL THE TRUTH AND DON'T BE AFRAID

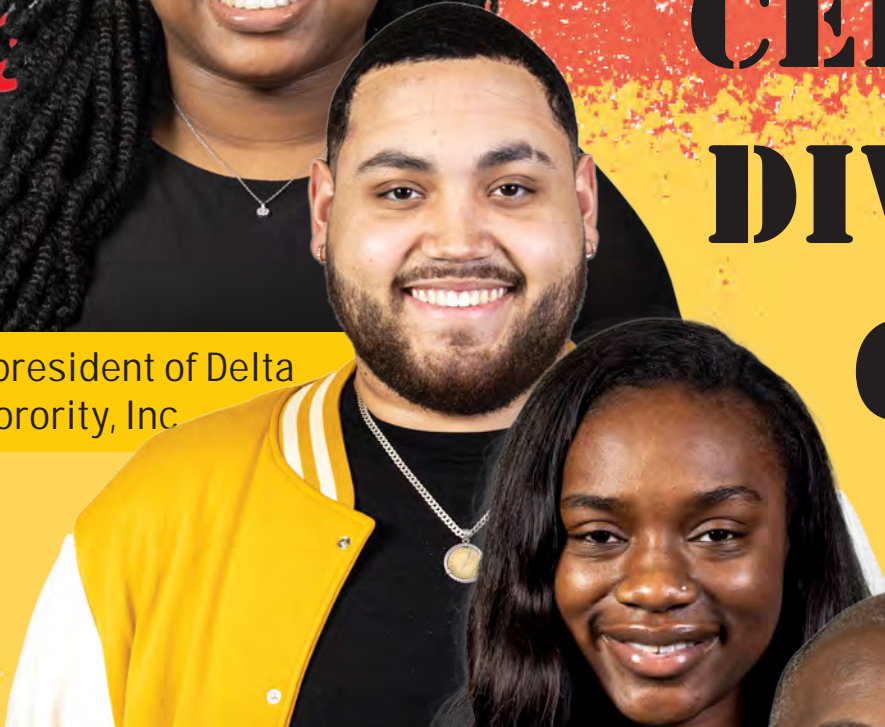
BLACK EASTERN COMMUNITY MEMBERS CELEBRATE DIVERSITY, CULTURE



Teshome Abebe,
professor/provost,
VP of academic
affairs 1998-2000



Raiven Jones, president of Delta
Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc



Christian Young-Perez, president of
Black Student Union



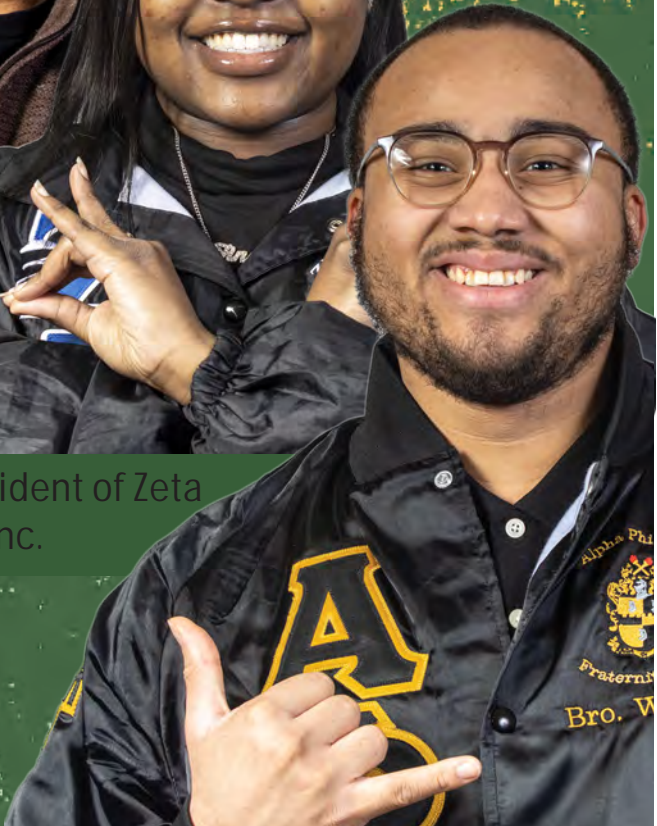
Jaedah Franks, 2022 Miss Black EIU
2022 Homecoming Queen



Alonzo Ward, African American
history professor



Nia DeRamus, president of Zeta
Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.



Yaree Wilson, president of Alpha Phi
Alpha Fraternity Inc.

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- The history of NPHC at Eastern, p. 6

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The Daily Eastern News is committed to accuracy in its coverage of the news. Any factual error the staff finds or is made aware of by its readers will be corrected as promptly as possible. Please report any factual error you find to Editor-in-Chief Madelyn Kidd at 581-2812.

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FILE PHOTO | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Black History Month events at Eastern include a NAACP Image Awards ceremony. Pictured above is four students at the 2022 Image Awards at Eastern.

Events themed ‘Black Resilience’ to celebrate Black history

By Cam’ron Hardy
News Editor | @DEN_news

With Black History Month here, clubs and organizations at Eastern will be hosting multiple events to honor and celebrate the month catering to this year’s theme Black Resilience.

