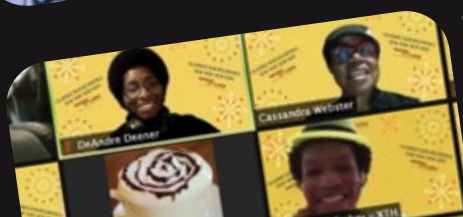


# MEMPHIS CHALLENGE

# 2020

YEAR IN REVIEW

**PAUSE  
PIVOT  
PERSEVERE**



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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AutoZone

### **Warren "Bud" Richey**

Retired, Memphis College  
of Art

### **Pamela Shields**

First Horizon

### **Donna Tillis**

AutoZone

### **Dr. Rychetta Watkins**

Memphis Music Initiative



*Esmond Arrindell and Cassandra Webster*

## **Dear Memphis Challenge Family, Friends and Supporters:**

Mankind marks time with clocks that tick off seconds, minutes, hours, and days—our calendars count these days into weeks, months, and years. Yet the God we serve marks time in millennia, increments of thousands and thousands of our years. The vastness of time underscores the unlimited capacity from which all goodness flows—and the limits of our ability to take in all that exists in the universe as we race against time.

Then along comes a limiting experience that slows our clocks, making each day a slow-motion passage through time. Maya Angelou said, "At some point, the thinker must think," and this COVID-19 induced slow-down is just such a moment. The lockdown occasioned by this global pandemic has caused a collective pause – giving us the time we all need to stop, re-examine and determine how we shall emerge into the post-pandemic world to come.

Chief among our musings is this key question: "How can the Memphis Challenge remain relevant to the community we serve?"

Because we are resilient, we go forward in faith. We began by asking questions and listening to what you, our MC family, had to say. We held focus groups and identified our weak links in order to make them stronger. Then to properly pivot into the future, we followed the data and accepted that change was inevitable, and the direction was clear.

Practicing what we preach to students, we acknowledged to one and all that nothing would be quite the same. After all, growth can only happen when you accept the need to change and prepare to make change happen. And that is exactly what we did.

Perseverance is our fuel as we continue to look for new ways to bring your ideas to life:

- ♦ We turned lemons into lemonade and moved our workshops online.
- ♦ We allowed our community of students, collegiates, and alums to amplify their voices, providing them a safe space to exhale and to be vulnerable and transparent during these turbulent times.
- ♦ We participated in city-wide coalitions to contribute to Memphis and make sure the city saw our role and our worth

So, as we round the circle to close out this year and turn the calendar to 2021, we do so knowing that we have a committed community in the Memphis Challenge family. We do so knowing that we are a cherished resource for balancing and enriching the lives of the students, collegiates, alum, and parents in our circle. We do so knowing that the possibilities for successful service are also infinite. We do so knowing that our mission is to seek and listen to input, then to . . . Pause, Pivot and Persevere!

Onward through 2021!

