



# The Big Red Magazine

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## Celebrating Alumnae in business: Academy of Women Entrepreneurs

It is no secret the world over that there is no equal parity between men and women. In 2015, world leaders adopted the UN Women's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). SDG 5 of that agenda seeks to remedy gender inequality via economic empowerment of women, providing access to health care and eliminating violence against women and escalating conflicts. They note that achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is integral to all its goals, since women are more affected and gender discrimination is holding too many women back.

The United States is among countries that adopted this agenda and has sought to extend a hand to aid this effort. As a result, The Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE), a U.S. State Department program, was started in 2019, to support female entrepreneurs around the world. This program, equips women with the tools they need to create and grow their own businesses, raise capital, and effectively network with other successful business owners. The U.S. Embassy Bahamas in partnership with the Access Accelerator, Small Business Development Centre of The Bahamas (SBDC) positions all AWE graduates to receive continued support long after graduation. Additionally, cohorts that complete the program have the opportunity to compete for seed funding awards of \$5,000. In just two years of the program, 11 women have received seed funding totaling \$55,000 (4 cohorts in the inaugural year and 7 cohorts in this year's graduating class. Over 200 Bahamian women have graduated this program.

Building on their inaugural year's partnership, The U.S. Embassy welcomed two additional partners to the AWE program. The Bahamas Chamber of Commerce sponsored one of the \$5,000 seed funding grants along with a year's complimentary membership at the Chamber for all seven finalists. Additionally, The Bahamas Development Bank has set aside \$250,000 in micro-loans for all qualified AWE graduates from both the 2020 and 2021 cohorts.

The AWE program has certainly already seen an uptake in participants of SAC alumnae. The Inaugural Cohort of AWE graduates consisted of three (3) SAC alumnae: Nadene Charlton, Jannifer Thurston and Cherelle Cartwright. Among this year's list of cohorts were 9 alumnae women entrepreneurs, two (2) of which are also AWE Program Facilitators: Danielle Gibbs, Marion Petty-Stubbs, Lisa McCartney, Nina Greene, Earnessa Carey, Lashan Gray, Nadia Bain, and Facilitators/Entrepreneurs: Regina Smith and Ria Butler. We will feature some of our alumnae and their businesses.

### **Jannifer Thurston SAC Graduate class of 1983- CEO of A Solutions Agency**

Jannifer, with over 25 years experience, brings a wealth of knowledge in Marketing, Event Planning, and business knowledge in general to this venture. The former Kalik Brand manager created successful marketing campaigns which resulted in doubling of the brand's sales volume. Forced to pivot during Covid 19, she has worked with music legends duo Paul & Tanya Hanna on their Celebration of Love, Life and Music virtual concert as well as their Inspire Foundation's Songwriters Music camp for kids. Currently, she is focused on creating a food tour which will incorporate, indigenous Bahamian



food and beverage, while touring historic and picturesque landmarks. She envisions that creating unique cultural tourism offerings will be financially beneficial, while adding much needed inventory to the cultural tourism offerings of our country. The former Vice President of the SAC Alumni Association highlighted a few of her biggest projects among which undoubtedly is the Inaugural and 2nd installment of the SACAA Lighthouse Awards and Gala. As a part of Craze Concepts, Julien Believe's DINGOLAY video production /event, Bahamas Masqueraders 2015 Carnival launch event and Fusion Mas Bands rebranding and relaunch in 2016. As a part of Heineken International /Commonwealth Brewery from 2009 to 2015, she created and staged numerous events the most popular of which was the internationally highlighted annual Junkanoo Fan fest, Beer fest, which had over 7,000 attendees, and the Festival of the Bahama Islands. In February of this year, was held the second Installment of the Bahamas Junkanoo Art and Music Festival, which was the first true art festival whose sole focus was monetizing our iconic national celebration of Junkanoo. She has an Associate of Arts degree in Accounting, a Bachelor of Business Administration in International Finance and a Master's in Business Administration. She says her determination to succeed stems from a desire to leave a legacy of financial stability for her six (6) children whom she dearly loves.

