



November 2023

The PANTHER

SERVING CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY WITH PRIDE

THE 'CONTAGIOUS' PASSION OF HOMECOMING

DAMAIA DAVIS, Reporter

Claflinites expect an exciting week of events, according to a homecoming breakdown given by Dr. Arthur Doctor during a Nov. 2 conference.

The campus has been buzzing about the Nov. 11-19 activities, from homecoming games to the concert lineup.

Doctor, dean of students, said homecoming is a time to embrace and celebrate Claflin's culture.

"The pride that is associated with this university, I would stack up against any other HBCU or PWI because people are so connected to Claflin," Doctor said.

"It's a time for community and family."

Claflin is known for its big alumni involvement, something Doctor said is part of what makes homecoming season at the university so special.

"I think homecoming here at Claflin is beneficial and impactful because our students get to see the generations and generations of alumni that come back and see their passion," Doctor said.

"For me, that is contagious to our students to see themselves or where they will be in the next few years after they graduate from the university."

The Clemson graduate said that during his time at Claflin, he has become a part of this energy.

"I look forward to homecoming here at Claflin because I know so many familiar faces and I feel like I've been welcomed into the Claflin family as well," Doctor said.

"That's what Claflin diversity is. To me, it's about family, not just Claflin alums but also extended family."

"Everyone can see themselves having an experience here at Claflin," Doctor said.

The SGA aimed to keep this tradition when planning the activities for students.



Claflinites celebrate the "Pantherville" homecoming. (Special to the Panther)

The full schedule can be found on the group's Instagram page and at the Panther website: claflin.edu/news-events/the-panther.

LATRICIA JONES, Reporter

SAB kicked off Claflin University's "Pantherville" homecoming with a Kiki Ball.

The event is related to LGBTQ culture and is designed to provide a safe space for people to express themselves. The "Pantherville" theme is derived from rapper J. Cole's "Dreamville" album.

Sunday, Nov. 12, is the official start with the crowning of Mister and Miss Homecoming. A late-night meltdown follows.

"Our students have been begging for a late-night meltdown," said Dr. Arthur Doctor, dean of students.

With Claflin basketball teams facing two different opponents during homecoming week, Monday is the day to pay last respects to the foes' mascots.

"We're trying to make this as funeral-like as possible," Doctor said.

Tuesday's big event: A dorm step show and bonfire.

"The dorm step show is one of the highlights of the week. No one should miss the step show," Doctor said.

Fried Chicken Wednesday features a fashion show meltdown.

Then comes Thursday and the homecoming concert featuring two primary artists: Kash Doll and No Cap.

Three student artists will perform: DRIP4VRR, R3tro Riq and Yung PG.

"We've got a lot of really talented students here at Claflin," Doctor said.

Friday is the yard fest and Saturday is a day for basketball games and tailgating.

A Greek step show will follow the games. "There will be teams from every Divine 9 organization."

Claflin is only college in South Carolina with all Divine 9 organizations on campus.

Homecoming Security and More

JORDAN PATTERSON, Reporter

Claflin Dean of Students Dr. Arthur Doctor discussed homecoming, security and the student center with student reporters on Nov. 2.

With homecoming being one of the biggest events held at Claflin University every year, security will be increased.

“We’re not cutting any corners when it comes to security," Doctor said.

Other agencies, such as the Orangeburg Department of Public Safety, will be involved.

“As a whole, you’re going to see a beefed-up security presence," Doctor said.

Thursday's student concert at 7 p.m. in the Jonas T. Kennedy Center will have extra security and police such as clear bags apply.

Doctor is proud of the concert, which features two main artists and three Claflin student performers.

The main artists are Kash Doll and No Cap.

Two artists instead of one is made possible by an increase in the student activity fee that was approved by students via referendum, Doctor said.

“We probably have the best homecoming lineup in the state of South Carolina,” Doctor said others have told him regarding the concert.

Concert costs are \$45 day of, \$30 in advance for non-students and \$25 for students in advance.

The artists are noted performers, but Claflin has a reputation of getting up-and-coming artists that have gone on to considerable fame.

“It’s not fiscally responsible to spend,” Doctor said of too much money for one artist at the expense of having funds for other events during the academic year.

A lot of students from other schools will be in attendance, Doctor said. He has been asked about the event by University of South Carolina students.

But the bottom line is the event is for Claflin. “I expect Claflin students to show up.”

Doctor said the increase in the student fee allows Claflin to have a big presence with activities all year.

“I want to really applaud our student leaders.”

Doctor expects a lot of homecoming curiosity about the new student center nearing completion on campus.