Sincerely,



Cassandra Webster | Executive Director



Esmond Arrindell, MD | Board Chair

## Pause. Pivot. Persevere. YEAR IN REVIEW

# 2020

**JAN** Midsouth Mission of Mercy Project

**FEB** Last Dance – In-Person workshop

### PAUSE AND PIVOT

**MAR** Parent Webinar: Creating Calm Can Do Attitude in Chaotic Times

**APR** Parent Webinar: You're Stronger Than You Think

**MAY** Closing Celebration Senior Drive-By  
Awarded Tech Solutions Scholarship

**JUN** SOLE MATH  
Virtual Internships

### PERSEVERE

**JUL** Parent Focus Groups

**AUG** Virtual MC Interviews

**SEP** Orientation

**OCT** Discover Memphis: ChangeMakers and Innovators Summit

**NOV** 1989 Society Launch

**DEC** Holiday Virtual Celebration





# Meet the Challengers: 2020 Student Profiles

## Senior Memphis Challenge



25

### TOTAL STUDENTS

19 Females | 6 Males

22 African American

1 Asian American

1 Hispanic



27

### AVERAGE ACT SCORE

8

### WORKSHOPS

Senior Summit

Refining the College Essay

Being Financially Fit

Mastering the Interview

Majors, Minors & Concentrations

Surviving Senioritis

Real Talk: The Elephant in the Room

Managing Stress

4.0

### AVERAGE GPA

## Junior Memphis Challenge



33

### TOTAL STUDENTS

27 Females | 6 Males

28 African American

2 Biracial

3 Hispanic

4.0

### AVERAGE GPA



8

### WORKSHOPS

Breaking through Procrastination

Managing Stress

How to Stay Curious

The Career of Your Future

Resume Writing and Portfolio Building

Networking

Making a College Choice

Public Speaking

## 9/10 Movement – 10th Grade

# 34

### TOTAL STUDENTS

22 Females | 12 Males

31 African American

1 Asian American

2 Hispanic

# 3.9

 AVERAGE GPA

## 9/10 Movement – 9th Grade

# 19

### TOTAL STUDENTS

11 Females | 8 Males

18 African American

1 Hispanic

# 3.8

 AVERAGE GPA

# 8

### WORKSHOPS

The Importance of Time Management  
Study Skills for a Lifetime  
Managing Stress in High School  
Power of Positivity:  
How to Practice Optimistic Thinking

How to Be Financially Fit  
How to Master Public Speaking  
How to Reflect on the Past and Learn  
from Mistakes  
The Art of Internet Etiquette



*“In society today, things are changing drastically, and I believe the Memphis Challenge will help me find my voice in my city.”*

- Zoe Tripp, Middle College High School Class of 2021

# 39

 HIGH SCHOOLS REPRESENTED

Bartlett | Bluff City | Bolton | Briarcrest Christian | Central | Christian Brothers | City University School | Collegiate School of Memphis | Collierville | Cordova | Crosstown | East | Freedom Prep | Germantown | Harding Academy | Hollis F. Price | Houston | Immaculate Conception Cathedral School | Kingsbury | KIPP Collegiate School | Manassas | Melrose | Memphis Academy of Health Sciences | Memphis Catholic | Memphis Rise Academy | Memphis School of Excellence | Memphis University School | Middle College | Power Center Academy | The Soulsville Charter School | Southwest Early College | Southwind | St. Agnes Academy | St. Benedict at Auburndale | St. George's Independent School | St. Mary's Episcopal School | T-STEM Academy | White Station | Whitehaven



# 2020 Class of

**AWARDED MORE THAN \$6 MILLION IN SCHOLARSHIPS**



**VICTORIA  
BARNES**

Collierville High  
Saint Louis University



**HANNAH  
BLACKWELL**

Memphis Central High  
Louisiana State  
University



**KIERAN BOWIEN**

Memphis Central High  
Southwest Tennessee  
Community College



**AISHA BUTLER**

Memphis Academy of  
Health Sciences  
Howard University



**TRINITY CHISM**

White Station High  
Ogelthorpe University



**JOSHUA JAMES  
CLAYBON**

White Station High  
Washington University  
in St. Louis



**CHRISTIANA  
FLORES**

St. Benedict at  
Auburndale  
The University of  
Memphis



**TYSAN GREEN**

Immaculate Conception  
Cathedral School  
The University of  
Memphis



**KYLER HALL**

Collegiate School of  
Memphis  
Rhodes College



**DANIEL HARVEY**

White Station High  
Rhodes College





**JADE JONES**

Collierville High  
University of Tennessee  
Chattanooga



**JOSHUA MACKIE**

Lake Cormorant High  
The University of  
Southern Mississippi



**MYLES MACKLIN**

White Station High  
University of Tennessee  
Knoxville



**ZAIRE MATTOX**

Soulsville Charter School  
Tennessee Tech



**LA'QUAYSHA  
NEWBY**

Collegiate School of  
Memphis  
Tennessee State  
University



**JADA PARK**

Soulsville Charter School  
Howard University



**BRIWANA  
PATTERSON**

Soulsville Charter School  
Baptist College of  
Health Sciences



**LESLIE RENDON**

Compass Midtown High  
Savannah College of Art  
and Design



**JASMINE  
SAULSBERRY**

Whitehaven High  
Talladega College



**JYMAE  
SAULSBERRY**

Whitehaven High  
University of Tennessee  
Knoxville



**JAELYN STOVALL**

Collegiate School of  
Memphis  
The University of  
Memphis



**TREVOR  
WATTERS-  
SAULSBERRY**

Whitehaven High  
Tennessee State  
University



**AMIAH WILLIAMS**

St. Mary's Episcopal  
School  
Emory University



**HEATHER  
WILLIAMS**

City University School  
The University of  
Memphis



**NICOLE WILSON**

City University School  
University of Tennessee  
Martin



Over the past five years, Memphis Challenge students have used their hands, their voices, and their hearts to tell impactful stories that reflect their own communities. **Tell Me A Story** is an arts immersion project designed to amplify the voices of Memphis Challengers.

