



The Big Red Magazine

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

AUGUST 1, 2021

Face To Face: Tito's Tigers On The Track Chasing Tokyo Olympics Glory

By FELICITY DARVILLE, first published in the Tribune.

St. Augustine's College Alumni Association (SACAA) president Cherelle Cartwright rang me, all excited after seeing Brent Stubbs' sports article announcing all five members of the 4x400 metre relay Olympic team for The Bahamas are St Augustine's College (SAC) alumna.

Her excitement comes not only because they are representations of the greatness of their school and their country, but because they are women. Shaunae Miller-Uibo, Doneisha Anderson, Megan Moss and Anthonique Strachan were originally named for the team, and most recently, Lacarthea Cooper has been named alternate, to participate in the Olympics in Tokyo scheduled to begin in ten days time.



"For a long time, women have been overlooked for the role they have played in building up this country in every aspect of society," she said.

"Here, we see five young ladies holding their own on an international stage. As women began to enter the fray in track and field, they upped the ante as they got out there and pursued their passion. As SAC students, I have watched these young ladies give their all on the track. They have opened the door for many behind them to show what these islands can produce. We are not even a million people in population and yet the calibre of athletes we produce is phenomenal!

"These five young women embody what SAC as an institution is all about – going out there, giving it your all, giving it your best. These ladies go fierce in competition, and it speaks to the legacy of our alma mater. We are built SAC tough; you have to respect the Red!"

Cherelle's enthusiasm led me to contact the father of Megan Moss and Assistant Coach at SAC, Tito Moss, to find out how he was feeling. He coached all five ladies at SAC, but he also has coaching experience with them in the private athletic arena. I learned that he saw something special in each of them early on. I also was touched by the relationship he nurtured with his daughter, who showed athletic prowess from an early age, and whom he has watched blossom into the athlete she is today.

In the track club circuit, Tito coached Shaunae and Anthonique at Club Monica, where he served as Assistant Coach for nine years. Megan also started at Club Monica, before moving to Red Line Athletics, a club Tito launched in 2018. Megan and Lacarthea are current members of Red Line. As a SAC coach for the past 15 years, Tito has had the opportunity to directly coach Doneisha as well.



Tito and Megan Moss.



He gave me a glimpse into his experience with each of them:

Shaunae - "When I started coaching with Club Monica, Shaunae had already won her World Youth and was on her way to winning her World Juniors. At that point, she was already a gold medalist for Carifta. She was very focused, very poised, very humble, very quiet. She was already an elite athlete and you saw at that young age that she was going to be a standout athlete. She was in grade ten at the time, I think. Sure enough, she lived up to that."

Anthonique - "Anthonique came to SAC in the ninth or tenth grade and did not finish, but in the three years she was there, she went from being just a great athlete to an outstanding athlete very quickly. She qualified for the Olympics while she was still in school, and she did not finish SAC; she turned pro as an 11th grader. She was poised and hard working and just like Shaunae, I knew she was going to be uber talented, way out there and special... something you don't see every day."

Doneisha - "I was responsible for helping recruit Doneisha to SAC. I think she came from TA Thompson Junior High. She was running the 400, 800 and 1200 metres. I was very instrumental in getting her over to SAC. I did not coach her in the private system, but as a SAC coach, I saw that she was hard working, and I got a sense from early on that she would be special. I enjoyed working with her. She was a year ahead of my daughter, Megan. In 2017 when my daughter won her first Carifta gold, Doneisha got bronze. So, Doneisha and Megan kind of came up together, as did Shaunae and Anthonique."

Lacarthia - "Lacarthia came to SAC from Freeport as a result of Hurricane Dorian. She told the school's administration that whoever trained Megan Moss, that's who she wanted to train with. She joined and has been working with me ever since – about two years now. She is just like a daughter to me. Some weekends, she stays with my family and I because her mom is from Freeport. She is focused and hard working and always wants to improve. In practice, she would want to work with the boys because she feels the girls are no push for her. Lacarthia is the youngest member of the relay team and the first athlete to make the Bahamas Olympic team having never been on a national team. She is presently in Costa Rica as a part of the NACAC under 18 team, and she qualified for every junior team.

