Finance Student Applies Lessons From Tough Past

Gifts Allow Him to Pursue Starting a Private Equity Firm, Promoting Financial Literacy

From living paycheck to paycheck to receiving two donor scholarships, Tré Dawson understands the value of money and hopes to bring that knowledge to his New Orleans community.

By Nkechi Nnorom

Now a sophomore finance major in the School of Business, Dawson was forced to grow up quickly. His grandfather, who supported Dawson financially through his teenage years, died. Dawson had no choice but to start working at age 16.

“Growing up, I was pretty poor,” Dawson said. “It was never because my mom or grandfather didn’t make enough money. I feel like it was the mismanagement of money that kind of did that to us.”

Dawson worked a combined three jobs at his local Winn-Dixie grocery store, and at two organizations created to serve youth in underserved communities—STEM NOLA and Youth Rebuilding New Orleans.

The constant financial burden helped Dawson not only decide on a course of study but also a way of life to help his community and him.

“When I started living by myself, I also started living paycheck to paycheck,” the New Orleans native said. “But it made me think about how to get revenue streams from different avenues.”

SCHOLARSHIPS MAKE IT POSSIBLE

In Fall 2016, Dawson was a recipient of the Bank of America Endowment Fund, a $1,600 non-renewable award. Dawson also was awarded the Citigroup Scholars Endowed Scholarship Fund’s $4,000 non-renewable award. These scholarships were awarded to finance majors who carried a GPA above 3.0. Dawson had a 3.82 and displayed financial need.

Since being at Howard, he has also received $200 scholarships from the 21st Century Advantage Program and the Executive Leadership Honors Program, both in the School of Business. Additionally, he has been awarded the Howard Legacy Scholarship.

Scholarships have allowed Dawson to focus on school, organizations and community involvement. He is a member of the Finance and Investment Club, the Louisiana Club and director of finance for EPOCH, the School of Business Student Council.

Dawson hopes to one day study public policy at the University of Oxford, open a private equity firm and implement a financial literacy curriculum in the Orleans, St. John the Baptist, St. James, Jefferson and St. Charles Parish Public School Systems. The curriculum will be centered on building generational wealth rather than individual financial prowess, which is often the focus in Dawson’s community, he said.

“Black people have a lot of great ideas, but when you don’t have the startup capital or the funding, it makes things a lot harder,” Dawson said. “That’s what I want to bring back to my community. I want to create a work environment to give young, Black scholars a chance to get in the field and gain exposure. I want to try to open the floodgates to my community.”

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Irvin D. Reid, Ph.D. (B.S. ’63; M.S. ’66), and Pamela Trotman Reid, Ph.D. (B.S. ’67), established a fund of $260,000 to Howard University. The donation will be used to set up the Irvin D. Reid and Pamela Trotman Reid Dissertation Fellowship, the Irvin D. Reid and Pamela Trotman Reid Scholarship and the Irvin D. Reid and Pamela Trotman Reid Annual Faculty Award.

Irvin D. Reid is president emeritus and the first Black president of Wayne State University in Detroit. He left the presidency to become inaugural holder of the Eugene Applebaum Chair in Community Engagement and director for the Forum on Contemporary Issues in Society.

Pamela Trotman Reid is a former president of the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford, Connecticut. During her tenure, she launched the university’s first professional doctoral program by creating a School of Pharmacy.

Anonymous Donor Establishes $2M Endowed Scholarship Fund

An anonymous donor from Florida donated $2 million to establish the President Barack H. Obama and The Michelle L. Obama Endowed Scholarship Fund. The fund will provide at least two full scholarships to undergraduate students with financial need. The donor’s admiration for the former first family stems from the Obamas’ devotion to decency and humanitarianism, uncompromised dedication to justice, inspiring stream of extraordinary achievements and unerring representation of the finest elements found in the character of the people in the United States.
FedEx Executive Creates Gina Ferguson Adams Scholarship Fund

Gina Adams (J.D. ’83), vice president for government affairs at FedEx, donated $100,000 to establish the Gina Ferguson Adams Scholarship Fund. The scholarship will provide a three-year, full-tuition scholarship to a student entering the Howard University School of Law in fall 2017. The student receiving the scholarship will be called the Gina Ferguson Adams Scholar.

