

THE METER

Serving the Tennessee State University and Nashville Community Since 1950

VOLUME 75, ISSUE 9 • OCTOBER 24, 2024

tsuthemeter.com

Nashville, Tennessee

'I'm so glad I go TSU'



HOMECOMING

By Makiya Jones
Staff Writer

The campus of Tennessee State University came alive this past weekend for the anticipated Homecoming Pep Rally, which turned out to be one of the most exciting events of the entire homecoming week!

Everyone gathered in "The Hole" for the yearly homecoming pep rally following the thrilling parade. As students, alumni, and community members crowded the field, a beautiful tapestry of school spirit and togetherness was created, and the atmosphere buzzed with expectation. The field was packed

with laughing and conversation, as well as a sense of excitement and nostalgia.

It's the moment when the whole community joins together to celebrate the relationships that bind us all together as well as the accomplishments of our school. There's a strong sense of solidarity as new connections are formed and old ones are reconnected.

The stage was decked out with blue, red and white banners and decorations that featured our school colors as the rally got underway.

Shown above are TSU's Sophisticated Ladies, Sophisticated Ladies Alumni and Aristocrats of Band Drum Majors. Photo Christopher Brown, WRA

TSU, continued on 2

TIGERS STANDING ON BUSINESS

Alumni Business Spotlight

By Tressa Willingham
Staff Writer

Chef Mario Eberhart is the proud owner of Bun Appetit Catering, a thriving food business based in the Nashville and Atlanta areas known for its delicious plates, private dinners, and catering services. Mario graduated from Tennessee State University in May 2023 with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications, minoring in Business. His education provided him with foundational business skills that have been instrumental in scaling his catering company.

Chef Mario Eberhart



Mario's journey as a chef began in high school, where he first launched the business in part-

nership with his mother, who is the co-owner of Bun Appetit. What started as selling plates to friends and family soon expanded into catering services, private dinners, and even celebrity clientele. He's proud to have served notable figures like singer Summer Walker, which helped him gain recognition and credibility. His next step is expanding to a food truck and, one day, a full-fledged restaurant. Mario's journey has been a blend of passion for food and entrepreneurship, fueled by the support of his network and community.

For Mario, TSU was more than just a school—it was a breeding ground for ambition and creativity. "Seeing the hustle and drive of my peers was inspiring," he recalls.

Spotlight, continued on 8

WHAT'S INSIDE

PAGE 4

See Homecoming through Filmed Faithfully's point of view.

PAGE 6

We celebrate breast cancer through fashion.

PAGE 9

See which yard runner stole the show

CAMPUS NEWS

'First Take' at Tennessee State University

By **Khenedi Wright**
Staff Writer

Tennessee State University was one of the few HBCUs graced with the opportunity to be part of the First Take HBCU tour. First Take is an ESPN show hosted by Stephen A. Smith and Shannon Sharpe. Smith and Sharpe are both alumni of Winston-Salem and Savannah State University. The tour allows for a live broadcast to take place on the campus of an HBCU. This year Smith and Sharpe visited Tennessee State University, Howard University, and Morehouse College.

First Take coming to TSU was the ultimate experience during homecoming week. The show had guest hosts Cam Newton, Christina Williams, and Eddie George. Topics ranged from essentials for homecoming to advice after graduation. Students, alumni, and fans were able to listen to hot takes like the Memphis Grizzlies being a bigger threat than the Los Angeles Lakers.

Eddie George had this to say about the experience, "Man this is huge, I mean just look at the people around

here, the energy. It brings people out. First of all its homecoming, but First Take is such a big brand with Shannon and Stephen A. and people always tune in to be entertained, for them to come and highlight all the great things at Tennessee State, it's been phenomenal for this University as well as the community of Nashville.

The Aristocrat of Bands came out to perform live for the broadcast as well as the cheer team. The football team came down to support Eddie George and the University before the big match up against Eastern Illinois.

George also commented saying, "It's important to have HBCU week because you're seeing the culture from a different perspective of African Americans, seeing how we celebrate the pageantry, the history, the traditions at our Universities. I think that it is important for people to be reminded that there's more out there that you can do, you can be entertained but get a great education."

The next stop for Stephen A. Smith and Shannon Sharpe is Atlanta the duo will be at Morehouse College for their homecoming.



First Take crowd. Photos by Chris Brown, WRA



Shown l-r are: Shannon Sharpe, Stephen A. Smith, and Cam Newton.

TSU, continued from pg 1

The crowd was energized by the Grammy Award Winning Aristocrat of Bands tremendous rhythms, which created an addictive vibe as everyone applauded along to their energetic performances.

Alumni played a crucial role in the rally, showing their tiger pride and stories that highlighted the lasting bonds formed during their time at our institution. "I love to attend the pep rally every year so I can take in all of the legacy in the space and bask in the knowledge!" commented, Senior, Anyah Sanders, SGA VP. Their presence acted as a reminder that our school's spirit endures beyond generations, promoting a sense of pride and belonging that keeps thriving.