Megan - "Megan is hard working, and she always knew what she wanted to do. She won gold in the under 17 category in Carifta. She broke Shaunae's Carifta record in 400 metres – that record was special to her knowing it put her in the company of one of her role models which was Shaunae.

"Each of these young ladies exhibited characteristics of wanting to be better and do what is necessary to get to the next level. All are humble, but they always knew within themselves that they were talented. But they are all beasts on the track!"

Tito's pride for his daughter's athletic achievements made him reflect on the very first signs of talent she exhibited. Megan is his eldest child. He and his wife Nekeva are also parents to a son, Morgan, who is heading into the tenth grade at SAC, and Madison, their youngest daughter, who is entering the ninth grade at SAC.

“When Megan was three years-old, my wife and I were taking her to Blue Lagoon,” he recalls.

“We were sitting on the dock on Paradise Island waiting for the boat to come and take us to go over to Blue Lagoon. Megan was there on the dock playing by herself, saying, ‘Get mark, get set, go!’ And she would break off running the dock from end to end. I said to my wife, this girl is going to be an athlete. My wife was like, ‘Yeah, right’. Sure, enough it turns out I was right. From a very young age, Megan exhibited the skills and talents of someone that we knew was going to be special. We also got that indication from her PE teacher in the fourth grade, Ms. Demeritte at St Francis, and Joseph. She said, ‘You need to get Megan into a programme. She beats all the girls and most of the boys save one or two.’ At that point we knew she was special.”



“Megan and I have always been close. She is my oldest and the first one to gravitate towards the sport of track and field. I would drop her to school and to practice, so we spent a lot of time together and we became very tight. We get along well. Whenever I coached with her and Club Monica and I saw things she needed to improve, I would ask Ms. Woodside the Head Coach to communicate that to Megan, because I wanted to maintain the distance between father, daughter, and coach. I didn’t want the roles overlapping. It was not until she was in the 11th grade that I started directly coaching her myself. I didn’t want us to be butting heads.

“Training for track and field is hard and you have to go hard at your athletes to really get them to buy in. So, I waited until she got older to directly coach her myself. To this day we have a close relationship. When she went off to college, I would hear from her every morning and every evening. She is studying Health Sciences with a minor in Hospital Administration at the University of Kentucky. She wants to be a Paediatric Cardiologist. She still calls me the same way twice a day and this is her second year of college. When she competed in her first Carifta Games, we would go on Youtube and look up her competitors and watch their races to prepare a great strategy. Every race she did, I recorded it and as a family, we would sit and review it – whether she won it or not. The father, daughter relationship we share is special, and that is still true to this day.”

Megan and her teammates are about to compete in the Olympics with high hopes of bringing home the gold for The Bahamas.

For Tito, there’s a special place in his heart for all of them: “The Olympics is the pinnacle of our sport. To know that as a coach, I played a part in their development – albeit at varying degrees for these ladies, seeing them make the Bahamas Olympic team is overwhelming. For some of them, my involvement in them reaching the pinnacle spot was more involved than others, but it’s a great honour. It made me feel good as a coach to know I played a vital role. As a coach, I don’t believe I am responsible for their talent, but it is a calling of mine to be involved in coaching and to know I helped to shape, motivate and encourage all five of them at some point really is special for me.”

During my years at SAC, I remember watching Tito race and make us proud to be members of the Big Red Machine. He ran the 400 and 800 metres and was the best in his age group. He made the Bahamas Games national team, earning three golds and one bronze medal, making a record in the 800 metres. In addition to coaching at SAC, Club Monica and starting his own successful track club, Red Line Athletics

with 75 athletes and counting, he was the Assistant Coach for the Central American and Caribbean (CAC) Youth Games in 2015. Two years earlier, he was certified as a USATF level 1 and 2 coach in Track and Field and Biomechanics. In 2019, he was the Assistant Coach for the Bahamas team for the North American, Central American and Caribbean Games (NACAC) which travelled to Mexico.

