



A NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS, ALUMNI, AND FRIENDS OF TAKOMA ACADEMY.

## From the Principal's Desk

My name is Yasmine Julien, and I have been devoted to the field of education for over 20 years. I am a native of Haiti and immigrated to the United States at the age of 9 years old. I completed my middle and high school education in the state of New York where I was inspired by my math teacher, Mr. Ranguul, to develop a love for mathematics. I am an instructional leader, mathematics content specialist, and experienced classroom teacher. I began my teaching career at a public charter school in Worcester, Massachusetts. I hold a Master of Education (M. Ed.) degree in Mathematics from Cambridge College, a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree with a concentration in Education from Stonybrook University, and a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in Sociology from Stonybrook University.

Previously, I served as the High School Assistant Principal of Instruction at Cesar Chavez Public Charter School in Washington, D.C., for three years, and prior to that as a Math Instructional Coach. In addition to my experience as a middle and high school teacher, I have taught undergraduate mathematics courses at Towson University for two years.

I am honored to be working at Takoma Academy as the principal this school year. With my goal of continuing the tradition of excellence at Takoma Academy, I am committed to ensuring that our students are abundantly prepared to thrive academically at the college of their choosing, and are



able to walk proudly with Christ as their personal savior. It is through my team's intentional efforts and commitment to developing the whole child that will lead our students to walk into their calling and academic achievement.

On a personal note, my husband, Carvens Julien, and I have three children - Madelyn, class of '22, is a freshman at Oakwood University, Gabrielle is a 9th grader at Takoma Academy, and Jonathan is a 7th grader at Takoma Academy Preparatory School. As parents who have always been selective about our children's school experience, we have been extremely pleased with their experience at TA and TA Prep. The commitment to caring and developing all children to meet their true potential is what I cherish and want to continue to instill as the new TA school leader.

I would love to hear from you, whether you are an alumnus, an alumni parent, or parent to include your email in our database to remain in touch and

forward any necessary information about Takoma Academy and its successes. Please contact me at [principal@ta.edu](mailto:principal@ta.edu).

**Mrs. Yasmine Julien**

### Mission Statement

Takoma Academy is a Seventh-day Adventist high school welcoming all races, cultures, and religions; leading young people to Jesus Christ, providing excellence in academics and a commitment to service.

### Bathroom Renovation Project

As the 2022-2023 school year begins, we are raising \$60,000.00 to renovate our boys and girls bathrooms, which are located in the lower level of the school building, near the gym. This renovation will benefit our students, their families, and visitors at our basketball games and events.

We have raised \$17,000 to date toward this initiative, so your support could help us reach our goal! Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to support TA's Bathroom Renovation Project by Sept. 30 in the enclosed envelope or on our website at [www.ta.edu](http://www.ta.edu).

# The Life of a Professional Musician

Growing up the son of a professional musician, it was almost predestined that *William Reichenbach Jr. '67* would join the family business.

He played the drummer boy in a Christmas school production at John Nevins Andrews School in the second grade. When Bill was 11 years old, he took up the trombone.

"I was very interested in it. That's the key thing, since your level of interest tends to overcome any difficulties you encounter," he recalled. Exposed to jazz music by his father, Bill learned to improvise and play music by ear, as opposed to reading it from a sheet of music. He would later bring classical music into the family's Takoma Park home.

"If I could hear a melody, I could probably play it," Bill said. His brother, the late Kurt Reichenbach '71 similarly learned to play music from listening to it, such as one day where he emerged from the family's basement, able to play an Al Hirt record on the trumpet. Kurt tended to shift his allegiances between different instruments, whereas Bill focused initially on the drums and later on the trombone.

Bill occasionally accompanied his father, Bill Reichenbach, Sr., to rehearsals, concerts, and other activities that formed a part of his father's jazz drumming career, including his work with the Charlie Byrd Trio from 1963-1972. Bill's father usually would arrive two hours before he had to play to give him time to set up his equipment and practice before the other players.

The young trombonist, who identified as a musician from an early age, learned the importance of showing up early and being well prepared. He also learned to get along with his fellow musicians, including avoiding speaking about topics about which they might have strong disagreements, including politics.

He compared learning to play musical instruments at an early age to learning a foreign language. It's much easier to pick up the facility to converse in a language or play an instrument in one's youth.