Cheerleaders inspired everyone to join in the cheers that have come to be associated with homecoming by energizing the crowd with their energetic dances. "My go-to chant is the 'Tennessee State University' since it was the first one I learned," said freshman Tyler Hoey. For many freshmen like Tyler, this pep rally marked their first

collegiate homecoming, making it an especially memorable occasion. "I also got the opportunity to DJ at the pep rally," he added, highlighting the anticipation and excitement that filled the air.

"I feel great, I feel like me and the guys are going to go out there and get the job done. Make all the fans and alumni happy and just have a great time. Ending our homecoming the right way!" TSU football team defensive back, Brandon Wilson exclaimed.

There was an energized atmosphere at the end of the pep rally, and everyone was excited and looking forward to what homecoming week had left in store. We left "The Hole" with a sense of purpose, prepared to cheer on our team and honor the dynamic history of our university, with chants still resonating in our ears and smiles on our faces. We're excited to keep celebrating who we are and the bright future ahead after this pep rally, which was more than just a warm-up.

EDITORIAL



BY RYNIA S. DICKERSON

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

THE METER 2024

Rynia S. Dickerson

How do you define Homecoming?

The Homecoming tradition for HBCUs dates back to 1924 at Howard University, when invitations were extended to alums to return to their university for a celebration of history.

Although Homecoming didn't originate at HBCUs, we turned the visit into a week-long celebration with events highlighting our university history by attending the last home football game, supporting campus organizations, embracing our music and celebrating the progress of education for black youth.

While highlighting our university history and appreciating the growth our community has made over the decades, Homecoming has become the place where the past meets the present. And some would describe it as a fall family reunion.

Attending an HBCU is like joining a Black family. Some things go unsaid but they are always understood. There are no other universities that embody Black culture and excellence the way historically Black universities do! This is an example of being in a space created for us by us. Our universities help curate an experience for us to embrace the struggles of our past and see how they will be beneficial in the future.

We take Homecoming seriously; everything is planned months in advance. From the theme of the annual celebration to the outfits to the food to the events, alumni match that energy times

two when they put themselves in a position to give back to the university and the students who remind them where they once were and how their journey started.

I look forward to the unsolicited advice, or, as we call it, "free game," that we get from past generations.

They share memories that are essentially their career testimony. It is a chance to see your history face-to-face and get inspired by the courage they had to chase their dreams and how they found that spark that fueled their road to success. After talking with multiple alumni during Homecoming Week, I found a new meaning of tiger pride.

Our mantra, "I'm so glad I go to TSU," is every student's testimony. I'm so glad I got to learn and create connections at the Black Mecca. This is truly an experience I wouldn't want to change for anything, and as I continue to embark on this continuous learning curve, I have found my voice and learned how to use it to not only bring awareness to the disparities and triumphs of my community, but I now know how to use my platform to uplift my community.

I would define Homecoming as a time to understand what was, appreciate what we have now, and celebrate all that is yet to come! So, how would you define Homecoming?

CAMPUS NEWS

Violence leaves Tigers in an uproar

By Rynia S. Dickerson
Editor-in-Chief

Gunshots were fired on Saturday, October 12 during Tennessee State University's Homecoming celebration. The chaos emerged slightly after 5 p.m. at the intersection of 27th Avenue North and Jefferson Street.

According to the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department, 10 civilians had been injured. Two of the persons who were injured were potential suspects involved in the shooting; five were transported to the local hospital by the Nashville Fire Department, and the other five were brought by private vehicles. Vonquae Johnson, 24, died at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

According to police, the shooting was a gang violence altercation. Five local gang members aimlessly opened fire on one another on the corner of 27th Avenue North and Jefferson Street; Johnson was identified as one of the individuals who started the shooting.

The MNPD report states, "Four of the five have adult arrest histories. One was convicted just six months ago on charges of robbery, felony possession of the drug Ecstasy for resale, and felony gun possession. He received a 10-year probated sentence to the Community Corrections Program."

Further investigation of the incident has now been taken over by the Homicide Unit detectives with the Specialized Investigations Division working alongside them to gather more information about those involved in this shooting and build a criminal case against them.

These individuals opened fire in the TSU neighborhood with no regard for people around them. Fortunately, no TSU students were involved or harmed in this incident. Tennessee State University was not connected to the incident in any form or fashion.

In addition, there was a fight reported outside of the Nissan Stadium during the Homecoming game. This incident was initially reported as a shooting, but upon further investigation, that was proven to be incorrect.

The fight broke out once an argument got out of control, and those surrounding ran for their safety. The stadium followed a lockdown procedure and did not allow anyone to enter or exit the stadium until police arrived to de-escalate the situation. Once TSU students and alum had vacated the Tailgate area, and Nissan was updated on the situation students and faculty inside were able to leave the stadium.



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TRADITION MEETS EVOLUTION: The Genesis of TSU's Homecoming

By Faith Miniard
Filled Faithfully Photography

As TSU celebrates its rich history and the traditions that have shaped generations, we stand at the rise of a new era.