On Thursday, a Lecture on Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy will happen at room 030 Lumpkin Auditorium from 3:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. The author, April Baker Bell will be present. Also, a Black history game night featuring bingo will be held in Thomas Hall at 9 p.m. and is presented by Housing and Dining.

On Monday, a sickle cell presentation will be presented by Julie Bly (American Red Cross). The presentation will be held in the Charleston-Mattoon Room in the Martin Luther King Jr. University Union from 4 p.m. until 5 p.m.

The Two Freedoms, Cosmopolitan, Colonia: Art & Democracy in the thought of

C.L.R James & Hannah Arednt event will be presented by Minkah Makalani, an Associate Professor of African and African Diaspora Studies. The event will be held at 5:30 p.m. in the Lecture Hall in Doudna Fine Arts Center.

On Feb. 8, the University Board Spotlight: Slam Poetry will be hosted at 7 p.m. at 7th St. Underground.

On Feb. 10, a blood drive will be held in the MLK Jr. Union University Ballroom from noon until 5 p.m.

On Feb. 13, a Black freedom lecture presented by Alonzo Ward, a professor of African American history, will take place in Room 2030 Lumpkin Auditorium at 4 p.m.

On Feb. 16, Dar He: The story of Emmett Till performance will be held in Dounda Fine Arts Center at 7:30 p.m. Ticket prices range from \$15-\$25. Tickets can be bought on www.doudnatix.com.

On Feb. 18, a “Slime Season” fashion show will take place in the Grand Ballroom in the MLK Jr. Union. The price will be \$7 and doors will open at 6 p.m.

On Feb. 21, a Black Resilience: Turning Degrees to Commas \$\$\$\$ presentation will be held and presented by entrepreneur, Veronica Peterson.

On Feb. 22, a hip hop paint and sip will be held at 7th St. Underground from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

On Feb. 23, a study abroad 101 “Why it is Crucial for Students of Color” event will occur at 4 p.m. in the Charleston-Mattoon Room in the MLK Jr. Union.

On Feb. 25, the Black Student Union 2023 Extravaganza will start in the Grand Ballroom in the MLK Jr. Union at 7 p.m.

On Feb. 27, Family Feud (Black Knowledge Style) will begin in the Grand Ballroom or University Ballroom in the MLK Jr. Union from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Throughout the month, Resident Halls will have a Black History Month Window Painting Contest.

Cam’ron Hardy can be reached at 581-2812 or an dennewsdesk@gmail.com.

FRONT PAGE COVER BY MADELYN KIDD, ASHANTI THOMAS AND ROB LE CATES

WHAT'S HAPPENING FEBRUARY 1 - 8

WEDNESDAY

ILCM Bingo Night
7-9 p.m. - Immanuel Lutheran Student Center

Student Government
7 p.m. - Arcola/Tuscola Room, MLK Jr Union

SATURDAY

Women's Basketball v. Tennessee State
1-3 p.m. - Lantz Arena

Men's Basketball v. Tennessee State
3:30-5:30 p.m. - Lantza Arena

MONDAY

Tarble Wellness: Crystal Sound Bath
5-6 p.m. - Tarble Arts Center

OR HERE!

THURSDAY

Council on Academic Affairs
2 p.m. - Witters Conference Room, Booth Library

Napoleon Electronic Music Festival
7:30-9:30 p.m. - Black Box, Doudna Fine Arts Center

Masquerade Murder Mystery
6 p.m. - 7th St. Underground, MLK Jr. Union

SUNDAY

YOUR EVENT
COULD
GO HERE!

TUESDAY

Charleston City Council
6:30 p.m. - City Hall

WEDNESDAY

Student Government
7 p.m. - Arcola/Tuscola Room, MLK Jr Union

ILCM Ping Pong Tournament
7-9 p.m. - Immanuel Lutheran Student Center

FRIDAY

Transfer Open House
9 a.m.-2 p.m. - Doudna Fine Arts Center

Send your event information to dennewsdesk@gmail.com to be added to our online and print calendars!

Meet the 50th Miss Black EIU Jaedah Franks

By Chandler Smith
Reporter | @DEN_news

Miss Black EIU has been around for five decades and is one of the most important celebrations for Black students that are recognizing African American Heritage month at Eastern.

Jaedah Franks, the 2022 Miss Black EIU and a junior biological science major, commented on some of the things that she has enjoyed since winning the pageant.

“My biggest accomplishment has to be making the connections that I’ve made within the African American community and just around campus,” Franks said. “A lot of people come up to me and they notice me due to me being Miss Black EIU, so it actually makes me feel good inside that I have made an impact on campus where people know me in a positive setting.”

Being that impactful allows Franks to feel very important in the EIU community. The experience that the Miss Black EIU student has had in her life made a difference with her being the face for the EIU African American community and made her a stronger individual.

“I was a very shy person,” Franks said. “I’ve always been friendly, but I’ve always been shy to initiate a conversation or just be that friendly face on campus. So when I became Miss Black EIU, it allowed me to practice my social skills in a way and be able to just communicate with me and everybody. And I feel like it has really played a role in just being social all around.”

