



# Call Me MISTER News

A Program within the College of Education, Health, and Human Services

## Longwood's Call Me MISTER Program Scholarship has been Endowed

Call Me MISTER is pleased to announce that a new Call Me MISTER scholarship has been fully endowed, in thanks to over \$25,000 dollars donated by the friends of and students in the program. In addition, over \$5,000 was generated in Longwood's Day of Giving, providing a healthy endowment. We are grateful to all our donors and will look forward to recognizing outstanding MISTERS with a scholarship. The amount of the scholarship will grow as the endowment grows. If you missed your opportunity to contribute, you may do so at <https://give.longwood.edu/callmemisterinfo>

## Alexander Morton Selected as Nottoway Middle School Nomination for Teaching Award

Longwood's Call Me Mister Alumni, Alexander Morton, was selected as Nottoway's Middle School nomination for the 2022 Mary V. Bicouvaris Virginia Teacher of the Year Award. Morton, class of 2016, has been teaching at Nottoway Middle School for five years. Morton stated, "I was chosen from among a panel of four teachers-people who had 10+ years in the classroom".

Mr. Morton stated that the Call Me MISTER program helped him to identify the skills needed to become an effective educator. He also noted the importance of Dr. Denesse Jones, who implemented Longwood's Call Me MISTER program, for his success as a teacher. "She must have seen potential in me and foreseen the need to prepare me to use my words as an educational tool. I used to have a stutter, and I had issues pronouncing multisyllabic words. I spent the next three years attending one-hour sessions at the Longwood Speech, Hearing, and Learning Services. When I graduated, I was equipped with the tools to bring confidence in the classroom, and I still use the techniques I learned to this day."



Dr. Maurice Carter, Director of the Call Me MISTER program, said, "Our theme continues to be: 'We teach what we know, but we reproduce what we are'. Mr. Alexander is a perfect example of our alumni producing effective and compassionate instruction not only to his school and students but also to his community."

The Mary V. Bicouvaris Virginia Teacher of the Year Award is open to all teachers in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade who have a renewable teaching license in Virginia; also included are school librarians, counselors, and reading specialists. Each school division superintendent submits their division's nomination to the Virginia Department of Education. Eight regional teachers of the year are selected by a panel representing professional associations and other educational groups. The panel chooses the Virginia Teacher of the Year from the eight regional teachers who then represents Virginia in the National Teachers of the Year program.

## MISTER Presents at Conference

"Grow your own." These are the words Mr. Da'Ron Harvey uses to describe his unexpected journey into higher education. Da'Ron Harvey a current senior at Longwood University majoring in Liberal Studies with a minor in English. College was not always on the forefront for Harvey when imagining his future. After high school, Harvey accepted a janitorial position in the Cumberland County school systems. Harvey became a volunteer coach for high school and middle school football and track & field. His passion for students and sports became quickly evident. Da'Ron was then offered paid positions to coach track and field, volleyball, and varsity girls' basketball.

One day, while fulfilling his janitorial responsibilities, a Cumberland Elementary School superintendent asked Harvey, "Have you ever thought about becoming a teacher? You are good with kids." The idea inspired him to register for classes at Southside Virginia Community College in Alberta, Virginia. He received an Associate's degree and applied to Longwood University to pursue his new dream of becoming a teacher.

In the fall of 2018, Harvey joined Call Me MISTER (CMM), a program on campus with the mission to increase the representation of males in Virginia's teaching force. "Call Me MISTER's founding was rooted in the virtual absence of minority males in the teaching force in the early grades. It is at these grade levels that the importance of male role models is highest, particularly in minority communities. Nationally, there is a shortage of men of color in K-12 education". Dr. Maurice Carter, the Director of the CMM program at Longwood. Harvey described CMM as a vital part of his time at Longwood. He is also involved with the College's Undergrad Advisory Committee.

Dr. Carter's mentorship with Da'Ron significantly impacted Da'Ron's trajectory. "Da'Ron is hard working, builds relationships with students, possesses articulation and maturity, and is a wonderful example to younger misters" Carter stated. He explained that Da'Ron proved that becoming an educator is possible with the support of a university and school district. Dr. Carter highlighted that less than 5% of educators in the Commonwealth of Virginia are men of color. He explained that it is vital for young students to have an exposure to a variety of educators. "It is so important that children see others who look like them in a teaching position." Carter concluded.



On September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Harvey told his story at the Virginia School Board Superintendents Conference. He presented statistics regarding the shortage of male minorities in the education system. "I was humbled and overwhelmed at the response. The most exceptional part of my speech was at the very end- I received warm clapping and a standing ovation." He concluded his speech with the Call Me MISTER Vision Statement.

While currently completing his senior year, Harvey works as a long-term substitute teacher for Cumberland Elementary School. When not in a classroom, Harvey coaches youth sports. Dr. Carter stated, "A child in the Cumberland school system is going to follow in Da'Ron's footsteps and say 'I want to be like Mr. Harvey. I want to become an educator.'"

### We would like to thank our partners!

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