In 1975, four years after graduating from Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., Bill moved to Hollywood, Calif., where he would live for more than 40 years, making a home that eventually included his wife, Frances, their daughter, Anah, and a cluster of dogs, cats, and horses.

Bill's career as a trombonist took off. He got his initial break when his former professor from Eastman School of Music, Chuck Mangione, asked Bill to come to California to record *Chase the Clouds Away*, released in 1975, after Mangione was signed to A&M Records.

He played on a six-month tour with The Buddy Rich Big Band, but after that experience, he decided he would focus on being a session player, as opposed to a touring musician, since staying in cheap motels and driving from gig to gig in a bus for weeks on end can wear on a person. Bill had observed a similar dynamic at play with his father, who went on a number of State Department tours that took him away from his family through The Charlie Byrd Trio, playing in far-flung countries, as part of a diplomacy efforts.

During his career, Bill has performed on several thousand movie scores, radio and television commercials and shows, and musical recordings.

Bill had been working all through college, playing at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts regularly, including at the rededication of the performing arts center on Sept. 8, 1971, when Leonard Bernstein conducted his *Mass*, a requiem for President John Kennedy.

His later big break occurred in 1978, when Bill was selected by producer Quincy Jones through Bill's friend,



trumpetist and arranger Jerry Hey, to play on *Blam!*, a disco, soul, and funk album by The Brothers Johnson, which topped the Billboard R&B chart that year. Later work with Quincy Jones included playing on Michael Jackson recordings.

During his decades as a musician, Bill has observed trends, including the transition from Jazz from exclusively Be-Bop to an art form that rediscovered Big Band and also became influenced by pop music. The economics of music meant that Big Band ensembles usually have had to tour heavily to support themselves. Bill has also seen over the years how pop music has influenced Gospel and church music, including at Seventh Day Adventist churches.

Encouraged by his wife and daughter to consider transplanting to a state with less exposure to potential natural disasters, such as wildfires and earthquakes, not to mention Los Angeles' burgeoning homeless epidemic, Bill and his wife sold their home in Hollywood and moved to a home on 2.5 acres of land outside of Asheville, N.C., in the western part of the Tarheel State in May 2022.

He continues to make trips back to Los Angeles to play and is considering doing college tours with his fellow musicians, which would include playing concerns, giving master classes with students, and speaking to classes.

# A Science Teacher and Preacher: Uncle Willie

If there's one person who is a common tie between generations of Takoma Academy students, it is *Ken Wilson '55*, more commonly known as "Uncle Willie."

A self-described "Science teacher and preacher," he returned to his alma mater, TA, in 1963 after two years of teaching at Greater New York Academy and retired from the school in 2006.

His nickname came about after he played pickup basketball the summer before he first began his work at TA. He recognized one of his new students from the blacktop. After the end of class, the student asked his teacher what he should call him. They determined that "Uncle Willy" would work well.

"If you love it, that's the main thing," he said about teaching, but he described Chemistry as more challenging to teach than Biology.

"Tell 'em what I'm gonna tell 'em, tell 'em, and tell 'em what I told 'em," is how he described his lecturing style in teaching Biology, Chemistry, and Religion classes. Uncle Willie earned his Master's degree in Science from the University of Maryland after earning a bachelor's degree from Columbia Union College.

Uncle Willie was married to Carroll Nelson, who had the nicknames of "Cody" and "Katie" from 1959 until her passing in 2013. They had two sons, Bart Nelson and Britt Nelson, who graduated from TA.

In 1974, the family purchased a 7-acre farm in Highland, Md., located in Howard County. Four years later, they moved to the farm and built a house.

Uncle Willie had lived on a 320-acre farm in West Virginia for four years, and the property had everything from streams, woods, fields, and a mountain, so purchasing the property in Highland seemed a natural next step. He would host TA Alumni



Association meetings there and enjoyed hosting friends from TA on the property. Uncle Willie sold the property in 2016.

Uncle Willie has good memories from his time at TA, with some of the best ones coming from activities outside the classroom. He remembers everything from serving as boys basketball coach from 1964 to 1984 to venturing on outings with students to the Shenandoah National Park, Va. Biota Club for National History trips included caving at the Blue Ridge Mountains. He remembers working as a bricklayer during off-hours with TA students for a TA parent who hired a number of TA community members.

He remembers one trip to the Old Rag Mountain at Shenandoah, where he and TA students ascended the mountain, finding a man who was suffering from a heart attack. After numerous attempts to resuscitate him, they had to shift their efforts to helping first responders to bring the man's body back down to the base of the mountain. This unfortunate incident resulted in a local newspaper article, where the students were lauded for their composure.