Being a shy individual, let alone a student can be tough for a lot of students on campus. The pageant itself has allowed Franks to set herself at a higher standard for what she expects out of herself in life. Some students may want to set that standard for themselves.

“It has allowed me to always be on my P’s and Q’s in a way has taught me since [I’ve] grown up that no matter what you’re doing, someone is always watching,” Franks said. “So it’s allowed me to just be more aware of myself and how I’m carrying myself around campus. I’ve always I want to say I’ve always been a well kept female. But being Ms. Black EIU held me to a higher standard,” Franks said.

The standard that Franks has set for herself has made her go for the goals she



wants out of life. Franks is trying to reach her goals at Eastern, and she has added some additional goals, with her interests being pre-medicine and in public health and exercise science.

“I want to do my master’s program in exercise science or something around that area, so in between time I can be an athletic trainer,” Franks said. “That’s also something I wanted to do.”

Some Black students may feel pressure when it comes to discussions in classes. Franks has also felt the pressure, and as a Black woman, understands it, especially while having certain conversations in the classroom.

“I feel like, honestly, being an African American student on campus can be hard at times, especially when you’re in classes touching those touchy subjects about like race and different things that happened in the Black community,” Franks said.

Eastern’s campus has many resources to support the African American community such as Black Student Union.

There are supportive individuals on campus, and students have many ways to



FILE PHOTOS | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Jaedah Franks is Eastern’s 2022 Homecoming Queen and 2022 Miss Black EIU.

connect with others. Miss Black EIU has impacted individuals in the Eastern community.

Chandler Smith can be reached at 581-2812 or at cbsmith5@eiu.edu.

Annual Miss Black EIU pageant to be canceled

Staff Report
Staff | @DEN_news

For the first time in 50 years, the Miss Black EIU Scholarship Pageant will be canceled due to a lack of contestants.

The Black Student Union has been the sponsor of The Miss Black EIU Scholarship Pageant for over five decades, and the event has been the most celebrated cultural tradition on Eastern’s campus in celebration of African American Heritage Month.

With the lack of pageant contestants this year, the EIU Student Life Office and Black Student Union has decided to cancel the pageant this year but look forward to continuing the event in 2024.

In place of the event, there will be a “Black Excellence” fashion show to celebrate Black history, culture, and style

through fashion.

Miss Black EIU began in 1971 when Debbie Minter Jackson, at the time a sophomore English major was crowned.

Following Minter Jackson, was a legacy of 50 Miss Black EIU queens.

Originally the 50th anniversary of the scholarship pageant was in 2021; however, with COVID-19 the pageant was postponed to 2022.

Jaedah Franks, a junior biological sciences major, was crowned the 50th Miss Black EIU.

Once crowned, Franks joined a sisterhood and legacy of 49 other Black women on Eastern’s campus.

The News Staff can be reached at 581-2812 or at dennewsdesk@gmail.com.



GRAPHIC BY MADELYN KIDD

EDITORIAL

Something must change within police departments

Another police brutality has affected the Black community, once again.

Tyre Nichols was killed by police officers on Jan. 7 and died Jan. 10. Tragedies like these are happening too often, but you don't need us to tell you.

Each new innocent death highlights a pressing need for systemic change. While it is necessary for police officials to dismiss and fire power-abusing officers and political office positions as commissioners, this is only the bare minimum for the gigantic problem.

It might "fix" the problem for a second, but you cannot expect every person in law enforcement to follow orders and do their job without abusing power.

It is clear that firing officers does not fix the police brutality because if it did, we wouldn't have as many deaths and misconduct cases as we do now.

What is needed is a change at the root of the system; total departmental reform. More in-depth background checks need to be done.

Having psychological screenings done can give employers a better insight into the person they are hiring. These types of screenings cannot be prepped for and are genuine thoughts from people that are trying to become officers.

Psychologists are working to have selection processes that do not include some sort of bias, according to apa.org. More trainings on these officers must be done as well.

Five officers beat Nichols and none of them had any second thoughts to stop beating the man, and as of right now, it is unclear why they began beating Nichols in the first place.

This is unacceptable.

If officers were to have proper, restrictive training, we would not have to burden the grief of lives across America are lost. Defunding the police is another option to stop these unnecessary and violent acts from happening.

They do not need all of the resources that they currently have and can be used in other places such as youth homes, public safety, and just to benefit the community in general.

Defunding can do a lot for small communities since they would be able to utilize the changes made.

Bigger cities would take a little more work, but nonetheless, it would benefit everyone eventually. Ultimately, police officers have individuals in that position who thrive on the amount of power they are granted.

They do not care about helping the pub-



FILE PHOTO | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

lic or the community- it is a power play to them. We need to stop hiring individuals who think this way, and we need to stop giving so much power to police officers.

The five officers who attacked Nichols

were a part of an "elite" squad where they got to do a lot of things no one should be allowed to do.

Reformation is not a choice anymore, it has to happen or nothing will change.

COLUMN

Possible end of an iconic, cultural pageant at Eastern

It's a few days before the start of Black History Month.

