



Media Professionals, Mentors and Advocates for Diversity

# THE BYLINE

JAN/FEB 2017 ISSUE

<http://www.aabj.org/>

## FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

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Happy New Year! I am proud to report that the Atlanta Association of Black Journalists is thriving! AABJ has long served as a standard of excellence; a standard that other local chapters of NABJ choose to emulate. AABJ wrapped up 2016, the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our great organization, with a wonderful Holiday and Scholarship Reception.

Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed greeted members and posed for pictures with our newly re-formed NABJ-GSU Student Chapter. City Council President Ceasar Mitchell and City Councilman, District 2, Kwanza Hall presented AABJ with proclamations to commemorate our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. AABJ also presented the Xernona Clayton scholarship award of \$2,000 to GSU student Sierra Porter. Now, I am excited about the promise of great things to come in 2017. I plan to continue the legacy of nurturing and improving the careers of professional journalists, providing mentors to guide aspiring, new journalists and advocating for diversity in the newsrooms of Atlanta. One of my main goals is to raise AABJ's profile. I plan to build relationships with news organizations in our city as part of our mission to advocate for diversity.

I have already met with the News Director at WSB-TV and we are planning a tour of the newsroom to give our members a look behind the scenes of the local newscast. I also plan to raise our profile using our social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in an effort to continue to engage our members. I can report that we have added 40 new followers on our Instagram page (@aabjorg) in the past two months. Another way we are raising AABJ's profile is through the re-launch of our newsletter, *The Byline* and through our community affairs show, *In Contact*.

These avenues also serve another purpose: they give students real world experience in writing for print and writing and producing a television show. Students will also have the opportunity to work on an AABJ documentary on the first Black journalists on air in Atlanta. Another important goal is to increase membership. I will recruit new members and reclaim past members by presenting compelling programs and workshops. In the works right now are a writing workshop and a workshop to improve your resume and video reels. I encourage all members to share ideas and thoughts on how I can better serve you by sending an email to: [aabj.org@gmail.com](mailto:aabj.org@gmail.com). Also, you can join or renew your membership anytime at [www.aabj.org](http://www.aabj.org). And last but not least, the Board of Directors is working to improve our financial health by securing sponsorships from corporations and media partners.

You can also help with fundraising; every time you use your Kroger Plus Card! Go to [www.kroger.com](http://www.kroger.com) and click on Community, then click on Kroger Community Rewards. Sign in or create an account, then add Atlanta Association of Black Journalists to your community rewards. AABJ will receive a donation every time you swipe your Plus Card! I look forward to a successful, rewarding year as your president

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours in Service,

Cheryl Collier

President

[president@aabj.org](mailto:president@aabj.org)



## Two Sisters' Excellent Adventure Marching on Washington

Two sisters mourn after the results of the Presidential election and were left with an empty feeling knowing what was to come under the new Trump administration. They were completely heartbroken, feeling that all of the work and effort put forth to have President Obama elected initially in 2008 and re-elected in 2012 would be dismantled.

"It's difficult to fully describe the feeling," said Rosaly. "However it is almost a bit comforting to see that so many people shared the same sentiment."

Rosaly is a 32-year-old Hispanic female born to Puerto Rican parents and raised in South Florida. She is the assistant to the Vice President of a South Florida property management firm and has been employed there for 11 years. She is a wife of 15 years and a mother of two mixed-race children (black and Hispanic). Politically, Rosaly is affiliated with the Democratic/ Progressive wing of the party.

In the midst of complete hopelessness came news of the [Woman's March on Washington](#) from her younger sister, Katricia, via a group chat message. Katricia offered to pay for Rosaly's flight if she wanted to attend. Rosaly answered immediately, "Yah, let's go."

Katricia, a 31-year-old Home Mortgage Associate for the past 10 years, is also a wife and a mother of three mixed-race children (black and Hispanic).

Katricia booked the plane tickets to Washington D.C. without having the logistics in line, "We have a tendency of flying by the seat of our pants and figuring things out as we go," Katricia said laughing. In the spirit of wanting to be a "doer" and not just a "talker," she signed up for the Women's March in November before it really gained any attraction.

"For the most part my sister keeps to herself and wouldn't be described as social, but that all goes out of the window when she's engaged in a political conversation," said Katricia.



Prior to the March the sisters met with the women of the South Florida Chapter, all lifetime activists. "I put up my D.C. Senate calendar in my cubical and began counting down the days for the March at the start of the year," said Katricia.