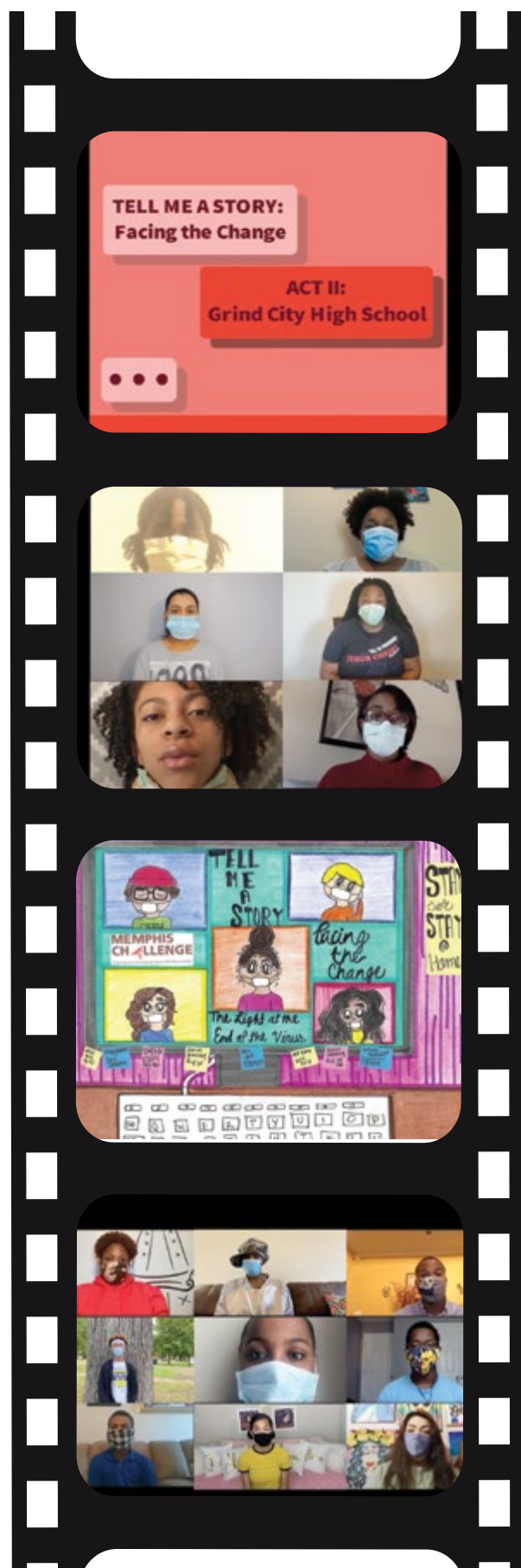
**2016: Storybooks** inspired to build character in children and teens.

**2017: Movies** portraying the anxieties and triumphs of Memphis youth.

**2018: Zines** highlighting student views on social justice while commemorating MLK50.

**2019: Hand sculptures** embellished with artistic representations of views on community, heritage, and the heights of their own goals.

**Tell Me A Story: Facing the Change** mirrored student life in 2020. James Baldwin said it best, “not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.” Thirty-two Memphis Challenge students worked collaboratively with their peers to reimagine the project to reflect the real-life fears students experienced during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. The students produced two virtual showcases and debuted them at the closing celebration in May. *Grind City High* and *The Light At The End of The Virus* were the culmination of 56 hours of creative efforts by Memphis Challenge students.





# The Memphis Challenge Tech Solutions Award

The Memphis Challenge Tech Solutions Award is a \$2,400 scholarship provided to four Senior Challengers (\$600 each) to assist with the purchase of technology – computer, printer, software, etc. – to be used toward their college education. This award is sponsored by a Memphis Challenge alum who wishes to remain anonymous.