To me, Black History Month seems like the few times out of the year where Black culture and history are celebrated with genuine energy and true pride from communities other than our own.

Being a Black woman on the campus of Eastern, I look forward to the various events and opportunities to celebrate African American culture, seeing as it is the one month that we feel a strong sense of representation on campus.

On Jan. 25, a press release was issued regarding the Miss Black EIU pageant, stating that the 51st annual Miss Black EIU pageant would be canceled.

The news did not come as a shock to me, unfortunately.

Last semester, you all may remember an article that I wrote about regarding a staff member here at Eastern who moved on to a better job opportunity.

This was due to the fact that administra-



Kyla Moton

tors here at Eastern were not willing to pay her the proper wage for the amount of work that she does.

Yolanda Williams was the main advocate for resources for African American students on our campus for years.

She was very vocal about the fact that the resources for Black students on cam-

pus being scarce.

In return, she was met with criticism instead of change.

Now, we are starting to understand a bit more how the university operates when it comes to Black students.

The cancelation of one of the most anticipated events amongst the African American community on campus makes it clear that there is an inclusion gap that is directly affecting our African American students.

The Miss Black EIU pageant was a way to spotlight the amazing African American women that grace Eastern's campus.

Every past contestant of the Miss Black EIU pageant has continued to do amazing things both on and off campus, in and out of Charleston.

There was not much focus on the pageant this year.

It is obvious that the lack of attention to the pageant was by those behind the scenes because there was a lack of interest in potential pageant contestants.

Black Student Union (BSU) members have been working and trying to get the word out about the pageant and get people excited for it, but the students on the BSU executive board only have so much that they can do.

They are the last people that we should be blaming for this situation.

As for the Miss Black EIU pageant, I hope that the pageant plans to come back eventually.

It was definitely one of my favorite Black History Month events just like many other people.

The idea of tradition is something that Eastern prioritizes and takes pride in.

Hopefully, with tradition in mind, a new tradition starts to develop or the old tradition will see its way back on campus in the future.

Kyla Moton is a junior English major. She can be reached at klmoton@eiu.edu or 217-581-2812.

LAST EDITION'S RESULTS

WE ASKED STUDENTS WHAT THEIR FAVORITE TYPE OF SCIENCE IS.

Biology
79.31%



Physics 13.79%



Chemistry 6.9%



Editorial Board

Madelyn Kidd

Ellen Dooley

Ashanti Thomas

Kate Stevens

Cam'ron Hardy

Autumn Schulz

Rob Le Cates

COLUMN

Being a Black man at ‘The News,’ in journalism

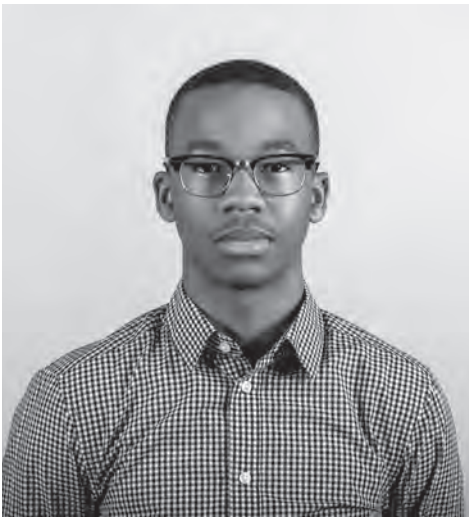
I have been working at The News for about a year, and my experience has not been ideal.

When I first stepped into the Daily Eastern News Newsroom, I looked forward to getting involved and working on my major, journalism, outside of the classes that I was already required to take.

I was very quiet my first semester working at The News. My coworkers knew nothing about me, and I still tried to keep it that way a little. As relationships began to form, I naturally tend to open myself a little, but I still try to keep it at a minimum.

I gained a promotion my second semester working at The News, so that required me to talk to the people I work with more. With this, unfortunately, I have been in some situations where racist remarks have been stated. That caused me to feel uncomfortable or irate.

But in the moment, I knew how to respond and not fit within the stereotype and react the way that was expected of someone that looks like me or where I come from.



Cam'ron Hardy

There are other situations that, I would like to think have nothing to do with race, but still make me feel the same way.

Unfortunately, having situations like these are somewhat expected in the field of journalism and covering real world events, but I do what I can.

With that said, it is not terrible working

at The News.

I look at some of my coworkers as friends that I feel comfortable around and hope to stay in contact with after graduation. They have offered me their ears to just express my frustrations with situations or anything that I feel.

I am currently the only Black man that works for The News. I have never been one to feel uncomfortable or unwelcome when I am the only one that looks the way I do. It allows me to know that I am doing something right and not being put inside a box.

I hope that my hard work and that the articles that I publish inspire people that look like me. I hope they read, listen and think that they could do what I do as well and that Black people are welcomed in this field, despite what they may think.

I hope that my presence working at The News will allow other Black men or women to want to come and work in the journalism field.

I understand that being the only Black person in a room can cause some worry. I hope my presence can be seen as a safety

to someone, and that if someone sees me, they feel some sort of comfort or unity.

Even with inappropriate situations happening, I have not lost my passion for journalism. Ever since I can remember, I have found writing to be the best way for me to express myself.