### **Regina Smith SAC Graduate class of 2004 - Firehouse Spice Company**

Regina is the Owner of Firehouse Spice Co- which manufactures seasonings, sauces, and condiments with locally sourced produce. She is currently a Project Officer at Bahamas Development Bank and is in her second (2) year as a Program Facilitator and Mentor of the AWE Bahamas Program. She is also the Co- Founder Grow Bahamas Ltd, a culinary incubator for processors, farmers, manufacturers, chefs, and foodies.



### **Mrs. Danielle Gibbs SAC Graduate class of 2006- Couples Paradise**

Danielle has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Forensic Science Minor in Criminology and Criminal Investigations. Upon her return home she has worked in various industries and currently works full time in the Financial Sector. She is co-owner of Couple's Paradise. Couple's Paradise was launched in 2018 and specializes in sexual wellness and health, adult novelties, lingerie and entertainment services for birthday parties, and bachelorette parties etc. Her current role in Couple's Paradise spans to Special Advisor as well, where she researches potential vendors, identifies viable collaboration and analyzing the competition. Danielle has helped to grow the company from \$0 from its inception to over \$100,000 in revenue last year. She has been an intricate part of the development and growth of the entertainment services for the brand which brings in 20% of the company's overall revenue.



She

### **Marion Petty-Stubbs SAC Graduate class of 1987- Island Therapy Candles & Soaps**

Marion is a wife and mother of two amazing young adults. She also has years of experience as a hotelier in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry. Out of her love and passion for candles came her home-based business venture... ISLAND THERAPY CANDLES & SOAPS. She started making natural, organic soaps because of her personal experiences with skin irritations and no relief with prescriptions that had ingredients she didn't recognize. As for her candles, she says "Our candles are hand poured using natural soy wax which is non-toxic, environment and pet-friendly. The scents are clean, inviting, and relaxing!! We use natural healing herbs, plants and essential oils and keep it simple."



### **Lisa R. McCartney SAC Graduate class of 1989-The Online Training Authority**

Lisa has spent the early years of her career as a science and family life high school teacher. A few years later, she left traditional education and pursued her and her husband, Kino's ('89), dream to homeschool their children, Krysten and Daniel. During that time, she sought to qualify herself as a human behavioral consultant with Personality Insights, Atlanta, Georgia. As a trained consultant, Lisa has helped others to become aware of their behavioral pattern, as well as identify the patterns of others. Therefore, not only is Lisa a trained educator and behavioral consultant, but she fulfilled another dream and became a published children's author of the book "Three Young Pigs", which teaches children that right choices lead to great reward. Lisa serves as the Treasurer of the Bahamas Homeschool Association, which seeks to set a standard for homeschooling in the Bahamas and provide resources for homeschooling families.





In October 2020, during the pandemic, she continued to pursue a God-inspired idea and launched The Online Training Authority (TOTA), an online platform that helps trainers, coaches, counsellors, and tutors to increase their client reach and profitability, while helping clients to locate some of the best trainers in the Bahamas and the Caribbean. Through this platform, The Online Training Authority (TOTA) provides a home for trainers, tutors, counsellors, and coaches. They are able to register on the website ([www.theonlinetrainingauthority.com](http://www.theonlinetrainingauthority.com)), upload a picture, and describe the training that they provide. Persons seeking a tutor, coach or a trainer can visit the website, click on the trainer, tutor, or coach of choice, and be connected to that individual. Additionally, Lisa was one of seven winners of the AWE program's business pitch competition.

### **Nadia L. Bain SAC Graduate class of 2005 - Service Culture Firm**

Nadia is a Talent Acquisition Specialist and she's also the Human Resources Partner at Service Culture Firm: a partnership with her husband Rodney Bain Jr. Service Culture Firm is a management consulting firm established in 2017. They serve individuals, entrepreneurs, and businesses by offering a wide range of products centered around Human Resources, Web Design, Social Media, and Brand Management. She has studied Human Resources Management, is a Certified Human Resources Professional and Certified Virtual Speaker. She enjoys giving back to her community and is a past Rotaractor, Special Olympics Coach, and current Club Administration Director for the Rotary Club of Nassau. Nadia has also provided Career Development Coaching for the Fox Hill Community Center as well as the Queen's College Centre for Continuing Education. She is also one of the seven winners of the AWE program's business pitch competition.