This photo series, captured by Filmed Faithfully, tells the story of the vibrant spirit of homecoming, where the past and present intersect, creating a legacy that honors our roots while embracing the future.

This is the genesis of something greater. A celebration of culture, pride, and the journey ahead.



1. All laughs and smiles from TSU alumni and students during the Pep Rally.
2. Chaunceona Walker of the Alpha Chi Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. leads her sorority sisters in a stroll.
3. Members of the Psi Phi Chapter of Alpha Phi Omega National Service Fraternity Incorporated gather together for fellowship during Homecoming Tailgate.
4. Alpha Beta Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho strolling at the Annual TSU Homecoming Pep Rally.
5. TSU alumni dancing to and enjoying the vibrant music at the Homecoming Pep Rally.
6. TSU Alumni gathering together for a selfie.
7. Justin Causey of Phi Beta Sigma prepares food during TSU Homecoming Tailgate celebration.
8. Alpha Theta Nupe of Kappa Alpha Psi, Jalen Edwards.

CORONATION

It's Coronation Day

By Dia Wadlington
Staff Writer

A day filled with elegance, culture and tradition. On Wednesday, October 9, 2024 the stage was set for a beautiful day Where Royalty Blossoms; Chandler's Vineyard. This year's Coronation marked a significant moment in the university's history, bringing together students, alumni, faculty, and distinguished guests to celebrate the crowning of the 34th Mr. TSU (Chandler C. Cotton) and 95th Miss TSU (Chandler T. Holt). The theme for this year, "A Royal Legacy: Chandler's Vineyard," resonated throughout the evening as the TSU community reflected on its proud legacy while looking forward to an even brighter future.

The Coronation ceremony is one of the most iconic events in the TSU calendar, showcasing student leadership, school pride, and Black excellence. A beautiful pre-show featuring a live performance of Sade's classic song Smooth Operator opened up the evening. A grand ballroom was created in the gym, complete with lavish decorations in the school's royal blue, red, and white shades, fitting for a King or Queen. The evening's schedule celebrated the spirit of Tennessee State University with a mix of customary ceremonies, moving speeches, and cultural entertainment.

After an evening of lively performances and stunning fashion, the room fell into a hushed anticipation as the time for the crowning ceremony approached. All eyes turned to the stage, illuminated in soft, royal blue lighting, as the emcee took the mic to introduce the long-standing tradition that would soon crown the new leaders of TSU. Each member of the royal court made their grand entrance one by one, representing the best of TSU student leadership. Dressed in their finest, they were poised, proud, and ready to make their mark. The atmosphere grew even more electric as the emcee finally called the names of this year's newly elected 34th Mr. TSU, Chandler C. Cotton, and the 94th Miss TSU, Chandler T. Holt.

The previous Mr. TSU, Davin Latiker, and Miss TSU, Victoria McCrae who had held these titles throughout the last school year, joined the stage to pass the torch, or, more fittingly, the crowns onto their successors. It was a symbolic and heartfelt moment, representing not only the end of their reign but also the continuation of a proud legacy that dates back decades.



Miss Fashion Society
Jhade Bolden, left,
and Mr. Fashion Society
Brighton Gillum



Photos at left, 34th Mr. TSU
Chandler C. Cotton and 95th
Miss TSU Chandler Holt



33rd Mr. TSU,
Davin Latiker, and
94th Miss TSU,
Victoria McCrae.
Photos by
WRA Production

Dressed sharply in a tailored suit that screamed both style and sophistication, Mr. TSU, Chandler C. Cotton, knelt to receive his crown from the outgoing Mr. TSU. The room held its breath for just a moment, watching as the gleaming crown—designed with bold, intricate details—was placed upon his head. The second that crown touched down, the Kean Hall erupted into an explosion of cheers and celebration. It was time for Chandler T. Holt to assume her role as Miss TSU after the crowd of people had

calmed down. The atmosphere in the crowd soared again as the departing Miss TSU took the stage to formally hand down the crown. Gracefully accepting her magnificent tiara with elegance, Miss TSU wore a gorgeous custom-made gown that shimmered with every stride.

The crowd roared in cheers as her crown was put on her head, and her pride was visible.

Wearing a beautiful tiara and a custom-made gown, the newly crowned Miss TSU gave an inspirational speech in which she discussed her aspirations as well as her love for motivating other students and thanking those who have supported her along her journey. In addition, Mr. TSU gave a moving speech in which he emphasized his dedication to the unity among the TSU family. Mr. and Miss TSU both stressed how much they wanted to serve as role models for the next generation of students who want to attend historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), as well as for their classmates.

TRENDING

On Wednesdays in October, we celebrate!



