

## Valencia M. Johnson



I will start by saying how I feel about my education as of today. I am a Sociology Major, with a minor in African American studies at Valdosta State University. My college career took five years instead of the normal four. Although it has been a long journey, with many pouts and complaints, I do see the benefits of my education and the work I put in to accomplish it. If you would have asked me six years ago about my thoughts on pursuing secondary education, my answer would have been an immediate “no”. I am the first of my immediate family to pursue a college career, but I have high hopes that I will not be the last. I would say that my siblings and I did not have the best upbringing. But what I can say is that we are strong and determined individuals that have seen many negative and depression circumstances, and we are still standing. My siblings, in my eyes are amazing due to their perseverance, talents, and strength they possess. I have two brothers, one older and one young, both natural talents in art, real creative thinkers. My youngest a beautiful self taught musician, of which I envy and admire. My sister, is older and of course wiser than I. She has five amazing, happy, and beautiful children that she raised on her own. This accomplishment alone deserves applause, she has been able to

stomp through life, and get right but up if she falls, and keep going. I truly admire her more than she would ever know.

My college experience at Valdosta State University has taught me so much, has opened my eyes to the things that I once never imagined or even thought of. My education has taught me so much about the person I am and where I can be if I keep striving for excellence. I admit at times, my view gets foggy, but I have made wonderful relationship with some of my professors who encourage me personally and educationally. My last summer at Valdosta State, I went on a study abroad trip to Santa Elena, Belize along with four other students. The experience alone gave me determination and opened my eyes to a new perspective on life. I could not have asked for a better group of people to go with. We all came from different backgrounds, but there we were all emerged in the same culture experiencing the same things which created a unique bond between. The two directors of the course were phenomenal, and I thank them for all their assistance during my study abroad experience. I cannot write this without giving credit and thanks to persons who has been my main source of encouragement for the past seven years; they are the reason I began my college career. When I say they are a strong person, believe me, they are strong. With the relationship we have, it is hard to sum it up in a few words, but without them I would not be here, and I thank my siblings, and will continue to.