"My sister and I are very like-minded but different in all the best ways. She has been my political partner in crime since I asked her to knock on doors with me during the 2008 election. She is a logistics master so it had to make sense, also we have a great time together," Rosaly chimed in.

The sisters booked the flight with zero expectations because they had been politically active on a local level since high school. There they learned to not go into political events with any expectations. The closer they got to the day of the trip the more hopeful they became, seeing the activity and the media surrounding the event.

"I knew that this had the potential to be something amazing and was elated to be a part of it," said Rosaly. "I had been searching to restore my faith in humanity in different places ever since the election cycle, not only in the general but also during the primaries. I was optimistic that this would begin that process. I would consider myself politically knowledgeable. I believe that my political positions are very much tied with my spiritual belief that our very purpose in life is to contribute to society in a way that goes beyond benefiting oneself and only those connected to me." She continued, "I love the possibilities of Government but believe that success in the political realm can only be achieved when the people reclaim control of it and force it to work for them. I believe people have relinquished that power over the years and Donald Trump is a symptom of society."

Two days before the trip, Rosaly became ill, but she repeatedly said out loud, "I am resilient and I refused to give in." Though losing her voice from her illness prevented her from cheering along with other Women's March participants on their flight she persevered.

The sisters arrived in DC the Thursday prior to the March and spent Friday looking for sign-making supplies and the ever-elusive clear backpack required by the City for the occasion. That night in Virginia they met with Katricia's husband's aunt and uncle, staffers for a senator and a congressman.

After that visit the sisters bunked with a close friend who had recently relocated just outside of D.C., which made the trip financially possible. Even though their friend is not politically active, she is like-minded and completely supportive and willing to drive them around.

The morning of the March Rosaly woke up and her voice, the number one tool that she needed to express herself, was gone.

The sisters pressed on, attended a Florida Chapter's breakfast where the turnout was impressive, and then they headed to the rally.

As they made their way up and down the streets there were massive droves of people: men, women, old, young and babies of all races and religions covered the streets as far as their eyes could see. You could hear the chants and cheers erupting from miles away. "This was two hours until the actual rally time- it was encouraging and exciting," said Rosaly.



As the sisters made their way towards their destination, the crowds quickly became overwhelming and claustrophobic. Rosaly, already not feeling well and pressed between people on every side, started to feel anxiety.

"I looked at my sister and told her we need to get out of this spot – we have to get to the sides of the crowd. The benefit of being with my sister was that I didn't need much of a voice. She trusted me and I followed her as we pushed through the crowd," said Rosaly.

Luckily, a member of the press also was trying to push through the crowd to the press tent and they followed him as he weaved through the crowd showing his credentials. The sisters ended up behind the stage where they could see all of the performers who would take the stage throughout the day. Rosaly and Katricia were able to connect with some of the celebrity talent,

March organizers, Congressional Black Caucus members and many more.

"Throughout the day I caught myself choking back tears several times, it was surreal and I was so grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of it. Everyone was patient, polite, friendly, and peaceful, and the police and security seemed pleased to have us there," said Katricia.

In the mist of the excitement the sisters finally looked at their phones for the time, wondering when the March would begin, and immediately a member of Sirius XM asked them, "Do you know why you guys are just standing here an hour after the march was to begin? It's because there are too many people. The parade path is packed, there is nowhere to go!"

This news was both amazing and a little disappointing to the sisters who really wanted to march and make their way to the front of the White House.

"The picture I had in my mind was of a sea of people in sync marching and holding up their signs," said Rosaly.

The sisters started to make their way through the packed crowds in search of a bathroom, which was not easy to find! They then stopped for a bite to eat and Katricia started talking to someone about the nearest Metro they could take to get back home. It was 3:30pm. Rosaly did not feel fulfilled and had no voice to argue her point.

"I'll be honest, at 3:30pm, once we finally got around to eating a gyro from a street truck I was ready to leave. We were right next to a Metro station and with all the people I knew if we didn't leave right then it would be nearly impossible to catch a train later, and I didn't see a path to making the end of the march – to the White House," said Katricia.

Rosaly then looked desperately at Katricia and whispered softly, "I want to make it all the way, this is what we came here for."

While the sisters were sitting on a bench they struck up small talk with two women (mother and daughter) who happened to be locals. With the little voice Rosaly could muster she asked the mother if they were planning to march, and the mother told her that they were going to try.