He remembers the new gym built at TA in 1970, which became a magnet for famous basketball players and teams for practice, from the Terrapin women and men's basketball teams from the University of Maryland to a high school all-star team to the Portland

Trailblazers to the Baltimore Bullets and Wes Unseld. He is proud that one of his former players, alumnus Jimmy Vines, matriculated to the University of District Columbia, where the Firebirds basketball coach told Uncle Willie that he refrained from playing games on Fridays and Saturdays so that Vines could be available to play more class while observing the Sabbath.

Many students and TA alumni have impressed Uncle Willie through the years, from the TA alumni whom he taught who are working at their alma mater to the Bainum siblings to *James Smith '79*, a patent lawyer and judge, to *Bobby Stuart '67*, who is an expert in plumbing and refrigerators. *Charles McMillan '72*, a nuclear physicist and retired chief executive officer of Los Alamos National Laboratories and his wife *Janet Robb McMillan '73*, and sisters in law *Kathy Robb Ramirez* and *Sandra Robb Gilbert '73*, have also left an impression on Uncle Willie. He described *Dr. Elmer Carrero '65* as an outstanding singer at the Pennsylvania Avenue Adventist Church.

The late 1970s was a heady time for TA, as Uncle Willie remembers the enrollment increasing to a peak of 600 students in 1979-1980.

In retirement, Uncle Willie has kept himself busy. He gave a series of 10 talks about Science and Creationism at South Carroll Adventist Church in Westminster, Md., in Carroll County, for 10 years. He has spoken at churches "from Manhattan to Hawai'i" focusing on Biblical Creationism, both giving lesson talks and leading prayer meetings. He continues to attend TA Alumni Weekend and has given his signature Roll Call, a recitation of classes and those who have passed away, at many Alumni Weekends, after being recruited to this role by Prof Lawrence.

He also served as an adjunct professor at Columbia Union College from 2011 to 2016.



# An Island Paradise Becomes Home

Many people visit Hawai'i for conventions and vacations. Cynthia "Cindy" McMillan '83 and her husband Karl Rhoads came to Honolulu in 1996, and they have not looked back to the mainland.

"It's like being in a foreign country without having a passport," is the advice she and her husband were given, after they moved to Hawai'i after Rhoads accepted a job offer from a Honolulu law firm following his graduation from GWU Law School.

In addition to being a warm island-state with beautiful beaches, Cindy has found a slower pace of life in Hawai'i, a place where many people place a priority on their family. When they came to Honolulu more than 25 years ago, she and her husband tried to learn about Hawai'i and its cultures and people with a spirit of openness.

For the last eight years, McMillan has served as director of communications for Hawai'i Gov. David Ige (D), responsible for all messaging on a daily basis from the governor's office for the state of 1.4 million people. Located 2,000 miles to the west of the U.S. mainland in the Pacific Ocean, Hawai'i became a state in 1959.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented an unusual challenge, since Gov. Ige mandated a two-week quarantine for visitors to Hawai'i started in March 2020, which effectively killed the tourism industry, for six months, leading Hawai'i's unemployment rate to spike to 22 percent in a matter of weeks, after previously having one of the country's lowest unemployment rates. This crisis led to a surge in unemployment applications, but by September 2020, Gov. Ige modified the quarantine order, and as of April 2022, the unemployment rate had declined to 4.8%, even though international tourism has not approached pre-pandemic levels.

McMillan is proud of Gov. Ige's commitment to making Hawai'i



100% reliant on renewable energy for electricity by 2045. She also describes the state's executive as a public-educated leader who is tackling climate change and watershed pollution, among other challenges. McMillan has learned how to communicate effectively using tradition news media, such as the Honolulu Star Advertiser and local TV stations, but also online news outlets, such as blogs, which are more popular on the smaller islands in Hawai'i. She also uses social media, including Facebook and Twitter, to help get the governor's message out.

Living in Hawai'i since 1996, McMillan and her husband have learned the importance of consensus and compromise, which she describes as essential in a state like Hawai'i. "Living in an island, you don't burn bridges," she said. "You work with everyone."