“The student center is going to be phenomenal," he said.

The present center does not meet the needs, but the new facility will “put us head and shoulders above others.”

“The possibilities are endless.”

HOMECOMING SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, NOV. 16

Hall of Fame/Athletic Hall of Fame 12-2 p.m., Orangeburg Country Club, 2745 Griffith Drive NW, Orangeburg. By invitation only.

Claflin University Alumni Choir Concert 7 p.m., Trinity United Methodist Church, 185 Boulevard St., Orangeburg.

Homecoming Concert featuring Kash Doll and No Cap 7 p.m., Jonas T. Kennedy Health and Wellness Complex, Tullis Arena. All tickets are \$45 on the day of the concert. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the concert starts at 8.

FRIDAY, NOV. 17

Claflin University International Alumni Association Executive Meeting 9-11 a.m.,Ministers' Hall.

Leadership Giving Luncheon 12-2 p.m., Orangeburg County Conference Center, 1643 Russell St., Orangeburg. By invitation only. Yard Fest 1-4 p.m. in front of Dunton Hall.

Presidential Scholarship Gala 7 p.m.,Jonas T. Kennedy Health and Wellness Complex, Tullis Arena. Price: \$300.

CU "Wine" Down featuring Live in the Flesh 9 p.m.-1 a.m.,Orangeburg County Conference Center, 1643 Russell St., Orangeburg. Price: \$35.

SATURDAY, NOV. 18

Classes in Reunion/Affinity 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Orangeburg County Conference Center, 1643 Russell St., Orangeburg.



Homecoming schedule of events. (Special to the Panther)

Panther Den and Tailgate Experience 12 p.m.-until. Tent and parking lot of the Jonas T. Kennedy Health and Wellness Complex.

Homecoming basketball doubleheader:Lady Panthers vs. North Greenville University 2 p.m. and Panthers vs. Coker College 4 p.m. Price: \$25 for general admission; \$35 for reserved seats.

NPHC Greek Step Show 8 p.m. Jonas T. Kennedy Health and Wellness Complex, Tullis Arena. Price: \$20 for general admission.

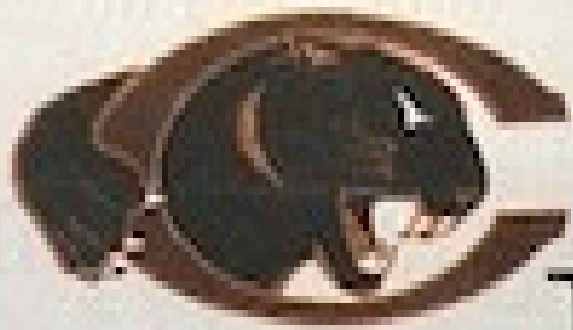
Orange and Maroon Soiree featuring The Promised Land Band 9 p.m.-1 a.m.The Sulit Luxe Affairs, 1005 Broughton St., Orangeburg.Price: \$45.

The Final Shin-Dig featuring DJ Big Bust 10 p.m.-1 a.m., Orangeburg County Conference Center, 1643 Russell St., Orangeburg Price: \$25.

SUNDAY, NOV. 19 Centennial Worship Service 10 a.m., Omicron Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., James and Dorothy Z. Elmore Chapel.

Alumni Brunch, 12-4 p.m., Orangeburg County Conference Center, 1643 Russell St., Orangeburg. Price: \$35. Proceeds will benefit need-based scholarships.

PANTHERS FROM THE PAST



JANUARY 21, 2016

CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY, ORANGEBURG, S.C.

The PANTHER

Regular updates at www.claflin.edu/the-panther

The Panther in print is not gone! But the student newspaper's website has changed the mission. Printed Panthers are less about reporting events and more about stories and photos that look into campus personalities, memorable moments and key issues that may not be at the forefront of news. In this edition, we take a closer look at Homecoming, politics, students and alums. We hope you enjoy!



Wale performs his hit song "Clippers" to open his performance during Claflin's Homecoming concert.
More on Homecoming 2015 on pages 4, 5 and 8. (Panther photo by Andres Waters)

MR. AND MISS CLAFLIN HAVE SERVICE GOALS

PHILLIP CAMPBELL. Reporter

This year's homecoming concert came with a bigger lineup, and DRIP4VRR is one of three student performers set to take the stage.

Gerald Edmunds Jr is a junior mass communications student who produces music under the stage name "DRIP4VRR". The homecoming concert will be his first live performance as a recording artist.

"Going out there, I'm kind of excited. I'll be lying if I said I wasn't nervous" Edmunds said.

"They've never heard me do this before."