Alpha Psi Chapter of
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority
Incorporated



Alpha Theta Chapter of
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Incorporated



Tamauri Murray, left, and
Mom Tuwana Murray



Ciniya Waters
Photos by Amari Burdine

By Elijah Southerland
Staff Writer

Courtyard Wednesday at Tennessee State University is more than just an event that happens on Wednesdays throughout the academic school year, it is a staple to campus life, bringing students together in a celebration of school spirit, involvement, and community. Each Wednesday, the walkway between the new courtyard and the amphitheater is filled with activity, as student organizations and student-led businesses set up tables to engage the student body with games, food, music, and opportunities to get involved on campus. The culture at Courtyard Wednesday is like no other, which is why students enjoy this event so much.

Courtyard Wednesday offers some-

thing for every student passing by. Students can participate in interactive activities, such as throwing whipped cream pies at members of organizations or receiving words of affirmation notes to help students persevere throughout the semester. For many students, this mid-week gathering feels more like more than just a short break between classes. Sophomore Ciniya Waters shared that her "favorite part of Courtyard Wednesday is tabletop because it really felt like a community without our HBCU. Just good vibes, meeting new people, good music, good food, and opportunities to get more involved with the school."

October adds a special significance to Courtyard Wednesday, as it aligns with both Breast Cancer Awareness Month

and TSU's homecoming week. Every Wednesday in October, students wear pink in support of breast cancer awareness. On October 9, 2024, the courtyard was filled with students showcasing their school pride for homecoming while also honoring breast cancer survivors and those still fighting. Many students incorporated pink into their homecoming outfits with a pink bow on their chest and hair as a symbol of solidarity. The blending of school spirit and support for a greater cause is a testament to the deep sense of community felt on campus.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is a key element in October's Courtyard Wednesday events. The sight of students wearing pink is a powerful reminder of the cause they are supporting. The com-

munity shows up not just for fun, but to stand in solidarity with those affected by breast cancer. Tamauri Murray, a senior whose mother is a breast cancer survivor, explained that pink is "a soft touch with a nurturing spirit attached. It's a color that can represent such a strong love and strong warrior." He also emphasized the importance to "support breast cancer because it brings us together to support a great cause and it shows our fellow tigers who may be going through or has a loved one going through a fight with breast cancer."

There is an overall sense of unity felt during Courtyard Wednesday, especially in October. Students come together for a common cause and bring awareness to it, aligning with core values of what it truly means to be a TSU Tiger.

Wednesdays, continued on 11

Catching Homecoming memories

Photos are memories, how will you capture them? Every corner tells a story, from the vibrant energy of student life to the quiet reflections found in the familiar halls. "The Land of Golden Sunshine" is more than a phrase, it's a celebration of our shared experiences. Here, we've captured just a few cherished memories to remind us of the moments that shape our community. From the lively campus events to the peaceful moments in between, these images reflect the vibrant life and history we've all been a part of.



34th Mr. TSU Chandler Cotton and 95th Miss TSU Chandler Holt

Top left photo: Sorority winner of the 2024 Homecoming Step Show is Alpha Chi Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated; Top right photo: Beta Omicron Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Incorporated; Middle left photo: Cam Newton walking through the First Take crowd; Middle right photo: TSU Alumni and his son enjoy First Take; Bottom left photo: Rho Psi chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Incorporated at Step Show; Bottom right photo: Zeta Alpha Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Incorporated fraternity winner of the 2024 Homecoming Step Show.
All photos by WRA Production

Spotlight, continued from pg 1

Whether it was students doing hair or creating custom clothes, TSU's vibrant culture motivated him to push his business forward." Hustle is the norm at TSU," Mario says, referring to how the campus environment was filled with students who were pursuing entrepreneurship while studying. He also credits the large network of students, alumni, and peers he connected with during his time at TSU for helping sustain and grow his business.

Business and marketing courses from his minor also played a crucial role in shaping his entrepreneurial mindset.

While at TSU, Mario was actively involved on campus, serving as Mister Junior and Treasurer of Collegiate 100, roles that helped him sharpen his leadership and financial management skills—qualities that have been

crucial to his success as a business owner.

When asked about his proudest achievement, Mario reflects on turning his vision into reality. "I created something from nothing," he shares, emphasizing how resilience, creativity, and solving real problems have been core components of his success. Inspiring others along the way has been another rewarding aspect of his entrepreneurial journey.

For students interested in starting their own businesses, Mario's advice is simple: "Start small and then scale." He encourages aspiring entrepreneurs to begin with manageable ideas and allow them to grow over time. Leveraging networks, seeking mentorship, and maintaining clear priorities are key. Time management and a learning mindset are also crucial, as entrepreneur-

ship requires balancing various demands while staying open to growth and learning.

Mario is committed to giving back to his alma mater. He actively mentors current students, participates in alumni panels, and hosts workshops to provide guidance to the next generation of entrepreneurs. His dedication to TSU reflects his desire to nurture the same culture of hustle and ambition that helped him launch Bun Appetit Catering.

Chef Mario Eberhart's journey from selling plates to running a catering business and aspiring to open a restaurant is a testament to the power of persistence, creativity, and community. Through his story, he inspires fellow TSU Tigers to dream big, work hard, and never stop learning.