I love reporting, writing movie reviews, and recording my podcast (Two Dudes Talk Movies on Spotify and Apple Podcast *wink*). I work hard despite conflicts, but you cannot stop that. You cannot fathom my love.

I have two more years in college to work on my degree in journalism. In that time, hopefully there's some sort of change because it only ruins the experience for the next future journalist, and the world needs journalists.

Ultimately, it is not even about journalism, it is just about being a good person, but that is a column for another day.

Cam'ron Hardy is a sophomore journalism major. He can be reached at camhardy@eiu.edu or 217-581-2812.

Quote of the Week:

" To bring about change, you must not be afraid to take the first step. We will fail when we fail to try. "

- Rosa Parks

COLUMN

Black music artists you should be listening to today

I am starting off with Ice Spice because- duh. If you are not already listening, then what are you doing?

Ice Spice blew up after she released the single “Munch (Feelin’ U)” back in August and has only been getting bigger since.

She is making records already with hitting 2.5 million streams the day her EP “Like...?” released only a week ago. The fact that she only had 3 new songs on the EP is crazy.

Plus, she only started making music in 2021, so she is really my princess of rap right now. Her accent and soft voice rapping over drill beats is chef's kiss, a truly great combination. I loved her lyrics throughout each song, too.

She was so real when she said, “How can I lose if I am already chose? Like...” So generational. Real lyrics right there. My personal favorites from the EP are “In Ha Mood” and “Gangsta Boo.” She was really spitting on those tracks, and I cannot wait to see what she will do in the future.



Ashanti Thomas

For some lowkey artists, I must talk about rap duo Paris, Texas. I love alternative and rap and they are a perfect mix of both of those genres.

Their first album “BOY ANONYMOUS” came out in 2021, which features electric guitar riffs and upbeat production throughout the whole album beneath their rapping.

In the song, “HEAVY METAL,” they rap over some harsh guitar sounds,

a perfect title to match the energy of the track. It also rapidly changes at the end to the opposite of how it started, with what sounds like an acoustic guitar with softer, slower strings being played.

Their sound on this has so many different levels, which keeps it interesting and fun to listen to.

On songs like “PACK 4 DA LOW,” it can be so energetic while “BETTER DAYS” starts out that way but switches to a softer and slower beat again, to match the vibe of their lyrics.

In their EP “Red Hand Akimbo,” the first song starts off with a classic guitar riff, and I love how they mentioned their type of music when they rap, “N****s can't tell if it's rock, can't tell if it's rap, I walk in between.”

He really said that so flawlessly. The production value on each track stands out to me on both records, so if you are a fan of either genre, give them a listen.

I do not even know where to start

with Kaytranada, his music is just so good. The production and beats on every single track he spits out are flawless, along with the vocals from featuring artists like Kali Uchis, Syd from The Internet, Thundercat, and so much more.

He has two albums and an EP and honestly, you could start with any of them for the first time, and I am sure you will fall in love.

With his electronic sound, he adds a variety of beats like house, hip-hop and soul. “TRACK UNO” on his first album, “99.9%” is a masterpiece. It has so many elements to it, it is like a bunch of different songs at once.

These are just a few of the black artists out of so many that I wanted to highlight and give them all their flowers and recognition.

Ashanti Thomas is a junior digital media technology major. She can be reached at 581-2812 or at althomas5@eiu.edu.



QUESTION OF THE WEEK:

On a scale of one through five, how inclusive is Eastern?



ANSWER THE POLL ON . . .

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BSU helps students express themselves

By **Cam’ron Hardy**
News Editor | @DEN_news

Before coming to Eastern at the beginning of the Fall 2022-2023 semester and becoming the vice president of the Black Student Union, BSU, RJ Shields, a senior criminal justice major, was the social events chair for the BSU at his previous school, Lincoln College in Lincoln, Ill.

Shields said his previous school was shut down last May due to a low population after COVID-19. He said the school already had a small population, with only about 800-1000 students, with about 90 percent Black students.

One of the events that he assisted with at his previous school was a throwback kareoke style event, they had guests come in and talk about different outlets, and they obtained help from Divine Nine Fraternities and Sororities and faculty members with planning and setting up events.

“BSU is something that I feel is important in college in general because college is a place where you go make lifelong friends and things like that, and BSU can help you have an outlet,” Shields said. “You can actually talk about certain issues and things like that that a lot of people might be uncomfortable [with].”

Shields also said that being in BSU gives people the freedom to just express themselves.

Shields said the transition from Lincoln to Eastern was pretty smooth except the part of being at a more diverse campus, but said it was not too bad.

With being vice president of BSU, he is part of the executive board amongst other members, who Shields said are “a great group of people to be around.”

Shields said that the last meeting had around 30 people in attendance, but a lot of people signed up to be involved in BSU at Pantherpalooza. He also said that more people are excited about the meetings.

Shields said the meetings are a combination of both formal and informal. He said that there are some laid-back conversations



FILE PHOTO | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

The Black Student Union at Eastern hosts a variety of events throughout the school year. BSU provides Black students events and meetings where students can express themselves free of the free of judgement.

pertaining to different issues in America, including the recent Martin Luther King Jr. statue that was unveiled in Boston.