Joshua-James Claybon

*Thank you so much for the Tech Solutions Scholarship Award to help purchase technology for college. I am incredibly blessed to have had the opportunity to become a part of such a supportive family of individuals. Thank you for the many lessons and additional insight on how to lead a successful life.*

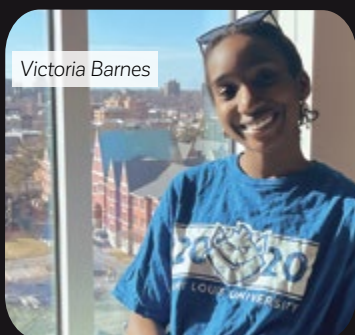
- Joshua-James Claybon, MC Class of 2020, Washington University



Kyler Hall

*The Memphis Challenge tech solutions scholarship removed a tremendous burden from myself and my family. Throughout high school, I was given a laptop to use for all of my assignments, and once I graduated I no longer had a laptop. Because of the tech solutions scholarship, I was able to purchase a brand new Apple Macbook Pro that I use daily, especially to attend my online classes. While completing my first year of college remotely during the pandemic, this laptop has helped me to stay in contact with my teachers, peers and advisors. I am forever grateful to Memphis Challenge and donors for awarding me with this scholarship and sowing a seed that will be used for years to come. Without this scholarship, I would be missing an essential component to my college experience.*

- Kyler Hall, MC Class of 2020, Rhodes College



Victoria Barnes

*“As a pre-medical student studying the Spanish language and biology, the availability to technology is incredibly important in order to complete the majority of my educational requirements. This scholarship has afforded me the opportunity to purchase a printer as well as additional accessories. Not only has Memphis Challenge given me the tools to be a successful leader, diligent student, and involved citizen, it has also provided relief to a burden that many students are facing due to COVID-19. Due to the immense amount of support from the Memphis Challenge’s students, alumni, program leaders and directors, I am certain that I will continue to flourish alongside other Challengers who participate with the program. I look forward to utilizing their guidance and having their encouragement in my future endeavors.*

- Victoria Barnes, MC Class of 2020, Saint Louis University



Amiah Williams

*I am so thankful to share that I used my Tech Solutions Award to get a new laptop. My old laptop worked very slow on a graphing software I need for calculus. I was able to trade my old laptop for a new Macbook Pro. I still use the software this semester, so I am happy to have a working computer to graph in my Calculus I class. It is so nice to have a reliable computer available, as over half of my classes this semester are online.*

- Amiah Williams, MC Class of 2020, Emory University

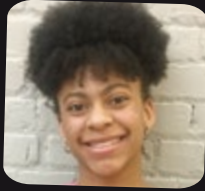
## MC Student Ambassadors



Kenneth Burnett  
Senior, Bartlett



Lauryn Clark  
Senior, St. George's



Nina Collymore  
Senior, Middle College



Xochitl Figueroa  
Senior, Power Center  
Academy



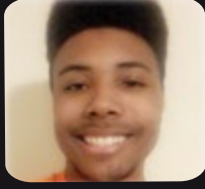
Paris Hall  
Senior, Immaculate  
Conception



Mikayla Higgins  
Senior, Whitehaven



Kalisa Lee  
Senior, Collegiate  
School of Memphis



Kamran Lewis  
Senior, Memphis  
School of Excellence



Cortney Sheppard  
Senior,  
Harding Academy



Kirsten Thomas  
Senior, St. George's



Blanca Willis  
Senior, White Station



Yasmine Wooten  
Senior, Power Center  
Academy



Alexius Brunson  
Junior, Central



DeAndre Deener  
Junior, St. George's



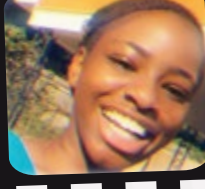
Terrell Embry  
Junior, Crosstown



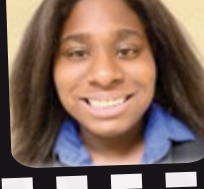
Jordan Greene  
Junior, Briarcrest



Jacob Milan  
Junior, East



Makhia Smith  
Junior, Central



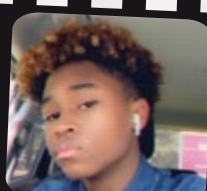
Zoe Tripp  
Junior,  
Middle College



Jonathan Akangbe  
Sophomore,  
White Station



Mayyadah Alzaben  
Sophomore,  
St. George's



Alonzo Daniels  
Sophomore, Central



Jacob Mackie  
Sophomore,  
Lake Cormorant

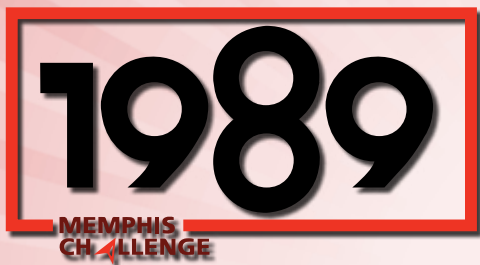


Daisy Rodriguez  
Sophomore,  
City University



Dai'ja Taylor  
Sophomore,  
Southwind





## JOIN THE 1989 SOCIETY

Help us reimagine Memphis Challenge as we expand our programming and enhance our impact.