Bun Appetit Caribbean Night Dinner Spread



Bun Appetit Soul Food Spread



Bun Appetit Meal Prep. Photos by Chef Mario Eberhart

CAMPUS NEWS

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER OR FORGET: TSU Homecoming Ball Drop

By **Miya Robinson**
Staff Writer

The Tennessee State University Homecoming Ball Drop is one of the most notable events celebrated by the university. It is an annual event that is hosted by SUBG to kick off homecoming week with a bang. The night began with students singing and dancing to their favorite songs, which filled the atmosphere with positive energy and unity. As students expressed their excitement for the quickly approaching events, the overwhelming sense of community on campus was unlike any other.

As the night unfolded, the energy

flourished, and the campus felt unified. The air was full of laughter and love as we all shared celebrating the HBCU traditions of Homecoming. Homecoming week is one of the few events on campus that allows students to let loose and enjoy the full college experience unfortunately, though this year's homecoming fell short. It devastated students to hear that this year's homecoming concert was cancelled so the ball drop was something to look forward to.

One common denominator that is found in almost every event hosted by TSU is the DJs. Although the music was good and brought joy, I find that the music played is very repetitive. There is very little variety dis-

played in the music and, in my honest opinion, it makes events like this boring. Upon my arrival at the event, most of the people there were sitting around waiting for the party to start. Although the DJ was very interactive, the crowd was not. Granted, social anxiety is real and could be the main reason for the "quietness", but I think the DJ and the crowd could've worked together to make this event more enjoyable for everyone.

As the clock got closer to midnight, the party started to pick up and everyone started to come out of their shell and students began to express their excitement for the clock to strike 12. The initial reserved and shyness of the crowd began to fade which infected

the rest of the crowd. You could feel the energy from everyone around. All of the worries of school melted away, even if it was just for the night. As a collective, the students felt a sign of relief as midterms were ending and they could enjoy their homecoming week with no additional stress.

Five minutes before the clock struck 12, the traditional "Get Geeked", chant was screamed by everyone in attendance. It was a moment of pure bliss and happiness. There were no signs of worry or anger. Everyone was there to celebrate with each other and bring in the week to come. For once since August, the campus felt unified and overjoyed.

PD at TSU earns state accreditation

By **Alexis Clark**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (TSU News) – Tennessee State University's Police Department has recently earned accreditation that aligns with best practices in law enforcement and ensures the safety of all students, faculty, and staff across campus. The accreditation was granted by the Tennessee Law Enforcement Accreditation (TLEA) Program, a recognition from the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police (TACP) Board of Directors Professional Standards Committee.

This achievement marks a significant milestone in the university's ongoing efforts to strengthen campus safety.

Chief Greg Robinson, Assistant Vice President and Chief of Police at TSU, emphasized the profound impact of the accreditation on the university's safety initiatives. "This accreditation means so much to the positive success of institutions like TSU," Robinson said. "It signifies that we have adopted the

industry's best standards and practices when it comes to training and implementing safety measures on campus."

According to Lt. Chris Jones, a member of the TACP who helped oversee the accreditation process, TSU is now one of only 10 public universities in Tennessee to receive this prestigious honor.

Last year, the TSU Police Department saw a 20% reduction in crime, Robinson added. "Achieving accreditation shows that we are meeting national standards to continue improving campus safety."

TSU PD intern Trinity Vann of Alabama has witnessed first-hand the dedication of the officers and the efforts that led to this accreditation. "I can tell that TSU Police Officers are passionate about their jobs, and they work very hard. So, I do feel that this is a very well-deserved accreditation," Vann said, who is a senior studying criminal justice.

Vann stated that she feels safe walking across campus to her classes and sees the accreditation as further reassurance. "It's important because it shows that we do have people that are working here that care about the safety of not just the students, but also the teachers and the other faculty members. This accolade shows that there is a group of people who are not just doing their job, but they care about the work that they're doing."

Robinson noted that TSU's Police Department, which employs 26 full-time sworn officers, has worked diligently toward this accreditation for the past three years. This recognition is the first in the department's history.

"When a department becomes accredited, it means you have adopted the industry's standards and best practices from across the country," Robinson said. As part of this accreditation, TSU will continue reviewing its policies, procedures, technology, and training to provide a safe environment for its community.

In addition to the reduction in crime, TSU has made significant investments in safety infrastructure, including upgraded lighting and enhancements to the Code Blue Emergency towers across campus. These towers provide direct access to the TSU Police Department for emergencies. Currently, there are nearly 30 of these call boxes on campus.

Chief Robinson looks forward to the department increasing campus safety awareness, hosting education seminars, and continuing participation in active shooter training.

"The goal is to continue keeping our faculty, students, and staff safe while minimizing any threats or risks to our university," he said. "We will enhance our coverage and visibility by adding more officers and security measures."

TSU security guards on campus bikes to ensure campus safety. The university continues to enhance these measures as part of its commitment to becoming 'future-ready.'