McMillan came from a high-achieving TA family in Adelphi, Md., and there were early signs of her leadership abilities, such as her playing basketball and serving on the Student Council. She has good memories of staff members, such as Bob Albright and Uncle Willy. She learned to write well at TA, which has been indispensable to earning a living, in addition to learning how to listen carefully to others and knowing how to tell stories.

She appreciates the Adventist focus on taking care of mind, body and spirit, as well as the "service aspect" to Adventist education.

After earning her bachelor's degree in English from Columbia Union College (now Washington Adventist University), McMillan considered teaching but found her sense of mission when she took a job at a small educational association, the National Council for Language and International Studies, which has a lobbying mission, among other objectives. "Political action is something we should all be doing," she remembers realizing from this formative experience.

After moving to Hawai'i in 1996, McMillan eventually came to work with the late Mark E. "Duke" Bainum, M.D., an Arkansas-born cousin of the Bainums who attended TA, who served in the Hawai'i House of Representatives. She and her husband Karl got married in 1994.

She's the only one of her siblings not to have earned a doctorate. Brother *Charles McMillan, Ph.D., '73*, and the retired executive director of Los Alamos National Laboratories, while *Sally McMillan, Ph.D., '74* is a professor of advertising and public relations at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. Her twin sister *Susan McMillan '83* is a policy and planning analyst with the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

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# A Young Lawyer, Practicing What She Learned at TA

For DaNia Henry '15, one teacher made all the difference.

When she took Mr. Tom Ballard's AP History class during her junior year at Takoma Academy, the class formed her thinking on government, the law, and what she wanted to do with her life.

DaNia, who was one of three valedictorians in her class, learned in AP Government about the impact of court cases and how they impact American society, from *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) to *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) to the *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857) decision to *Roe v. Wade* (1973). She felt a certain degree of apathy in the news and about being involved in politics or the functioning of government but after taking the class, she felt more interested in being involved, just as she was coming into adulthood, with the right to vote at 18 years old.

"It really opened my eyes," she said of AP History, as taught by Mr. Ballard.

Armed with several Advanced Placement credits earned at TA and dual enrollment courses from Washington Adventist University, she earned her bachelor's degree from Oakwood University in political science with a minor in mathematics in three years (2018). Thanks to law school trips at Oakwood and conversations with lawyers and law school students, she knew what to expect in law school. She plunged headlong into taking the Law School Aptitude Test and enrolled at Georgetown Law Center, graduating in 2021. Before taking Mr. Ballard's class, she had thought of the law as a boring career, but that Spring class changed her thinking.

At Georgetown, she particularly enjoyed Criminal Defense and Prisoner Advocacy, a clinical course, as well as Democracy and Coersion, a criminal defense and constitutional law class. It was clear she was not going



to go to work for a K Street law firm. At Georgetown Law Center, she also had to figure out her own routine and "stay close to my community," including maintaining her own spiritual life.

"At TA, we had chapel, and we would pray before games," she recalled. "I had to figure out what would work for me," while attending law school.

In October 2021, in part through the advice given her by Georgetown Law professors, DaNia remained on the East Coast and moved to a state where she could practice criminal defense in a place where she felt the laws and customs treated the accused with more fairness.

She moved to Springfield, Mass., having passed the bar exam in Washington, D.C., and being admitted to practice in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. She works as a public defender in Springfield, where she represents indigent clients accused of misdemeanors. She handles misdemeanors such as assault, traffic, and property crimes. The daughter of a Jamaican-born father and a Bajan mother, DaNia was making a mark in a new place.

Her work has helped her to recognize how much different many peoples' lives are from hers. As she gets to know her clients, as well as victims of crimes, she begins to better understand how the realities of peoples' lives are more complicated

than the facts and evidence presented about their legal cases.

At TA, she played soccer, sang in the Chorale and Camerata, and served as president of the National Honor Society.

She called Mr. Alban Howe, her TA math teacher, "a game changer." He maintained high standards for his students and helped change her relationship with math. "He had a level of excellence I didn't think was achievable. I did not like math before." She remembers him saying, "Make a decision and make it good."

She also appreciates the standard set by music and fine arts teacher Mrs. Lulu Mupfumbu. "She had a level of excellence and confidence. She set me up for success." Growing up in Prince George's County and going to school at Takoma Academy had a massive impact on DaNia's development as a young black woman.