Other times, the conversations have to be formal when members are planning and organizing events. One of Shields’ main goals is to get BSU as big as it once was.

“One of the biggest challenges for us, as a part of the executive board, is trying to incorporate and get more engagement from people,” Shields said.

Even though Shields has not been at Eastern his entire college career, he said he has been informed about all of the excitement that was once present. He wants to find more people to be a part of the organi-

zation, so they can spread the word about events that come up and that people can speak highly about it.

Shields has been a part of BSU for a long time and said he just wants to have his voice expressed.

“I just like to have a voice and be able to voice my opinion on a lot of stuff, just to help is the overall goal,” Shields said. “...I felt like I just wanted to help because they were talking about how the numbers for BSU were dwindling down over the past couple of years,” Shields said. “... I just wanted to help get it back to that type of glory because it’s not that represented on this campus anymore, for at my eyes look-

ing on the outside.”

Shields is still considering helping out BSU after graduation because he still wants to “bloom.”

“Come out and support BSU, just to get it back to the days of glory and to keep the campus together,” Shields said.

BSU has some events this month to celebrate Black History including a Black History Month bingo on Thursday. The event will take place in Thomas Dining Center from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Cam’ron Hardy can be reached at 581-2812 or at dennewsdesk@gmail.com.

NPHC provides a space for Black students at Eastern

By **Cam’ron Hardy**
News Editor | @DEN_news

The National Pan-Hellenic Council, NPHC, was founded May 10, 1930, and has been nicknamed the Divine Nine, or D9, which is a collection of nine Black fraternities and sororities.

It was founded at Howard University in Washington D.C. and incorporated under laws in Illinois in 1937, according to sfl.osu.edu.

Among these fraternities and sororities include:

- Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
- Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.
- Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
- Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.
- Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.
- Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.
- Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.

These organizations allow Black people to be among like-minded individuals. Each of these organizations have their own type of main values and standards, but all share the common goal of educating and uplifting the Black community from racial inequities, according to yesprep.com.

The entire D9 was founded in the 20th century by Black students who were from Historically Black Colleges and Universities, HBCUs.

A lot of members from these organizations were a part of social justice movements including the Civil Rights Movement and Black Lives Matters movement. One of the notable people that was a part of these organizations is Martin Luther King Jr.

King was a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and joined the fraternity during June 1952, at Boston University, according to kinginstitute.stanford.edu.

Another notable person that was a part of the D9 was Alicia Keys, a Grammys award winning singer-songwriter. She joined Alpha Kap-

pa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Phylicia Rashad, an Emmy award winning actress, was also a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

If students are interested in joining one of these organizations, they can attend informational meetings that the organizations may have.

After still wanting to join, they can go through the initiation process called on-line.

After some time of going through that process, which is supposed to be kept in secret, the organizations have events showing the person officially crossing and pledging the fraternity or sorority.

People that are not in sororities and fraternizes gather and view others being announced publicly that they are a part of the organization.

These organizations host numerous events throughout the school year in order to help the community.

It is also a way for organizations to make college a better experience for other people that attend the university.

Seven of the nine fraternities and sororities are present at Eastern and host events for people to come and enjoy.

The fraternities and sororities present at Eastern include:

- Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
- Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.
- Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.
- Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.
- Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.
- Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

They create flyers and posters that are posted on social media to advertise the events to others.

Being a part of organizations like these can be lifetime commitments and is celebrated by others for achieving this accomplishment.

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“I feel that EIU does show off and represent our Black athletes that are making an impact towards the school.”

Washington added to Thornton’s response, “I constantly see positive and congratulatory announcements of Black athletes on EIU’s social media,” she said, “they do a great job at recognizing all athletes for their accomplishments.”

In September of 2022, a Zippia report showed that 78 percent of basketball players are white, while 6.8 percent are Black or African-American, which shows that in order to be a Division I athlete, it is almost 11 times more likely that you will succeed as a white athlete, rather than if you are a Black athlete.

Zippia also found that only 23 percent of basketball players are female, which only adds to the difficulty of being a Black Division I athlete.

In regards to the difficulty of the sport they are playing as a Division I athlete, both Thornton and Washington say that the time working on their sport has drastically increased.

“You have athletes that spend their whole lives on the sport.” Thornton said.

Washington takes a bit of a different angle.

“There is a lot more responsibility, both on and off the court,” she said, “As a Black female athlete, it is important to lead in a positive way so that I can be someone young Black girls can look up to.”

Washington and Thornton also made it clear what it means to them to be a Black female athlete at their level, and how important it is to them.

“It is a blessing to be a Division I athlete,” Washington said. “Being in this position gives me a larger platform for young black girls to look up to, and shows them that they can do it too and become a Division I athlete.”

“It means a lot to me because it has always been a dream for me, and I’m one of the only female athletes in my family to go Division I.” Thornton said.

Thornton also adds her personal reasoning for how much it means to her.

“I have little sisters that look up to me and I try to stress to them how special it is to be a Black girl, and how much hate you get for being a female and being Black, and actually being good at it,” Thornton said.