Recent Gifts, Awards Strengthen Howard Community

PARRIS FULFILLS $1M GIFT
Wilhelmina J. Parris donated $273,451.62, fulfilling her million-dollar gift to the College of Dentistry in memory of her late husband, Dr. Bernard C. Parris (D.D.S. ’57).

RAMSEY ESTABLISHES THE HONORABLE HENRY RAMSEY JR. ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP
Eleanor J. Ramsey, Ph.D, has established the Honorable Henry Ramsey Jr. Endowed Scholarship, worth $100,000. The scholarship is named in honor of her late husband, who was the dean of the Howard University School of Law.

SCHOOL OF LAW BOARD OF VISITORS MEMBER DONATES $40,000
Dennis Ellis (J.D. ’95) donated $40,000 to the Howard University School of Law. He is a member of the Howard University School of Law Board of Visitors.

COOK DONATES $75,000, ESTABLISHES ENDOURED SCHOLARSHIP FUND
The Honorable Ralph D. Cook (J.D. ’67) made a retirement gift of $50,000 through his employer, Alabama Power Co., and a subsequent individual gift of $25,000 to establish the Honorable Ralph D. Cook Endowed Scholarship Fund at the Howard University School of Law.

STUDENTS, ALUMNUS WIN PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS
CAMERON CLARKE
Cameron Clarke has been selected as one of 32 students nationwide to receive the prestigious 2017 Rhodes Scholarship. Clarke is a double biology and community health major from Jersey City, New Jersey, living in Richmond, Virginia.

Clarke entered at Howard University in fall 2013 as a high achiever with 42 advanced placement credits.

GREER ROBERTS
Howard University senior and international business major Greer Roberts has been selected as a 2018 Schwarzman Scholar. Roberts is the first Howard student to receive the scholarship, which is a Rhodes Scholarship-inspired master’s degree program founded by Stephen A. Schwarzman, chairman, CEO and co-founder of Blackstone.

Roberts is one of 129 scholars selected from more than 2,700 applicants. The group has representation from 30 countries and 75 universities. The program fully funds expenses for its students to attend Schwarzman College at Tsinghua University in Beijing, China.

DEANDRE SMITH
Howard University alumnus DeAndre Smith (B.A. ’15) was awarded a 2017 Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellowship, following a nationwide contest.

According to Rangel Program Director Patricia Scroggs, this was the most competitive year for the fellowship, with a record number of 575 applications. What’s more, this round of applications was due Sept. 19, four months earlier than in previous years, making for a shorter application-submission window.
Dawson works on the Credible Messenger Initiative at the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services in Washington, D.C., a transformative, mentoring intervention program for youth committed to the agency, with a restorative justice philosophy for young people in the community at large. Dawson stays connected—daily—with youth who live in Wards 1-4.

Dawson’s investment in his New Orleans community and local D.C. community is an essential life lesson he learned from his mother. “My mom stressed giving back,” he said. “She told me anybody that comes behind me and looks like me, I should just help them out when they need help.”

Dawson’s father was not in his life. However, a male figure like Ethan Ashley (B.A. ’08; J.D. ’11) was there to help mold Dawson into the young man he is today by providing him with financial help and teaching him basic skills, such as tying a tie and holding the door open for women, Dawson explained. In return, Dawson is paying it forward in his communities.

With your continued support, students like Dawson can reach for their dreams and fulfill their destinies.

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1919
THE HOWARD ROTC (RESERVED OFFICERS’ TRAINING CORPS) PROGRAM WAS ESTABLISHED

1972
THE HOWARD UNIVERSITY CANCER CENTER WAS ESTABLISHED

1954
THE DENTISTRY BUILDING WAS CONSTRUCTED; TOP FLOORS WERE ADDED IN 1981

The recent Charter Day Convocation and Sesquicentennial celebratory events were monumental milestones for the Howard University community, a time to celebrate, reflect and look to its future.

This year, the Charter Day Dinner experienced unprecedented fundraising success by raising a record-breaking $1 million in net proceeds to aid students in need. This amount doubles the amount of revenue from last year’s fundraising event.

The first female student graduated from Howard’s law department.