TSU PD, continued on 10

CAMPUS NEWS

The return of Meter Day

By Camille Lander
Media Relations

For the first time in a long time, *The Meter* hosted Meter Day, a forum featuring of TSU alumni working in fields as diverse as broadcasting, digital media, content creation, and more during Homecoming Week. Terrence Woods, Marketing and Service Coordinator for the Memphis Grizzlies, PJ Labat, ESPN Content Creation. Juan Williams, videographer and photographer for Cumulus

Broadcasting, and Maya Taylor, previous editor-in-chief for *The Meter* 2023-2024, who currently works in Mayor Freddie O'Connell's office were all in attendance. The panel sat down with current Meter staff, kicking off a discussion that highlighted everyone's career journey, expressing the triumphs and challenges as they navigated college during the novel COVID-19 pandemic, advice and tips on navigating post-graduate life, and truly understanding the evolving landscape of mass communications as they entered their current positions.

The field of mass communications is extremely wide. The days of just radio/broadcasting and overall journalism aren't over, but the big three share their traditional platform with so many other means of mass-produced communication, making it a more lucrative and competitive industry. "I know when you first got here, mass comm. Majors were like, 'I just took mass comm because it's easy.'" No. It's the most competitive market that you could ever be in. How do you differentiate yourself from the field?" Labat said. With the rise of the World Wide Web, as we know it today, these traditional forms of media are no longer the sole players in the industry. From social media, content creation, influencers, to advanced marketing, public relations and affairs, the job listings are endless. For example, *The Meter* is moving with the times, evolving into more spaces than one to make sure the student body of Tennessee State University is informed, educated, and in the know, using both print and digital options.

As for advice, the revolving themes were to never give up, put in the work to achieve your goals, never shy away from asking for help, and to prioritize things like updating your resume, LinkedIn, and portfolio. Williams reflects on receiving his first internship at Sinclair Broadcasting working in the Sports Department, and what he gained from the experience. "My advice would be if you have a goal that you are trying to reach, and it might have different obstacles that you have to go through, don't give up...it's not easy to get somewhere if you don't put the work in. You have to grind it out, it's not going to get handed to you."

Navigating the post-graduate world can be scary. "Adulting" as we call it, comes full throttle as we maneuver this thing called life. The panelists were candid about the obstacles they faced post-graduation and the lengths it took to get to where they are

now. "It has been a difficult contrast from being in college for four years straight and then being out in the real world where they're like 'Hey, figure it out'...that was one thing I struggled with, but I am gaining my footing now." said Taylor.

They spoke especially on the topic of sacrificing to prioritize your dreams and goals. "A lot of the stuff might not seem fun, but there is always an end result. Keep striving and keep pushing because you have two options: you can spend your twenties partying and you look up and you're in the same spot when you're thirty, or you can work in your twenties and look up when you are thirty and be where you want to be." Labat said.

Following the panel, the staff had the opportunity to network with alumni, asking questions and gaining insights on how to succeed today in mass communication. Labat opened the floor to having each person state their true, raw career dreams, in which they were able to help calm nerves, speak life, and understand a little more in the next generation of media pioneers. "Your reputation is the biggest thing you could have... always continue to build connections and keep those connections. Always try to go to different conferences, get on different Zoom calls, reach out on LinkedIn...your reputation will take you a long way." Woods said.

As Meter Day drew to a successful close, both alumni and students reflected on the significance of the event. Mass Communications Professor Erik Werner was also in attendance, as he played a pivotal role in the panelists' college and post-college careers. For the audience, this year's Meter Day was more than just a forum—it was a powerful reminder of the enduring strength of and further influence of TSU's mass communications program and the fruits of its labor, inspired by the accomplishments of those who came before them.

TSU PD, continued from pg 9

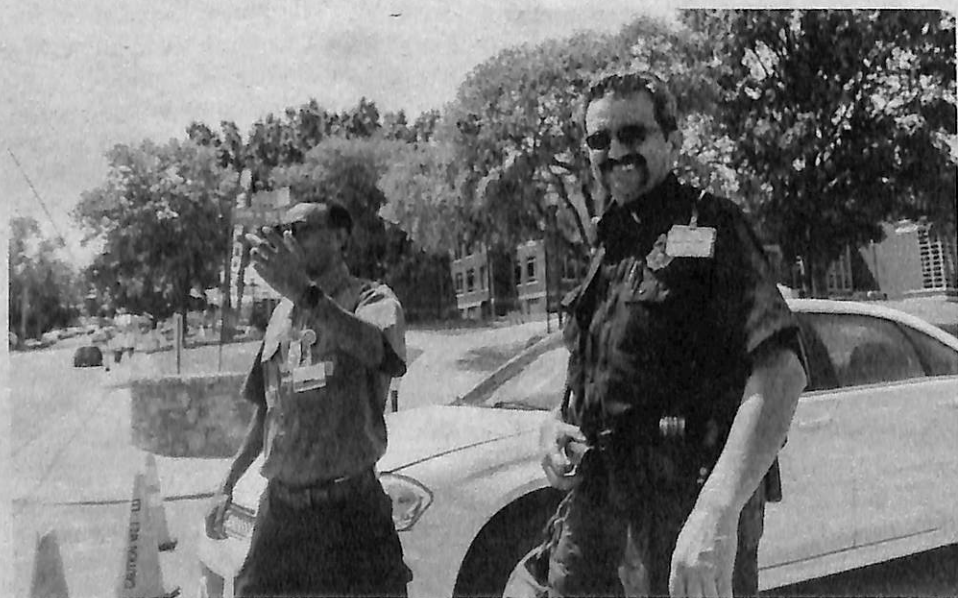
Robinson also highlighted that the accreditation opens doors for additional grant opportunities to strengthen the department's resources.