He believes SAC has been a breeding ground for athletic greatness because from its early days, sports were an integral part of its programme. Tito told me SAC had the first track on the island of New Providence, before the Queen Elizabeth Track and Field Stadium was built. Kids who showed athletic prowess – and could also handle the rigours of the academic programme – gravitated towards the school. He also pointed out that just as Megan has become a better athlete than he ever was, many SAC alumni who showed great athletic promise during their days, sent their children to be a part of the same institution, “decade after decade, creating a legacy where talent has beget talent”.

“As SACAA President, I could not pass this opportunity to celebrate what the school has produced,” Cherelle told me.

“This has never happened in the history of our country! SACAA supports these ladies and gives them all the love and honour they deserve as we cheer them on to the Olympics!”



From SAC to Tokyo - the 4x400 relay team is an all-St Augustine’s College line-up, with Lacarthea Cooper, left, being named alternate to join the team of Shaunae Miller-Uibo, Anthonique Strachan, Doneisha Anderson and Megan Moss.

History of Saint Mary's Hall

"In March 1946, at 70 years of age, John Cyril Hawes, architect and priest, (1876-1956) commenced working on what was to be his largest architectural undertaking in the Bahamas, St Augustine's College, Monastery and Church at Fox Hill, New Providence. Construction of St Augustine's College and the monastery commenced on April 12, 1946, with the foundation stone laid by the Auxiliary Bishop of New York, the Most Rev Stephen Donahue on July 11, 1946. The first stages of the college and monastery were completed in eleven months and consisted of two 160-foot-long blocks. The college and monastery were blessed by the Lord Abbot, the Right Rev Alcuin Deutsch on March 11, 1947.

In March 1947, Hawes laid the foundations of the two west towers of the future monastery church that was never completed. In 1949 - 50 Hawes continued work on the foundations and crypt of the monastery church, building and decorating ten altars and their retablos in typical Hawes style."

In 1953, St. Mary's Hall was completed to house the school's auditorium, classrooms, library, cafeteria, and science laboratories. St. Mary's Hall remained the college's main school complex until the college's second Headmaster Father Burton Bloms, O.S.B. engineered the building of the new school complex below the hill and initiated the Bahamas' first boarding school in 1965 (discontinued 1974).

Due to the St. Augustine's College and the St. Augustine's Monastery's interwoven Benedictine history, St. Mary's Hall was actively used by the college to hold most events. If St. Mary's Hall's walls could've talked, they would share elaborate tales about school dances, plays and music recitals, community town hall meetings and tales about being the grand hall for external school exams.

St. Mary's Hall along with St. Augustine's College was owned and operated by the Benedictines of the Bahamas. Currently, the college is operated as an independent school; whereas, St. Mary's Hall along with the St. Augustine's Monastery is owned and managed by the Roman catholic Archdiocese of Nassau.

In more recent times, parts of the monastery have been home to another institution, namely, Omega College. The original St. Augustine's College classrooms are once again being used as vessels for higher education. For a brief time, the hall also served as a hurricane shelter for the Fox Hill Community.

Despite the fact that inner chambers of St. Mary's Hall may seldom echo with young SAC voices, one can still hear the heavy footsteps of an athletic passerby, who continues to climb up and down the halls steep staircase perhaps continuing the school's cross-country tradition.



**Saint Augustine's Monastery and College,
Nassau, undated.**

Photo source: - vintagebahamas.com ©



“I Remember When...”

...I was in the 10th or 11th grade around 1970, SAC put on a production called “Stalag 13” which was based on a German Army World War II prisoner-of-war camp. In the play I had a small part as a German soldier where I had to dress in full costume. The organizers told us that we could not leave the backstage area of St. Mary’s Hall in costume as it would spoil the effect of the play, (which made sense), but I had to pee. And since there were no bathroom in the backstage, I was forced to use the next best option available which was to pee out the Eastern window of the backstage area which was right over the boarding houses for the family island students. I was younger back then, so it was definitely a strong stream of pee that I was later told splashed right in front of some residents. I do remember hearing someone shouting from outside, “that ain’t water, that’s piss!” Of course, I got in trouble. In the middle of the play, people bust into the back asking who was peeing out of the window. I quickly fessed up being the upright and honest fellow as I was. I could not tell a lie; it was I who pee’d out of the window. As my punishment instead of the strap, I had to give the public announcements over the P.A. system for a week.