Edmunds says opening for NoCap, which is one of his favorite artists, is a big opportunity for him. Edmunds said although they may not know him, he hopes that he can get the crowd energized and excited.

"I expect them to rock out with me because I'm going to bring that top energy." Edmunds said "I want to be out there getting the crowd involved, making them enjoy the whole performance."

Edmunds started recording music last August but music has been a part of his life for much longer.

"I've been making music for like my entire life," Edmunds said

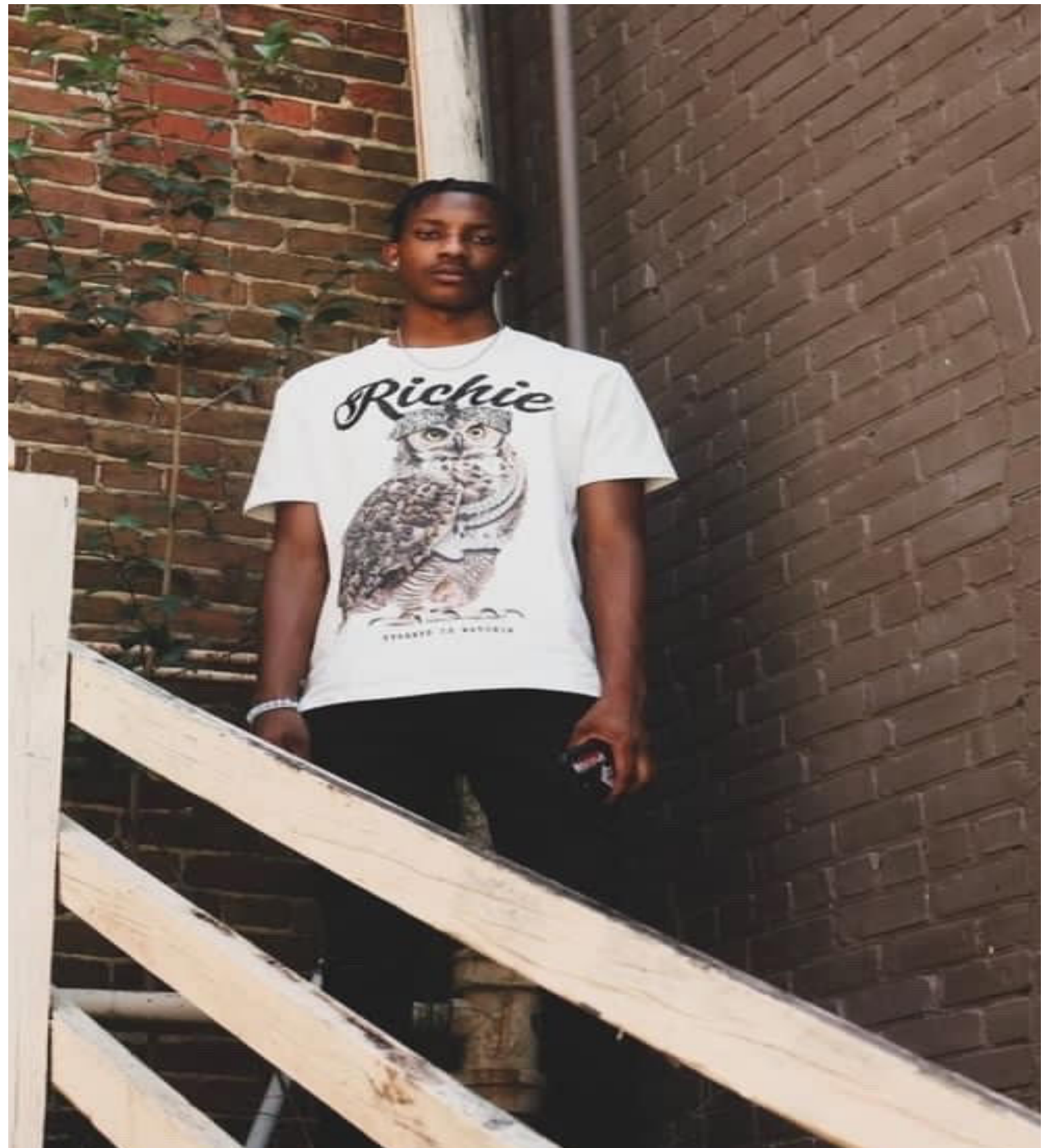
He performed for his church and started writing music when he was younger. He mentioned Migos, Drake, and Lil Wayne as inspirations.

Edmunds feels that he has grown since his first release in August of last year, not only musically but also in knowledge of the industry.