"We put in a lot of work to become viable enough to achieve this," he said. "Personally, this accreditation means everything. It shows the dedication and sacrifices made by the men and women of this department to reach such a high level. We are committed to sustaining compliance with the best techniques to maintain a safe environment, which has already contributed to the reduction of crime on campus."

This accreditation status has been awarded for a three-year period ending September 2027.

This effort highlights TSU's commitment to becoming a 'future-ready' university by advancing its safety measures and security efforts, ensuring that all students, faculty, and staff feel safe and supported throughout their academic journeys.

For more information on TSU's Police Department visit www.tnstate.edu/police.



TSU security, police during Fall 2024 move in day. Photo courtesy of Tennessee State University

Greek Step Show

By **Sydney N. Culpepper**
Staff Writer

Tennessee State's highly anticipated Greek Step Show took place Friday, October 11, 2024, and attendees are still buzzing with excitement over the performances and results. Held annually, the show is a highlight of the fall semester and consistently draws a packed house to Gentry Center, full of excited students, alumni, and family members who return to campus for homecoming festivities such as this. Despite being a weekend event, the high energy and engagement

of the crowd were unwavering from start to finish. The show featured the campus's D9 steppers. This year's event had Sigma Alpha Iota, an international music fraternity, making a special guest appearance during the intermission. Their musical performance provided a change of pace from the high-energy stepping while showcasing their breathtaking vocals. The step show kicked off with a powerful performance by the Epsilon Alpha chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated. The ladies brought electrifying stage presence, wowing the audience with their sharp choreography and show-stopping stunts. Their blue-

and-white costumes appeared crisp and coordinated, setting a high standard for the night.

From the start, it was clear that every participating organization had invested countless hours into their routines, pushing themselves to deliver something unique and memorable. While the entire event was filled with unforgettable performances, it was the men of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated who truly stole the show. Their chapter, Zeta Alpha, dominated the stage with such energy and confidence that the audience couldn't help but cheer them on. From the moment they stepped onto the floor, their presence was undeniable. Their routines were sharp, precise, and packed with complex choreography that showcased their months of preparation. It was obvious they had practiced to perfection, and their dedication paid off. Caleb Henry, the Ace (first member) of the Zeta Alpha chapter's newest line, stood out for his remarkable energy and commitment to his role as the frontman. With strong facials and intense movements, Caleb's presence dominated the stage, earning him cheers from the crowd. Speaking after the event, Caleb explained, "We put in an incredible amount of hard work and dedication to secure this win. For about a month and a half, we spent hours every day practicing, perfecting each move and routine. We even sacrificed attending school functions and other activities to ensure we were fully focused on achieving the results we wanted." Caleb's statement shows just how much effort was put into their performance.

For many of the students involved in the step show, balancing schoolwork, extracurriculars, and the step practices was no easy feat. The men of Phi Beta Sigma made sacrifices to ensure they were ready for the big night, and their victory felt well-earned. The audience's enthusiasm might have reached a peak during the Phi Beta Sigma performance, but every act kept the energy alive.

The Alpha Chi chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated closed out the night with a strong and impressive routine. As one of the final acts, precise moves the crowd to its feet, ensuring the show ends on a high note. In the end, the Zeta Alpha chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated took home the gold with a prize of \$1,000. Their win didn't come as a shock to anyone, as the chapter has a long history of dominating the Greek step show at Tennessee State, claiming their eighth first-place win this year. As the audience filtered out of Gentry Center, the excitement in the air was tangible. Conversations about the night's performances could be heard throughout both the campus and social media with many attendees sharing their favorite moments from the show. The Greek Step Show at Tennessee State proved to be an event that continues to draw in the campus community and create lasting memories. In a tradition that ties the past to the present, Tennessee State's Greek life has shown once again that stepping is not just about the competition, but about community, pride, and representation of Black excellence.