— Paul, Class of ‘73

...So, I here at one jook jook convenience store off Fox Hill Road buying last minute lock down snacks. I’se in back of the moderately long ass line, about 4 feet from this broad behind nicely dressed lady.

Then whap, I recognized Sean Swain; a gentleman who was about 3 to 4 years my senior in high school. I hadn’t seen him in a minute; the last I heard about him, he was working some place in town at one type of big-time bank or something like that. I didn’t even know he lived out East. So, what’s so significant about this meeting? Well, if you had attended the high school that I had attended, one would have appreciated the existence of demigods: boys and girls who had unbelievable supernatural powers; nay, they had superpowers. Godlike beings who we youngsters worshipped and paid tribute to. Swain was a god in school!

In a land of mortals, where most of us could hardly walk a cross country without falling out, there existed the likes of Shaka Serville; the basketball phenomenon who could have outplayed, out scored, out rebound the likes of Magic Johnson and Larry Bird with ease. He was that good; a living legend whom everyone thought was a sure NBA draft pick; however, he decided to do law. Sighs. And then there were goddesses like Philippa Arnett, whom the Lord had made perfect...a true Valkyrie on the tracks, created to be admired. I still remember how we adolescent boys used to line up against the sport center’s gated fence to watch her shoot past us in perfect form as we energetically shouted her praises. Ok I just got excited...

In any event, back to Sean Swain; Swain stood about 5ft flat, a little taller than one of Tolkien’s hobbits; but though he was likkle, he was tallawa. A true giant that dwarfed any competition. We used to call him Carl Lewis; he was the fastest man in school; ranked high in the Bahamas’ track and field world; he had records upon records and medals upon medals. He was an inspiration for us short guys who were vertically challenged. Yes, seeing Swain excited me. Being in his presence reminded me of one of those Lord of the Ring trilogies where great things happened to little people.

— Cecil, Class of ‘94

Love on Campus

Some months ago, I saw a Valentines' Day meme on social media where it was said "I want to experience that type of love like how SACAs love SAC". The passion, the desire, romance, and nostalgia that conjures up in SACAs sentiments that allow them to love faithfully and unconditionally their alma mater is what the person is referring to. Quite a number of alumni have found that type of love by pursuing relationships with fellow graduates and in fewer instances with teachers.

It was my 3rd year at SAC. I never considered myself to be an attractive girl or popular one for that matter. Often times I was teased by friends for not being developed as voluptuously as my female counterparts in the "bust" region earning the nickname "mosquito bites". So, to my surprise when a guy in a higher grade level sent me a love letter expressing his affection, I was ecstatic! I read that letter over and over that day at the beginning and end of every period. Can I tell you this girl was beaming! Why? Because he was handsome, and I had a crush on him too! A "friend" of mine saw me smiling to myself while reading the letter, snatched it out of my hand and ran away. I felt violated and was embarrassed but thought she would have at least respected my need for privacy. She didn't. Even though she returned the letter to me, she went and broadcasted it all over Upper Campus. She did not stop there but went to the guy, teasing him about the contents of his heart that he had entrusted me to safeguard. He was angry, though rightly so, and felt betrayed. He also stopped speaking to me and avoided me like the plague. Though my poor young heart was broken and pined after my lost love for a while, we never spoke about it. I never got the chance to explain. Do I think I deserved it? No! All the same, I understood. Just like that my hopes of a romantic union was dashed before it got out of the starting block. After graduation, for a brief moment I became romantically involved with one of my best friends from SAC. He was handsome, caring and we shared so much. I could speak to him about anything. I loved him so much so that we got caught up in our feelings and went a bit further than we should have at his parents' house. A moment of pleasure shortly became dashed with a bucket of cold water as we weighed the consequence of our actions. We didn't talk about it like we spoke about everything else. We were afraid to lose the bond of our friendship and allowed ourselves to drift apart. He could very well have been my love story. I can't say that I haven't thought about it many times. Who knows what the future holds? Alas, Those are my stories and my experiences but they're not the *only stories those sacred walls hold*.