In the past, there have been few Black athletes that young boys and girls can look up to. Two current athletes, to which both Washington and Thornton each named one, are LeBron James and Stephen Curry.

“Two Black athletes that I have looked up to have been LeBron James and Serena Williams,” Washington said. “Both of them have set a good example on and off the court. They worked very hard, which shows that anyone, Black or white, can make their dreams come true with hard work and determination.”

Thornton’s players to look up to are people she said she’s always admired.

“I looked up to Maya Moore a lot, and when I was younger I wanted to be just like her,” Thornton said. “We had a very similar playing style, and she was just an amazing player overall.”

Thornton said she loves Stephen Curry’s passion.

“He is an amazing player, breaking so many records. I love his passion for the game.”

Washington said that she has not personally experienced anything negative for being a Black female athlete.

“Overall, being a Black female athlete



Taris Thornton, a sophomore human services major, and Lariah Washington, a senior marketing major, pose with their assistant basketball coach, Mariah King, Saturday afternoon.

has not made me feel any different than the other athletes on campus,” Washington said. “Throughout my life, I have never had any negative experiences being a Black female athlete, they have all been positive, which I am grateful for.”

Thornton, on the other hand, had a bit of a different experience.

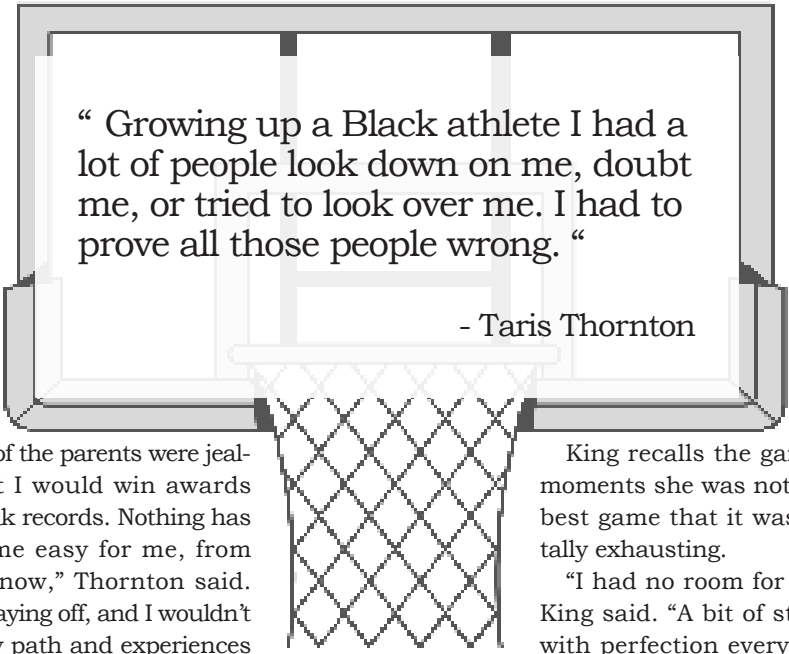
“Growing up a Black athlete I had a lot of people look down on me, doubt me, or tried to look over me,” she said, “I had to prove all those people wrong.”

Thornton also brought up a personal experience she had when she was younger.

time overseas.

However, she said it was stressful at times because the staff did not necessarily care about her as a person because they just wanted wins.

“As a professional athlete, I learned really quick that it’s a business,” King said. “It took me some time to understand that it’s the same as college, some coaches didn’t care about me as a person at all. If I’m scoring points and grabbing rebounds, everything was all good. The moment I wasn’t perfect, the sooner they would threaten not to pay me or send me home.”



“A lot of the parents were jealous that I would win awards and break records. Nothing has ever come easy for me, from then to now,” Thornton said. “It’s all paying off, and I wouldn’t trade my path and experiences for anything in the world. It has made me stronger and keeps me going to keep proving everyone wrong, and loving my family who have always supported me and been there for me.”

Mariah King, an assistant basketball coach and former player for the women’s basketball team also shared her thoughts on what it was like to be a Black Division 1 athlete and now a Division 1 coach on Eastern’s campus.

She shared that while she was an athlete from 2009-2013 she had a positive experience throughout her time as a player for the women’s basketball team.

King said that Eastern provided a home-like feel for her because of the family feel brought to her as she became closer with her teammates and the staff.

Things became a little bit different as she went on to play professionally overseas.

She did not face any racial issues in her

black student athletes. It’ll give our present Black female student athletes a sense of home away from home, parental figures, and sister figures.”

King said that she is proud to have been a Black female athlete and now to be a Black coach both at the Division 1 level.

“I know there’s a lot more work to be done for our younger generation, but I think we’re taking a step in the right direction,” King said. “Speaking up about concerns, having a voice, and being brave enough to step into a room even when no one there looks like you, know that you’re put there for a reason. That’s something to be proud of.”

King said that she feels Eastern does a good job of representing and recognizing its Black athletes.

“I’d say they (the women’s basketball team) get recognition when it’s time to be acknowledged,” King said. “Could there be more? Yes, I’m sure of that. For example, maybe encourage their identity development and nurture their academic engagement and career aspirations.”

She said that she looks up to University of South Carolina’s head women’s basketball coach Dawn Staley who often can be seen promoting and being a voice for Black athletes and staff.