She is also very grateful for her English and AP Literature teacher, Ms. Myra Candalaria. "She helped shaped my thinking. She introduced me to so many good books and helped develop my critical thinking," DaNia said. With time, furthermore, she came to appreciate what she learned in Mr. Dunbar Henri's Bible class. A Political Science course she took at Oakwood University with Prof. Preston Foster helped her gain more appreciation for topics that Mr. Henri would bring to class, including marriage, salvation and choosing a religion.

"TA teaches you to be confident and how to have a spiritual life," DaNia said.

## Rest in Peace

Virginia Dart Collins '49  
Jean Sunderland Murphy '44

# Meet the Class of 2022 Triplets, TA's First Ever

Let's face it: the Morencys are not your average American teenagers.

They probably spend some time glancing at a smart phone, but they seem too driven to give an electronic device much attention. Three aspects of their identity make them unique: they are triplets who are first generation Haitian-Americans and Adventists.

Trying to wrap your head around all the extra-curricular activities that the Morency triplets were involved before their June 2022 matriculation at Takoma Academy requires a notepad and a patient notetaker.

Gabriel, Ethanael, and Janelle Morency made good use of their four years on the Carroll Avenue campus, leaping back to action after the school resumed in-person learning and activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

They played soccer, Janelle kicking the round ball around this last fall for the first time on a team because she wanted to try something new. They ran track and field.

They served as student ambassadors for Takoma Academy, giving tours of the schools to prospective students and visitors, as well as providing support at activities such as Alumni Weekend. Janelle was a member of HOSA, allied health care professions, at TA.

They belonged to National Society of Black Engineers, and Gabriel took a trip to Detroit for a NSBE convention with TA in ninth grade. They sang in the Camerata, taking a trip with the choral group to Boston this past February. They tutored students at their alma mater, Takoma Academy Prep and enjoy being engaged in community service.

There is a certain irony of living as a



*Ethanael, Janelle and Gabrielle Morency*

Haitian-American. At the same time that 30,000 Haitian migrants journeyed from Chile to the Texas border, with the desperate hope that they could stay in the United States in September 2021, so the Morency siblings are occasionally reminded that other people think Haitians are inferior, even though the United States has always aspired to be an egalitarian country.

The Morencys were born in Massachusetts and moved to Maryland with their parents and grandmother by the time they were 18 months old. In their house, they were taught to speak Haitian Kreyol, French, and English, and over time, they came to love Zouk and Kompa, two types of music found in Haiti. The family belongs to Emmanuel-Brinklow Seventh Day Adventist Church in Ashton, Md.

Gabriel is the most extroverted of the three, while Janelle and Ethanael have more introverted personalities, the latter serving as the “designated tech guy” in the family.

Janelle, Ethanael, and Gabriel have enrolled at Oakwood University for the fall. Janelle plans to study Biology there, with the goal of becoming a

cardiothoracic surgeon, inspired in part by a friend who had heart surgery.

When asked to name a favorite class or TA teacher, the triplets diplomatically deferred the question. Ethanael noted that TA is like a family, and members of a family love each other while recognizing there are different gifts and roles given to each member of the family.

The Morency triplets maintain a healthy level of competition with each other, and they think this dynamic helps each to do well individually.

When asked about the difficulties posed by virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, Janelle said that it was challenging, since there was not the physical separation between home and school that students usually experience. She also had to learn to be well organized, since the temptation to spend time aimlessly was present. She was glad to be back on campus for full, in-person learning during the 2021-2022 school year.

The Morency siblings will carry their TA experience with them through adulthood and cherish the friendships they made and lessons they learned, both inside and outside the classroom.



# Annual Fund Donors

*Thank you to all who gave to our Agape Fund during the 2021-2022 school year (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022)*

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**Takoma Academy**  
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Takoma Park, MD 20912



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**TAKOMA ACADEMY NEWS | VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2 | SUMMER 2022**

## **Alumni Weekend April 22-24**



*James Pittman '82*



*Dr. Joy McIver '92 plays the violin*



*Keith Beckett, interim principal*



*Rev. Melvyn Hayden III '89 delivers the Sabbath sermon*



*Class of 1982*



*Class of 1977*



*Class of 1987*



*Class of 2002*



*Class of 1972*



*Mrs. Lulu Mupfumbu, fine arts and music teacher, leads the Chorale*



*Dunbar Henri and Lou Ann Wood, longtime teachers who retired, appeal for a generous response to the Sabbath collection*

**Mrs. Yasmine Julien**  
Principal  
principal@ta.edu

**Mrs. RaShawna Young '92**  
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