### **Nadene Charlton SAC Graduate class of 1986- HR Career Centre**

Nadene's passion for human resources can be traced back to her pre-professional years. Whether as a member of her St. Augustine's High School's student counsel or as a part of her campus' international club's new member's interview team at University of Miami, she has always been on a human resources path from the start. Why? It's simple. She loves getting people excited about their careers and the world of opportunities in today's workplace. She loves connecting exceptional companies and exceptional employees!

Nadene serves as General Manager of HR Career Centre, a HR Consulting Firm, bringing over 20 years of HR experience to the team. Prior to joining HR Career Centre, she managed the Human Resources function in small to large-sized companies in various industries including financial services, hospitality and banking in The Bahamas and Turks & Caicos Islands. Currently, Nadene leads the HR Consulting and Support team, serving as an escalation point for HR clients. Nadene helps client's identity and address their HR needs throughout their businesses. She supports a diverse client base in a variety of industries. Her areas of expertise include compliance and best practices, HR infrastructure, and policy and procedure development. She also leads the Training & Development team.



Nadene earned a B.Sc. in Psychology, and MSc. in Human Resources Management. She is also certified in HR management with PHR and SHRM-CP certifications. She is married and has two children.

### **Cherelle Cartwright SAC Graduate class of 1991- Mama Sassy's Gourmet Foods**

Mama Sassy's was started a few years ago rather by accident, as a result of throwing shade at a friend who often came by asking for food but never bringing anything to contribute to the meal. The friend came by a few days later with huge sack of goat peppers and a note to send some of whatever she made to them. Since Cherelle started the venture, her products have been featured in the Jamaican Gleaner newspaper as well as the local Bahamian newspapers. One of her pepper sauces/ marinade was a winner at the Tru Tru Bahamian festival. Mama Sassy's boast a line of 14 artisanal products made from locally sourced raw materials. Some of the products were selected to be sold at the Dubai expo this October as part of the contingency of Bahamian local made products. Already in a few niche markets, Cherelle is also looking to expand her brand even further over the next few months. Cherelle has been able to have many of her



products tested at an FDA approved lab as a result of grant money she has won totaling \$10,000 half of which from a Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Export Business plan competition and the other half, as a Pitch Competition winner in last year's Inaugural AWE program. Cherelle wears many hats in addition to being an up-and-coming entrepreneur. She is a talented professional recording artist/ singer with over 20 years in the business singing at local hotels, including Atlantis and international venues, private functions, and concerts. She is the Host of Bahamian Arts & Entertainment show which is available on Youtube via RBNTV Networks. She is mom to two (2) children and currently serving her second term as President of the SAC Alumni Association.

The SAC Alumni Association wishes all alumnae cohorts of the Academy of Women Entrepreneurs an abundance of success in their business ventures and a heartfelt thank you to the United States Embassy Bahamas and strategic partners for undertaking this program to empower and uplift economically our Bahamian women.

# Face To Face: Alumni and the Pandemic

The amount of COVID-19 deaths have risen steadily in the past several weeks, so much so that almost every Bahamian knows someone that has succumbed to the virus. It is rampant, and merciless. In a small population like the Bahamas, the effects of the disease have hit home for many.

The past several weeks were shocking for me as well. First, my schoolmate, the bubbly and effervescent Stephanie Plakaris passed away. She was a well-known passport office worker, always willing to help others. We attended St Augustine's College (SAC) together, and she maintained that upbeat attitude all the years I knew her. She is survived by her children, Mayor Gibson Jr and Samaiya; fiancée, Mayor Gibson; parents, Stephan Plakaris and Christina Williams; and many others.



The next schoolmate to pass away was even more shocking. Dr Charles Edward Wildgoose, affectionately known to us as "Eddie", was in my graduating class, SAC Class of 1995. He had a satirical sense of humor and loved to look at the other side of the coin. He had no issues going against the grain, but he always remained true to his virtues. I looked forward to his almost daily contributions to our chat group.

We all knew that he had started his own practice in Exuma, along with his wife, Danzara. They set up Di-Ara Comprehensive Medical Center, which quickly became a vital source of medical care for the islanders. He and his wife relished in the beauty of island life with their children, Diyari and Azarand.

