

Features 7: A Humbler Learner – Sara J. Doyle

By Nicole Harris

At DePaul University there are many ways to get involved with both campus and student life: joining student organizations, getting on-campus jobs, and volunteering to name a few. However, for a select few individuals these common outlets are not enough to sustain their desire to be involved and help their peers.

In every dorm across campus you will meet trained students who bring fun-filled events containing exploration, diversity, and learning to their residents. These individuals are known as Resident Advisors, R.A. for short. RAs not only post information about the services offered on campus and events hosted by student organizations, but they also serve as confidants for the residents in their respective halls.

RAs serve as your “go to people,” but one might wonder whom they go to when they become overwhelmed with their hectic lives. The answer would be their Residential Director (RD). RDs are full-time staff who live amongst students in the halls. These individuals are responsible for RAs, residents, and the overall safety of the residential community at DePaul University.

In this issue of *Onyx* our featured staff member is Sara J. Doyle, the Residential Director for the University Apartment Communities (UAC). During an exclusive interview with Doyle, I was able to get a more in-depth understanding of the woman behind residential living.

Sara J. Doyle, who describes herself as “restorative, comedic, and abstract”, was born in Queens, NY where her family lived for a short while until they moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan. After completing high school she enrolled in Western Michigan University (WMU), becoming a fighting Bronco and choosing to study History with intentions of pursuing a career in secondary education. Once Doyle obtained her Bachelor’s Degree from WMU she continued her education at Michigan State University where she studied Student Affairs Administration.

When asked what led her to pursue a career in Higher Education Sara stated, “After realizing I did not wish to be a high school history teacher anymore I began to reminisce on my days at WMU.” Doyle continued, “I was largely involved in campus life. I was initiated in Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., a member of the gospel choir, on the planning committee for homecoming, and involved in an array of other student activities. It was these experiences that led to my discovery of wanting to develop students in higher education.”

Doyle is the only Black woman who serves in her capacity on campus, leading her to possess a more in-depth perspective on the Black Community at DePaul. When asked

how she would describe the Black student community at DePaul Doyle declares, “Amazing! I see students who choose to benefit from the opportunities they have and are supportive of each other. I see a lot of mentorship among students as well, which is inspiring. I love seeing students paying it forward and lifting each other up.” This comment is inspiring, for me personally, because even though DePaul’s Black community may seem small, we find ways to make ourselves present while also making sure we lend a helping hand to our fellow students of color.

As we concluded our interview I asked Sara to venture back to her days at WMU and share with our readers one of the most profound experiences she had during undergrad. Sara had trouble explaining only one specific experience, but eventually shared the following; “I specifically remember my first day in my African-American Theater course. My professor started by stating, ‘We were going to discuss many topics none of you have heard before.’ He continued, ‘Even if you are African American, in this class - don’t think you have one up on the others in the course.’ This comment allowed me to realize there is always room to learn.”

This is something we all can relate to as college students. Even though we are expected to know more than a high school student, in many instances this mind set enables us to miss out on knowledge. However, we must remember as we journey through our college careers, there is always more we can learn. Sara stated, “This professor taught me how to be a humble learner, and this is the key to knowledge.” The ability to learn humbly will allow us to grasp new ideas, and further lead us to understand and appreciate what we have learned.