Others like myself, have tried their hand at love on campus and failed. Some connections were made after graduation, some have resulted in offspring but no marriages. Some unions were not limited to students/alumni, some were between teachers and students. Today we celebrate those who loved then and are still loving now. Today we celebrate alumni, as well as teacher and alumni marriages that are standing the test of time. The connection has happened for them, and they will tell you, their story.

ANDREW AND PATRICE BURROWS

CLASS OF 1971

In June of 1966 as I was leaving St. Thomas Moore School for summer break, I was given a letter for my parents. The contents of the letter was that I was to report to St. Augustine's College in July for summer school and that as of September I would be a student of St. Augustine's College. At that time St. Augustine's was an all-boy's school, where the priest were in charge. Most of the teachers were priest. As an altar boy I admired the priest and what they did, and it thought that one day I would be a priest.



As I prepared for my first day of school I said a prayer, "Lord I want to become a priest but if that is not your will, please send me a good woman to be my wife".

In 1968 the girls from Xavier's College moved to the campus of St. Augustine' College. The first-year classes were still boys only and girls only. In the second year we began to have classes together.

In form 3 one day at lunch time, I went with some of my friends over to where some girls were eating lunch, I saw a beautiful young lady in the group, after she left, I asked who she was, I was told her name was Patrice Carroll, I also found out she had a boyfriend. In May I received an invitation to attend her birthday party. I spent the whole night just watching her. I was the last person to leave the party because my brother was picking me up and he was late. Patrice came out and asked if someone was picking me up, I said yes, when my brother picked me up on the ride home, I told him she was going to be my wife. He laughed at me.

In form 4 we had some classes together and I found out that she and her boyfriend had broken up, but some other boys were trying their hand. I remember just before Christmas that year a dance was to be held at St. Mary's Hall, one or two boys asked her to go, she told them they would have to ask her father, I guess they were afraid. So, I asked her if I could take her to the dance, she told me the same thing, my response was to ask him what time I can come to see him. The next day she told me that I could come one Sunday. I went and asked Mr. Carroll could I please take his daughter to the dance he said yes and as they say the rest is history.



Patrice told me about her prayer "Lord please send me a good husband." We graduated in May 1971, and we married on May 11th, 1972. We had our share of ups and downs or highs and lows but 49 years later our love is stronger than ever.

The Lord has still allowed me to serve him in ministry as a Deacon.

We have five beautiful children, one daughter and four sons. Six grandchildren, one granddaughter and five grandsons.

Married 1972, 49 years.

Patrick and Yvette Ferguson

Class of 1992

It was in 1986 (7th grade), that our paths first crossed on the hallowed campus of St Augustine's College. We would spend the next six years sharing four homerooms and eventually graduating together in 1992.

We both journeyed on to the then College of the Bahamas, and it was there that the love connection was made. How we actually got together still remains a debate between us. Patrick's story is that I threw myself in front of his mom's burgundy Dodge Plymouth to get a ride, and his attention. My version is that he always happened to be around campus whenever I got out of class (by the way, he had already graduated). I did eventually accept his offer of a ride home, and an invitation to dinner.



He was such a gentleman! As we spent more time together, I soon realized that he was also very loving, considerate, and humble, a protector, a provider and a romantic! We dated for several years, got engaged and married on December 25th, 2004. Yes, Christmas Day! Our marriage has been the best Christmas present that I ever received. It's had its ups and downs, triumphs, and heartbreaks, but we're closer today, and as in love as we've ever been. God has blessed us with two beautiful children, loving family, and friends, fulfilling careers and most importantly, a happy home.

Our son Caleb is currently an honor roll student in grade 9. He has also been chosen for the Bahamas Swimming Carifta team, two years consecutively.

Married 2004, 16 years.

Look Forward to additional SACAS "Love on Campus" stories in our next issue of The Big Red Magazine.

To have your story included email us at thesacalumni@gmail.com.

Also, if you know of SAC alumni couples, email us: their names, graduation years and their contacts.

WE'RE LOOKING FOR WRITERS!

Share your thoughts, support and congratulations, invite fellow alumni into your SAC memories or pay tribute to a fellow alumnus!

Call us at (242) 397-1744 Or email thesacalumni@gmail.com for more information.

Articles will be featured in our upcoming E-Newsletter or on our website www.thesacalumniassociation.org