Rosaly, having no voice, nodded to Katricia to ask the mother if they could join them and the mother told her they could.

In the true spirit of the March the mother and daughter duo were more than happy to take them along. They all pressed on together. The more they walked and the more crowds they met up with, the path became easier and easier. They

made their way past the Washington Monument where the parted ways with the mother and daughter duo who top of the group in front of the White House where they saw all the signs neatly lined up along the fenced perimeter.



“Seeing those signs lined up at the White House was the most impactful – they went on for miles and captured so many different sentiments, said Katricia. “Prior to this March every time I brought up BLM [[Black Lives Matter](#)] or ACA [[Affordable Care Act](#)] I was met with aggression and debate, which starts to really make you feel like you’re alone in your political views and passion for others,” said Katricia.

Rosalyn stood in front of the White House and just took it all in deeply with a heavy heart and then eventually found herself centered. At that moment she looked at her sister and said, “Ok, now we can go.”

The sisters sat in a small café drinking hot lattes’ and a small ice cream cake with a candle to celebrate Katricia’s 31<sup>st</sup> birthday. The sisters reminisced on the day’s events and then visited the monuments.

One of the monuments in particular gave a precise meaning to the inscribed quotes on the line-up of signs along the walls:

“Make a career of humanity, commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a greater person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in.” - Martin Luther King, Jr.

“We came with a purpose but that purpose became difficult to achieve. It was uncomfortable and seemed impossible at times. It would have been easy to jump on that Metro and go home early,” said Rosaly. “We would have left with that same unfulfilled feeling that brought us here, but we trusted each other and we trusted strangers knowing that we were all brought here by the same empty, hopeless feeling that was brought on with the results of this election.”

“I would like to see movements at all levels of government. My biggest hope is that this pushes the Democratic Party to support more progressive legislation and progressive candidates,” said Rosaly.

The sisters returned to Florida on Monday on a high, surfing online for the next course of action. “This global and very successful movement was to make a statement. It was a preemptive strike in which to say: should your administration move forward with discriminatory measures to further limit our rights not only as women but other marginalized groups of people as well, we will come in fierce opposition,” said Katricia. “There are things that once done can’t be undone. Many issues and stances were represented however, all of which were threatened by Trump while campaigning and now by his prospective Cabinet members in their respective careers.”



Katricia vows to continue to be engaged for as long as need be until we as a people live out the first sentence in the second paragraph of the constitution:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that **all men are created equal**, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.”  
-Thomas Jefferson

In the next two years Rosaly would like to focus her energy on registering new voters and on voter education: “I think that the 2018 election can be a turning point and I plan to be a part of it, she said, “I now own a little piece of history.”

-Le’Dor Phoenix

## 2016 NABJ Conference Prompts New Student Chapter At GSU

As a young Journalist, I often had times of doubt. I would watch my fellow peers with majors such as computer science and engineering endure the same struggle as me, yet they had no worries about their future. Whenever I would tell someone I'm majoring in journalism, they never respond with, "Oh there's tons of jobs in that field" or "Wow you're guaranteed to make a good salary." My mother always told me "Don't worry about money, do what you love and be the best at that...the money will follow." I've always loved writing and telling stories. As a child I would sit up all night and write stories just to hear how proud my mom and grandma were of me. I dreamed about one day working in broadcast, but some days I wondered if this field was worth the risk.

My uncle constantly spoke about an organization known as "NABJ." I had researched multiple organizations that I thought could help my career, but none of them seemed right for me. My uncertainty was followed with wise words from my mom, "You need positive black role models who want to see you succeed, so whether you like it or not we're sending you to that convention this summer." There's nothing like a little motherly motivation to get the ball rolling. We made a couple phone calls to relatives to help fund "Cecil to NABJ 2016." So, at the end of the summer, I got on a plane to DC.

To my surprise nearly half of the plane's passengers were members of NABJ. They welcomed me like I was one of their own. With open arms, I was invited to dinners and programs filled with Black journalists from Atlanta. Once I made it to the convention I had one of the best experiences of my life. I was surrounded by professionals from all walks of life. I gained new mentors, career guidance, and verification that my dreams were attainable. Not to mention, partying with my favorite news anchors was very "lit". The doubt that festered in my mind was suddenly cleared. I could see what was beyond the dreadful loans and hours of studying. There was just one problem... I was the only student from Atlanta. I felt selfish for being the only one to receive these blessings. Georgia State has thousands of journalism students just like me. Students who aren't sure about the opportunities waiting for them. I felt like it was my job to bring this organization back to my city and show my peers. Even before the Convention was over, I got right to work.