In 1989, Memphis Challenge was founded by J.R. Pitt Hyde to inspire and develop future Memphis leaders. That same year, Anita Baker's hit, "Giving You the Best That I've Got," was the #1 single. We're proud to proclaim that, since its inception, Memphis Challenge has continued to GIVE YOU THE BEST THAT IT'S GOT!

The result is – today, there are more than 3,000 brilliant and bold Memphis Challenge alumni making their mark on Memphis and beyond. They attest to the value and relevance of MC programming.

In this virtual world of social isolation, Challengers need reassurance and guidance more than ever. We must innovate to fill the gaps, so that no one falls through. To help tailor, develop and present programming for these uniquely challenging times, we have created the 1989 Society Giving Circle. This initiative takes its inspiration from our founding year as reassurance that we are up to the task that lies ahead.

The goals for the Giving Circle are to:

- ♥ Increase Tech Solutions Scholarship Awards by 40 percent
- ♥ Host 10 webinars for collegiates
- ♥ Provide 250 self-care packages to Challengers and collegiates
- ♥ Provide mental health and stress management resources to Challengers and their families

Donors receive:

- ♥ Name included on the virtual wall, 1989 swag and/or video spotlight



To date, the 1989 Giving Society has raised \$15,000 to help us reach our goals. If you would like to join the 55 alumni and friends who have contributed, visit [www.memphischallenge.org](http://www.memphischallenge.org) to learn more and make your pledge.

## ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

- ♦ Initial Focus Groups
- ♦ Alumni Council
- ♦ Create programs targeted toward alumni
- ♦ Communications/execute a fundraising strategy

"Man, Memphis Challenge raised me. Taught me professionalism, introduced me to NSBE, and gave me friends who I connect with to this day!"  
– C. Barksdale, MC Class of 2010

"Memphis Challenge played an important role in my growth and development as a young woman. I am proud to be a member of the 1989 Society and give back."  
–R. Martin, MC Class of 2009

"MC gave me incredible opportunities and training for social and professional growth. Memphis Challenge will always be near and dear to me."  
– M. Tate, MC Class 2002

## COVID-19: A COLLEGE STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

In the fall of 2019, I was excited to begin my college experience at Xavier University in Louisiana, yet nervous at my course load and the challenges I would face. As challenging as my fall semester was, my spring semester was much more difficult. Immediately following our Mardi Gras break, we were informed that, due to COVID-19, we would all have to return home and finish the semester online. I was utterly disappointed. No one imagines their first year of college being interrupted by a global pandemic, yet I was left with a week to pack up my dorm room and say goodbye to my friends. I was stressed and frantic that week, but, once I was home, the adjustment was less overwhelming. I knew Xavier was taking precautions for its students, as every university should.

During the stressful time of quarantining, I found it hard to occupy my time inside. In order to stay sane, I made sure I spent some time outside, whether it was taking a walk or playing with my brother. That ensured that I got some sunlight. I also made sure I didn't spend all day in my room. I got up and walked around just for a change of scenery. I also started a job with Bridge Builders, and waking up at the same time everyday gave me some structure back to my life.

To my fellow collegiates, I encourage you to stay focused on your goals, short term and long term. Remember what you're working towards and stay motivated. This pandemic will pass, and we'll still be on track to achieve those goals. I was excited to return to school because, while I loved being home with my family, I experienced a sense of freedom at college, and I was excited to get back to it and my friends.

– Angela Carter, MC Class 2019



### FUNDERS

Programming made possible by the support of our partners who we thank for their commitment to inspiring and developing future Memphis leaders.

- ♦ Anonymous Donor
- ♦ Arts Memphis
- ♦ AutoZone
- ♦ Baptist Memorial Health Care Foundation
- ♦ Memphis Challenge Board of Directors
- ♦ Delta Dental Foundation
- ♦ Delta Boulé
- ♦ FedEx
- ♦ Friends, parents of Memphis Challenge
- ♦ Hyde Family Foundations
- ♦ Jack & Jill of America, Inc. Memphis Chapter
- ♦ First Horizon Foundation
- ♦ 1989 Society
- ♦ Shelby County Government
- ♦ University of Memphis TRIO-Upward Bound
- ♦ Women's Foundation for Greater Memphis

### MEMPHIS CHALLENGE

*Inspiring and developing future Memphis leaders.*

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