“Dawn Staley does a tremendous job of using her platform to be a voice for Black females in athletics,” King said. “She also does a great job of representing for the culture. I look up to her confidence and willingness to address issues that need to be spoken about no matter what others may think.

King said her favorite quote by Staley is “I understand that my success isn’t about championships - it’s about bringing together people who were once, and in some ways still are, divided. It’s bigger than basketball.”

King is only in the beginning of her coaching career.

As time goes on, she hopes to bring more to Eastern’s program and wants to see Eastern continue to build on their recognition and representation of its Black athletes and coaching staff.

The DEN sports staff can be reached at 581-2812 or dennews-desk@gmail.com



PHOTOS ON 7 AND 8 BY HAN BYER | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Assistant coach Mariah King and the rest of the team come together during a timeout at their basketball game vs. Southeast Missouri in Lantz Arena Saturday afternoon

Eastern gives Black athletes positive experiences

By Han Byer, Kate Stevens and Autumn Schulz
Photographer, Assistant Sports Editor and Sports Editor | @DEN_sports

In May of 2022, the NCAA released statistics breaking down NCAA athletes by ethnicity from 2021, finding that 8.8 percent were Black women athletes and 16.5 percent were Black male athletes.

Five current Black athletes here at Eastern shared their stories on what it is like to be a Black Division I athlete on campus.

Jay Pearson

According to The Guardian, in the NCAA, football and basketball are the two sports that include the highest number of Black athletes.

Pearson is a redshirt freshman running back for the Eastern football team. Pearson said that the opportunity to play football at the Division I level means a great deal to him.

“It means a lot actually because I’m doing something that a lot of Black males can’t even get the chance or opportunity to reach and for me, getting the chance to play and attend a D1 school, means a lot to me and my family,” Pearson said.

There is quite the transition from being a high school athlete to being a Division I athlete and for Pearson, he said that he is treated the same as other Black athletes on campus.

“In high school, I was getting treated like a celebrity but I was also still getting treated with respect as any other black athlete but in college, I just get treated like any other Black athlete,” Pearson said.

There are many Black athletes, at all levels, that have become mentors for many athletes and non athletes. Pearson said that for him, Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin is the athlete that he looks to.

“I look to the neighborhood hero

Damar Hamlin because, for one, I grew up with him and I watch how he took care of the neighborhood and give back to all the people from the hood,” Pearson said.

Diego Oliver

Oliver, like Pearson, is a member of the Eastern football team. Oliver is a redshirt freshman defensive back.

Oliver said that being a Black athlete on campus forces him to take another approach that is distinct from white athletes.

“It’s been positive in most ways but being a Black athlete, you’ll always have to do some things a little different,” Oliver said.

Being a Black Division I athlete gives Oliver a sense of accomplishment.

“It means we have beat all the odds that have been stacked against us and proved everyone,” Oliver said.

Oliver also chose another professional football player as someone he looks to for guidance.

“Greg Newsome II, who grew up in Chicago, went to Northwestern, and is now on the Cleveland Browns,” Oliver said.

Joel Barrows

Barrows is also a part of the Eastern football team as a defensive lineman. He said that his experience as a Black athlete on campus has been optimistic.

“I think my experience here as a Black athlete has been a positive one,” Barrows said. “I’ve made a diverse group of friends and haven’t seen many racial issues within the athletic department.”

Both Pearson and Oliver said that Black athletes on campus get positive recognition and representation but



me to develop as a person and be more open to experience and relating to people who come from a different walk of life.”

Barrows agreed with his fellow teammates, saying that playing at the Division I level as a Black athlete is nothing short of

“Being a Division I athlete in general is a blessing and something that I am greatly appreciative of,” Barrows said. “I believe being a Black Division I athlete has afforded me some opportunities that I otherwise wouldn’t have.”

Instead of focusing on just one Black athlete, Barrows said that he looks to all.

“I look up to all Black athletes regardless of level because we are actively taking steps to better ourselves and personal situations,” Barrows said.

In order to focus on Black female athletes, two of Eastern’s women’s basketball players spoke on their experiences being a Black female athlete at the Division I level. Senior guard Lariah Washington and sophomore forward Taris Thornton both said that they have had positive experiences at Eastern.

“My experience at EIU as a Black female athlete has been very positive,” Washington said. “The community at EIU has always been super welcoming and supportive, and it has always felt like a second home to me.

Thornton agreed, saying “I feel like a lot of people try to lift you up and encourage you to be the best you can. I just feel like Eastern as a whole doesn’t tolerate discrimination”.

A common issue in sports is the lack of recognition for Black athletes, to which both Washington and Thornton believe Eastern is making progress towards. Thornton believes that Eastern is working hard to stand out, and that Black athletes are getting the recognition they deserve.

Barrows feels differently.

“I think the majority of the recognition we get occurs when there is a situation that causes racial controversy within society,” Barrows said.

Barrows said that the transition from high school to a Division I football program has opened his mind to fellow athletes coming from different backgrounds.

“In high school, my team was predominantly Black and the majority of us came from similar situations. Being in this environment has allowed