"It's not all about just making a song." Edmunds said "It's about knowing how to market it and how to get yourself out here."

He provided a bit of advice for those who may be just starting, or hesitant to get into the music industry in the way they want.

"If you're going to do music, just do it," Edmunds said, "be different, but also be yourself."



DRIP4VRR

"Don't ever give up because there are of plenty times where I decided to give up" Edmunds said "but I'd say just keep your head on, keep working."

This mentality and work ethic is what got him to where he is now, Edmunds said

"I'm always working. So, like if you see me if I got my headphones in, I'm working."

Edmunds recently dropped a new project titled "Walk Land" on Nov.10, which can be streamed on all platforms. The project includes three tracks including "Sosa Villain," which features artist "Yung Pg" who is also part of the lineup.



Homecoming artist lineup. (Special to the Panther)

CROWNS AND SASHES

OFFICIALLY ROYAL



Mister Claflin, Khari Graham and Miss Claflin, India Rice, walk the stage during coronation. (Special to the Panther)

BETHANY SCRIVEN, Reporter

Claflin University Royal Court hosted their coronation on Thursday, Nov. 9 in the W.V. Middleton Auditorium.

The coronation showcased Miss and Mister Claflin, the royal court, class kings and queens and dorm kings and queens.

The coronation was titled “Throne Forever,” inspired by the Marvel movie “Black Panther.”

The movie illustrates black individuals in royal positions.

“We chose the theme because it highlights black individuals in royal positions, which gives us an experience we may not see every day, so I think it is very important that we highlight our black queen and kings on campus that is shown through our theme of Black Panther,” India Rice, Miss Claflin, said.

Mister Claflin, Khari Graham expressed his excitement before the coronation.

“I think it’s going to be a grand event, and I attended the coronation last year, actually imagining myself in the limelight,” Graham said.

The Claflin royal title and coronation come as dreams satisfied for Miss Claflin and Mister Claflin.

Rice describes her reign as “a dream come true.”

“I knew coming in to Claflin that I wanted to run for Miss Claflin when it came my chance, so it was just something I always dreamed of, and I was just excited to finally get the crown and sash,” she said.

Graham says his reign is “unreal.”

“One word I would describe being crowned as Mister Claflin is unreal, just because I did not have this in my goals when coming to Claflin,” he said.

As leaders for the university, Miss and Mister Claflin shared what is expected for the remainder of their reign.

The two are looking forward to continuing their community engagement, getting to know their peers and securing the CIAA titles.

“One thing I am really excited about next semester is the CIAA [basketball tournament]. So hopefully we can get those back-to-back dubs as Miss and Mister CIAA for Claflin,” Graham said.

For now, the two will focus on “being involved with different organizations on campus to promote the royal court as well as smaller organizations that a lot of students may not know about,” Rice said.



Pictured are Mister and Miss Claflin. (Special to the Panther)

PRESIDENT EYES NEW STUDENT CENTER, OTHER PROGRESS

DAMAIA DAVIS, Reporter
SAVANNAH JEFFERSON, Reporter
LATRICIA THOMAS, Reporter

Construction on Claflin's new student should be substantially complete by Nov. 30, President Dwaun J. Warmack said.

Located at Goff Avenue and Magnolia, the student center will include a one-screen movie theater that will open Tuesday through Sunday, Warmack told Panther reporters on Oct. 31. It will have 180 seats, including wheelchair-accessible seating.

The student center will serve the community as well as students, showing first-run movies, Warmack said. "(It will) provide something that the community does not have."

There is to be a cost for the public and students at the theater, but Warmack said the expense will not be excessive. "We're not trying to make money."

The university is tentatively planning a soft grand opening for the student center on Christmas Day, the president said. If that happens, the movie "The Color Purple" will be shown in the theater.

The student center's official grand opening will not take place until students return in the spring semester.

Alongside the multipurpose theater, the center will also include:

- A ballroom
- Papa John's pizza
- Starbucks
- Qdoba
- Convenience store

For students interested in finding work, the student center will provide opportunities for jobs close to campus.

"For this building to be successful, there will be student workers to help us, and that was the vision from the beginning," Warmack said.

Dean of Students Dr. Arthur Doctor and Vice President for Student Development and Services Dr. Leroy Durant are to oversee the student hiring process. Positions will include:

- Movie theater
- Information desk
- Tech set-up

Student center financing is through fundraising and a 2% U.S. Department of Agriculture loan of \$18.4 million for 40 years, Warmack said. The facility will cost more than the originally projected \$40 million, largely because of rising costs in construction.

"You can't predict COVID happening," Warmack said of the increases.