Eddie graduated from the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus' Bio-Chem programme with his MBBS degree. He did his internship at Princess Margaret Hospital and ended up serving more than a decade with the Obstetrician and Gynecology Department. He was there just after the delivery of two of my sons and was able to check up on us while we were on the ward. He also worked part time at several private clinics including Eastern Medical and the Walk-in Medical Clinic.

There was a collective shock in our SAC Class of 1995 group when we found out that the reason Eddie hadn't messaged in a few days is because we wouldn't be able to receive a voice note or text from him again.

During the week he was laid to rest, I got the news of the passing of another two schoolmates. Both were at SAC during the years that I attended, and so I knew them by face and also by profession as adults. They were both beautiful women inside and out and so there was another collective school shock at their passing. Dr lanthe Cartwright Bastian, Class of 2000 and Sergeant Krystal Blatch, Class of 1990.



lanthe was a well-loved, caring pediatrician. Most recently, she worked with the pediatric associates at the Caves Shopping Plaza. Her passing was tragic for all who heard of her. She was seven months pregnant and mother to two young children. She was airlifted to Florida for treatment, but she succumbed on her birthday.

Her devoted husband, Demetres Bastian and her sons Kai and Kellen will now have to cover their loving arms around a baby girl, while dealing with the loss of a wife and mother. Doctors were able to save her baby, and she is said to be surviving well in neonatal intensive care.



Sergeant 2125 Krystal Blatch was a devoted member of the Royal Bahamas Police Force. During her career, she was attached to the Western Division, Grand Bahama; Airport Division; Mobile Division; Exuma Division; Police Canteen and Fire Services Division. She was enlisted into the force in 1991. She was promoted to Corporal in 2005 and to Sergeant in 2007. Commissioner of Police Paul Rolle referred to her as a dedicated officer as he offered condolences to her family.

Families all over the Bahamas have been rocked by Covid-19. We have seen families losing multiple members in the same time frame. Families are being ripped apart in this pandemic, leaving pain and severe heartbreak. The effects of this will last a lifetime for many.

Dr Tyrone “Butch” Bartlett, who spoke out recently after he contracted Covid-19, recently contacted me. Initially, as a friend, he advised me against getting vaccinated. He came out publicly after falling ill to the virus to encourage people to get vaccinated in order to save lives. His entire family contracted it, and he believes they were able to survive due to excellent hospice care at home and a strict regimen he implemented for their recovery. He contacted me to share a poem he wrote as death knocked on his door. He was able to slam that door and survive, but it took everything in him:

**First Published in the Tribune, Face to Face with Felicity Darville, Media Specialist, Therapist**

Life devolves  
To endless battle  
Space and time  
Contracts within  
To a stage  
Where dreams unravel  
Falling where  
Nightmares begin  
  
Fear reduces  
To survival  
Breath the prize  
Fought for to gain  
Black the sky  
That presses downward  
Strength sought  
Where there’s only pain  
  
Relentless is  
This raging monster  
Ravenous  
It’s lust for life  
Having none

My spark it covets  
Like a fruit  
Hanging and ripe  
  
I defend  
What’s mine and sovereign  
Burning bright  
My spark aflame  
My life not yet  
Claimed not fallen  
Surrendering not  
This ground I gain  
  
I repel  
Death’s grim advances  
Striking as  
It fades then falls  
I take back  
My life it gathered  
No longer  
Beneath its thrall  
  
Clouds break  
And the sky is opened  
As the sun

Greets me below  
With victory  
Assures and granted  
I breathe deep  
Life’s precious flow  
  
Now restored  
To form and function  
Death’s retreat  
A welcome sight  
I send cries  
Towards the heavens  
Thanking God  
Who spared my life  
  
Grateful for  
Faith validated  
Saved by light  
I am restored  
Thankful for prayers  
Asked and granted  
I claim life  
As my reward

Dr. Tyrone Bartlett

# “I Remember When...”

...When I was in SAC in the seventies, I contend that Sister Rita was the first to bring the dance ministry to religious settings in the Bahamas through her "interpretative" dancing that she was proud to display in religion classes to the music of Cat Stephen's morning has broken. Other than for rushing for collection or catching the spirit dancing in church was frowned upon back then no one thought that dance ministries would eventually catch on like wildfire in Bahamian Churches. Now it is a mainstay and thought by many to be the only ministry keeping young people especially teen girls in church. I see Sister Rita as the pioneer and innovator of choreographed dance to themed recorded music in religious services in the Bahamas, as she often performed her interpretative dance in masses held in the rec room of the monastery.