Alpha Chi Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated,
Sorority winner of the 2024 Homecoming Step Show. Photos by Christopher Brown, WRA

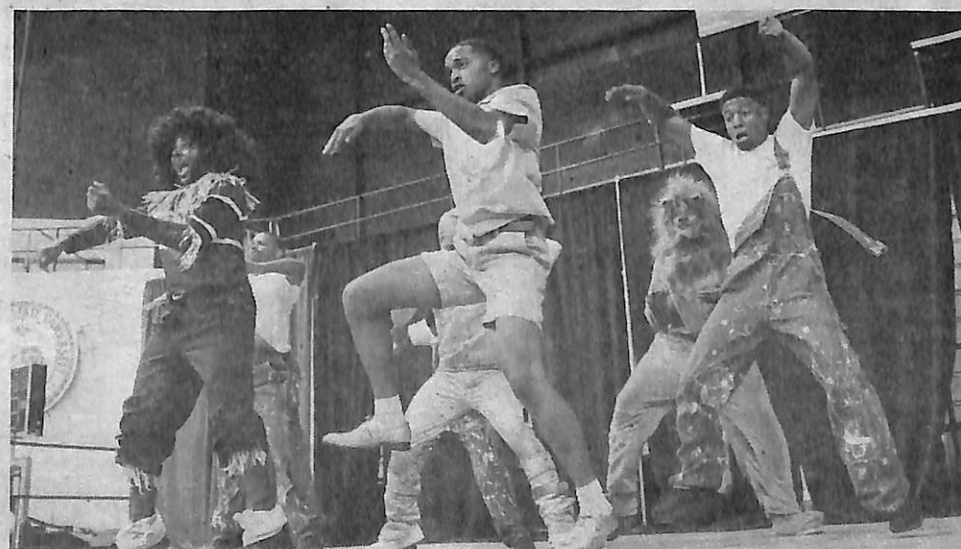
Wednesdays, continued from pg 6

Jeremiah Clemmons, a junior, stated that "Homecoming week always brings positive vibes and everybody out of their room." Courtyard Wednesday stands out during homecoming week, as students flood the courtyard to participate in the festivities. Organizations use this opportunity to attract students to their tables with homecoming-themed activities, games, and giveaways. The energy is like no other, with students and faculty alike coming together to celebrate TSU.

For many, Courtyard Wednesday is about more than just having fun – it's a chance to form meaningful connections. The event provides a platform for students to learn about different organiza-

tions, network with their peers, and get involved with causes that resonate with them. Vendors and local businesses also participate, selling food and apparel to students as they enjoy the family atmosphere on campus.

As the fall semester continues, Courtyard Wednesday remains a cornerstone of life at TSU. The event brings joy, connection, and purpose to students every week, whether they're enjoying music and food or getting involved on campus. It is a testament to the power of community at Tennessee State University, where support for important causes, school spirit, and student engagement come together to create an experience unlike any other.



Zeta Alpha Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Incorporated,
Fraternity winner of the 2024 Homecoming Step Show

TRENDING

TSU students showcase talent at Grammy U Fall Summit

By Rynia S. Dickerson
Editor-in-Chief

For Tennessee State University music students, breaking into the music industry isn't easy. However, Grammy U's Fall Summit, presented by Mastercard, provided them with a platform to showcase their talent and connect with top industry professionals.

Grammy U, the Recording Academy's membership program, offered TSU students the chance to engage with trailblazers and gain invaluable tools for career success at the event held from Sept. 30 to Oct. 1.

TSU seniors Emmanuel "Mille Manny" Strickland and Joshua "Lil-CEOJosh" Akhidenor not only par-

ticipated in the summit but also performed, making a significant impact and demonstrating their skills.

"Being a Grammy U member and an HBCU student, this opportunity meant a lot," said Strickland, who is studying business information systems and pursuing a career as a singer and songwriter. "It was a stepping stone for me—one step closer to performing at the Grammys."

Akhidenor, who is also a business major and music artist, expressed how meaningful the experience was for him. "Watching my friend (Strickland) perform and seeing the crowd embrace him was inspiring. I feel like this is the start of his Grammy journey," he said.

Latoya Bennett-Johnson of Mastercard set the tone for the summit, telling TSU students they were already on the path to becoming the leaders they aspire to be—CEOs, business owners, and more.

"My personal challenge is to give you every opportunity to reach your greatest potential," Bennett-Johnson said. Her words resonated throughout the event as students absorbed insights from panels featuring singer-songwriters Charli XCX and Troye Sivan.

Adren Gilmore, a TSU sophomore studying commercial music and a Grammy U representative, played a key role in bringing these opportunities to his fellow TSU students. "One reason I pursued the Rep position was to address the underrepresentation of Black students

in Grammy U programs," Gilmore said. "Seeing TSU students on stage, alongside big names like Charli XCX and Recording Academy CEO Harvey Mason Jr., was a proud moment."

The summit not only provided students with inspiration but also gave them a platform to share their unique perspectives. These opportunities at Grammy U allow TSU students to represent their culture, break barriers, and connect with a broader audience.

"This year's summit was one to remember," Gilmore reflected. For TSU students, it was just the beginning of their Grammy journey, leaving a lasting impression and equipping them with both inspiration and the tools needed to succeed in the music industry.



Music Artist Charli XCX, left, and Troye Siva. Photo by Rynia S. Dickerson



Rynia S. Dickerson, Editor-in-Chief, The Meter.