The idea for the new student center was put into motion by former SGA President Kayla Hodges four years ago.

Warmack said Hodges recognized the lack of recreational opportunities for Claflin students and the surrounding community.

"You can create a vision, but you may not be there to see it through," Warmack said of Hodges. "This is happening because a student four years ago had a bold vision."

Warmack told reporters that he shares a similar vision when it comes to giving back to the Orangeburg community, saying the resources he and his family have are a blessing.

"We want to provide something that this community doesn't have," Warmack said of the student center. "I will not waver from my commitment to ensuring that Claflin is a beacon of light in this community."

As the student center's completion date nears, a busier Goff Avenue becomes more and more an issue, Warmack said.

The segment of Goff from Magnolia to Clark would be closed to vehicle traffic under a plan put forward by Warmack and Claflin and backed by the city of Orangeburg.

The S.C. Department of Transportation ultimately must approve of the change since Goff is a state road.

Warmack said the area of Goff through the campus is "extremely unsafe." Claflin is "trying to be part of the solution."

The responsibility for the outcome goes back to the state and city, Warmack said.

In addition to the student center, Claflin projects include a new biotechnology building and nursing facility.

With the support of 6th District Congressman James C. Clyburn, the funding for the biotech facility is coming from the U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Institute of Standards and Technology.



Ground was broken for the new student center in March 2022. (Special to The Panther)

U.S. Sen Lindsey Graham was instrumental in getting funding for the nursing facility.

Warmack said, the "The delegation has been very supportive."

The university also has plans for a 150-bed residential facility as part of the city of Orangeburg's Railroad Corner revitalization. Railroad Corner is the area across the Southern Railways tracks at Russell and Magnolia.

Warmack said Claflin is prospering while some other institutions around the nation are not.

Despite the fact that COVID-19 was starting in 2019 — the year he took office — Warmack pushed ahead.

"We never could have imagined a global pandemic would hit. And in the mist of the global pandemic, we were able to not just survive as an institution, but thrive," Warmack said.

Warmack said a five-year review will be conducted to record all of the changes.

"We are finalizing a five-year review document that will chronicle the work that has happened over the five years," he said.

"We have increased our net assets over the past five years by over 100%," he said. "We have increased our total assets as an institution by over 200%. We have increased our endowment by 100%."

Enrollment is growing, Warmack said. The freshman class of 2027 is a superior group with a 3.69 GPA and 1200 average on the SAT.

Warmack spoke highly of the class of 2023, which began at Claflin in the same year he took office. They are very special, he said.

"The class of 2023 graduated with nine valedictorians all with a 4.0 GPA," he said. "I'm biased because those are my babies. Those are the students that came in with me."

Warmack said homecoming will again be a special week.

"Safety is the No. 1 concern," he said, urging students to "make wise decisions ... be responsible."

COLLEGE STUDENTS HAVE 'LARGEST VOICE' GREVIOUS SAYS

TYUANNA WILLIAMS, Editor

As a professor of Speech and Drama at Claflin University and a member of the Orangeburg city council, Annette D. Grevious has an interest in college students' involvement in local politics.

Grevious says her unique position allows her "to engage our students more in local government activities."

"I don't think our students realize that they actually have the largest voice in this particular district," Grevious said.

She recently claimed her District 4 seat on Orangeburg's city council after winning the Sept. 12 election.

District 4 includes Claflin and a portion of South Carolina State University.

Grevious plans to encourage students to use their campus address in order to participate in local elections.

"I don't think that they take full advantage of that opportunity," she said.

"You're going to be in the city of Orangeburg for four years. So you have the opportunity to affect change right here in the city that you're going to be residing in for the next four years or more."



Annette D. Grevious is a Claflin University professor and an Orangeburg city councilwoman (Special to The Panther)

Grevious ran on the platform of being a voice, ensuring growth, attracting more businesses and improving the quality of life for Orangeburg citizens.

"Students may complain that there's not a lot to do in the city of Orangeburg. But getting involved in the city government or county government, letting your voice be heard and being an instrument for change is going to affect those things that are happening," she said.

Grevious says students should attend city council and county council meetings and possibly run for a seat.

"We actually had a student who ran for this seat in 2019. As long as they are residents in the city of Orangeburg, and in that particular district, they could run for a seat on city council," she said.

For Grevious, doubling as a professor and a city council member is convenient.

"As a city council member on campus I'm interested in talking to students, getting their opinions, their issues, and their concerns that they would like to see City Council address," Grevious said.

MORE ARTICLES AVAILABLE ONLINE

claflin.edu/news-events/the-panther