— Darius, Class of '77

Brother Henry's muffins. Muffins and orange juice was the after-school snack (with Vinnette H Gaitor).

I remember NEVER going BEHIND the cafe when I did cross country! And it took me the WHOLE 2 periods haha! Again, with Vinnette.

I remember the ONLY time I went to detention (grade 9) was for being late to Mme. Cox's French class because she was tired of us (the entire class) always coming late from PE. As soon as we (yes again with Vinnette) got to the door, our classmates they told us (as they were leaving) Mme. was sending everyone to Mr. Kraft's office. The only person I remembered not getting detention was a girl whose name I'm not remembering now but I can see her face!

On the day of detention, it was the ONE day my mother decided to pick up early and my brother wasn't the one in detention and one of our class clowns. I don't think he was in my French class though but still amazed he wasn't in there for some other infraction. Boy did he have fun laughing at us though!

Lots of laughs!

— Julie Ritchie Class of '90



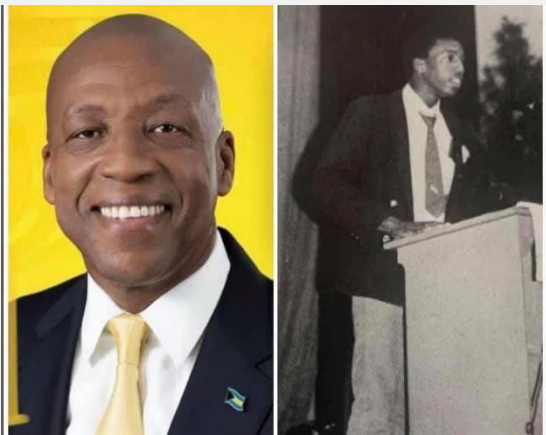
# Alumni in Politics

Bahamians elected a new government on 16th September 2021. The Progressive Liberal Party (PLP), won 32 seats in the House of Assembly and formed the new government while the Free National Movement (FNM), won 7 seats and became the official opposition.

As usual, several SAC alumni contested the general elections. The SAC Alumni Association recognized 15 alumni who offered themselves for election. In a series of social media posts, the Association juxtaposed senior pictures of the candidates with their official election profile photographs. A short biography of each candidate accompanied the photographs.

SAC alumni contesting this year's general elections and highlighted were Jeffrey Lloyd (69); Fred Mitchell (70); Dr. Hubert Minnis (71); Alfred Sears (72); Yvette Prince, (80); Celi Moss, (83); Chad Rutherford, (83); Fontella Chipman-Rolle, (85); Garth Maynard-Roseboro, (86); Michael Halkitis (87); Luisa Wells-Jorin, (88); Drumeco Archer (89); Christopher Saunders, (93); Shanendon Cartwright, (93) and Leslia Brice, (95).

The following SAC alumni were successful in winning seats in the House of Assembly:



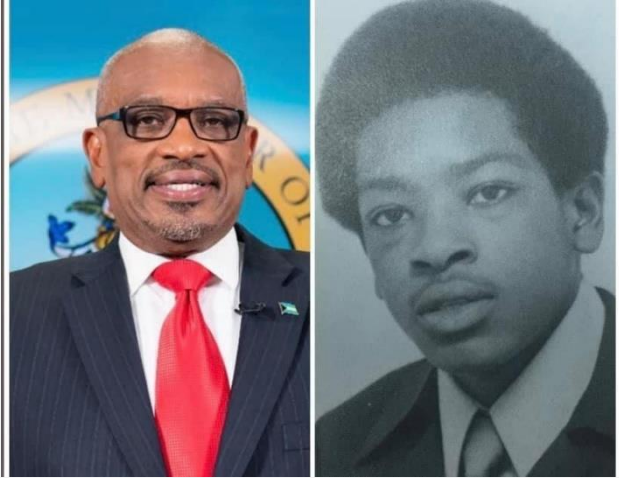
Alfred Sears, Ft. Charlotte (Minister of Works)



Frederick Mitchell, Fox Hill (Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Public Service)



Leslia Brice, SeaBreeze



Dr. Hubert Minnis, Killarney (Leader of the Opposition)



Shanendon Cartwright, St. Barnabas.



