

# **Alumni Spotlight**

## **Judge Shanese Johnson**

### **Ramblings, January Issue**

**Please provide your biographical information (major/minor at WCU, town you grew up in, reason why you came to WCU).**

I grew up in Philadelphia. My major was Business Management and a minor in Political Science. I didn't get into the Ivy League school applied to which I wouldn't have been able to afford anyway. WCU offered me a scholarship and it was close to home. Also, I knew I would be needing to pay for law school so it seemed like a good fit. My Mom went to WCU for 3 years, left to get married and finished at Temple so I had visited the campus well before I applied.

**What made you go into degree?**

I wanted to major in Political Science but my Dad flipped out and told me that I need to change my major to something useful in case I didn't get into law school but I did on my first try.

**What is your official title and what are your responsibilities in your current position?**

I am a Court of Common Pleas Judge in Philadelphia County. I hear non-jury felony and misdemeanor cases.

**What is a typical day like at work?**

I arrive in the morning and give a final review of my cases for the day. I eat breakfast at my desk and then I head to my courtroom to start hearing cases.

**What have been the biggest challenges at work?**

My biggest challenge is logistics. It's always a challenge getting attorneys, defendants, witnesses, and etc. all in the same place at the same time so we can do cases.

**What do you enjoy most about your current position?**

I feel like I can make a difference in peoples' lives each day.

**What skills, talents, and other traits are useful and necessary to do your job?**

I think you need to be intelligent, compassionate, thoughtful and have integrity.

**Do you have a favorite or funny story about work?**

I have plenty but I don't think some of them would be appropriate to print!

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#### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

I love to travel, read, watch movies and spend time with my family and friends (especially my son).

#### **Where do you see yourself in five years?**

I expect to do exactly what I am doing now except I would likely be hearing jury cases as well.

#### **What advice would you give to a current student who aspires to follow in your footsteps and pursue a similar career path?**

They should pick a major they like and can do well in, get good grades, be involved on campus and get relevant internships and work experiences.

#### **How has your WCU education contributed to your success?**

I got a solid academic foundation and an affordable education. It was an academic environment in which I could thrive and move on to be successful in law school.

#### **What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishments (both personally and professionally)?**

Personally, it would be surviving breast cancer diagnosis in 2010 and raising my 13 year old son. Professionally it would be having my own successful law firm for 14 years and being elected Judge.

#### **What's your favorite memory from when you were a student at WCU?**

Well graduation definitely! I met and got a picture with Jesse Jackson when he spoke on campus my senior year. I appreciate the friendships I made and how I have stayed in contact with many of my classmates from WCU.