Michael Halkitis although not winning his seat was named a PLP senator and Minister of Economic Affairs/ Senate Leader of Government Business.

The SAC Alumni Association wishes all Members of Parliament a fruitful tenure. St. Augustine's College produces champions, trailblazers, and nation builders. Our alumni shape the direction and the course of The Bahamas.

# President's Column

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION Q & A

## **IF I GRADUATED FROM SAC AND I'M ALREADY AN ALUMNUS/ALUMNA, WHY DO I HAVE TO PAY DUES?**

Article III Section 4 of our Constitution states that "Every member, with the exception of Honorary members, shall pay to the Association, a subscription of \$60 per annum."

This provision has been in the Constitution prior to my being elected to the association and evidences that the original framers of the constitution desired it to follow a dues paying model.

It is my belief that this was enacted to equitably allocate donations from alumni. Collectively with alumni giving a fixed minimal amount, more funding can be garnered for various projects. For example, there are just about 8,000 SAC Alumni. When donations for various projects are required or requested fewer give and the few that give end up disproportionately contributing more to make up for those who do not contribute. It places the burden on those few. Whereas if we take into consideration getting \$60 in dues from at least 1,000 of our alumni, collectively we have raised about \$60,000 to contribute to any venture we wish to support. Imagine if we were to get participation from all of our alumni. We can easily raise almost \$500,000 which can be used to facilitate initiatives at our alma mater as well as programs for our alumni base. Economically we would be positioned to do far more than we have ever done to date. Some of the things we wish to establish are tuition grants for prospective and current students to attend SAC, continuing education programs, endowment fund to manage donations, alumni assistance funding, upgrading at SAC, a permanent office or building for our alumni association to conduct its activities as well as other projects we have placed on our long-term agenda.

Prior to this year, dues support has been dismally low when we factor in the number of our alumni base. However, this year though there is still plenty room for growth, we are encouraged as we have seen an uptick in membership. Hands down the main revenue stream for the association remain our Lighthouse Awards & Gala Ball.

Upon paying an annual subscription to the association alumni are considered "FINANCIAL" members which allows them access to certain benefits and /or privileges.

As financial members alumni:

1. Receive a personalized alumni privilege card
2. Receive member discounts with selected businesses
3. Complimentary tickets for specific alumni events & early access to tickets (Gold/Platinum members)
4. Receive discounts on select alumni merchandise
5. VIP Access to Gold and Platinum membership options which include gifts
6. Receive an annual financial report on the association as presented at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
7. Permitted to vote during elections, and contribute to decisions or initiatives of the association
8. Permitted to run for a position on the Executive board of the association
9. Option to establish a grant named in your honor

Moving forward, as we try to take our association to the next level, we implore more alumni to become involved. We need everyone to rise up and contribute financially via paying dues and donate whatever time, treasure, or talent they can. The change we wish to see must start with us. Our strength lies in our unity and coming together.



President,  
Cherelle Cartwright





# WE SALUTE YOU!



The SAC Alumni Association salutes alumna Patricia Chatti proprietor of Cia Monet Organic Candles Soaps & Scents 100% soy candles that double as massage and tanning oils

Cia Monet  
CANDLES SOAPS & SCENTS



Join us at our  
**POP UP**  
location

**SOAPS**  
**SOY CANDLES**  
WITH ESSENTIAL OILS  
& MORE!

- ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY
- DOUBLE AS MASSAGE OILS
- VEGAN
- BURNS 60+ HOURS
- BIODEGRADABLE
- OVER 60 SCENTS
- HANDCRAFTED ORGANIC SOAPS

#supportlocal  
#shopsmallbusinesses  
#buybahamian



POP UP

Cia Monet Brands extends 5% for candles soaps and bath accessories and 10% on all designer items from boutique



# 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](mailto:thesacalumni@gmail.com) for more information.

*Articles will be featured in our upcoming E-Newsletter or on our website [www.thesacalumniassociation.org](http://www.thesacalumniassociation.org)*