On the last day of the Convention I called one of my friends from GSTV. He had never heard of NABJ either. I told him we needed to start our own chapter at Georgia State. We attended the first fall AABJ meeting and was shocked to be surrounded by several of our GSU peers. Even though we had never met, it was clear we all shared the same goals. We understood that this organization could be a huge stepping stone for our careers. We came together to form an E-board and created NABJ-GSU. It's been a pleasure working with and also getting to know each of my fellow board members. We each bring something different to the table which makes us a very interesting group. It hasn't been easy balancing school and starting up a student organization, but we've had a ton of success so far. With about 30 members, and 3 meetings under our belt, it feels like the sky's the limit for NABJ-GSU!

-Cecil Bjorn Hannibal III

# Sierra Porter Wins AABJ's 2016 Xernona Clayton Scholarship

On December 8, 2016, I had the honor to be named the 2016 Xernona Clayton Academic Scholarship Award For Excellence Recipient by the AABJ. I remember correctly holding my mother's hand when it was time to announce the winner of the scholarship. Then, one of the founders of the AABJ, Felicia Jeter began talking about the winner. At first, I did not know she was talking about me until she started reading my list of accomplishments as a student from Georgia State University and as a journalist. I was so overwhelmed with joy that I began to cry. When she called my name, I heard claps and cheers as I walked on stage to accept the award. I was greeted by Jeter with hugs and kisses. When it was time for me to speak about receiving the award, I could barely get my words out because I was crying so much.



Eventually, I spoke about winning the award and thanked God, my family, and Ernie Suggs (reporter at the AJC (The Atlanta Journal-Constitution)). When my speech was over, I hugged and thanked Mrs. Jeter once again and the entire AABJ for choosing me as the scholarship recipient. After the ceremony, I took pictures with almost everyone in the room including the GSU Chapter of NABJ (National Association of Black Journalists) and joined them right on the spot. I met Cecil, who is the president of the chapter and we exchanged contact information to discuss more. I also met the legendary Monica Pearson who gave me words of wisdom. That night was a night I will never forget.

Before winning, I had met Suggs at an Atlanta Press Club meeting in Downtown Atlanta. The meeting was about police brutality, the Black Lives Matter Movement, and reporting during protests. Blayne Alexander from 11 Alive was the moderator for the meeting that night. I remember specifically asking a question about reporting about police brutality against African-American people. I began to cry as I was deeply passionate about the issues facing African-Americans today. Suggs answered my question by basically telling me as a reporter you have to suck it up. After the

meeting was over, Suggs approached me and gave me some advice as a journalist. Then, he told me to come to the AJC office so he could introduce me to the team. I was surprised but excited. I have read the AJC plenty of times but never actually went to the office where all the stories are written. About a week later, I walked through the doors of the AJC office. Ernie and I met for lunch then we walked all around the newsroom. It was my first time actually seeing a newspaper office. I have never seen so many newspapers in my life before. Suggs introduce me to everyone in the office including Marlon A. Walker, who is a reporter for the AJC. I was networking with all the staff and was grateful to meet professionals in the field.



When it was time for me to leave the AJC office, Ernie pulled the Xernona Clayton Academic Scholarship application on his laptop. The application was due one week from the time Ernie presented it to me. When I got back to school, I had to get everything together for the application. I remember needing two letter of recommendations. I frantically emailed my professors. Finally, my sociology professor said she would write a letter of recommendation for me along with my internship coordinator. I spent nights staying up working on my essay questions and getting all the components together. On the day I had to submit the application I rushed to the post office before it closed and turned in my application. From there I left everything in God's hands and sure enough because of my efforts, God sent me a blessing.

I am truly thankful for this incredible achievement. I am now the student editor for the GSU Student Chapter of the Byline. I vow to excel in my academic and journalism work. I would like to thank Felicia Jeter, Carol Gantt, Cheryl Collier, Monica Pearson, Ernie Suggs, the AABJ, and NABJ for believing in me.

Thank You,

Sierra Porter

## Bodybuilding Is A Woman's Business

ROSWELL, Georgia – Gina Shabazz is owner of Roc Fit, in Roswell, Georgia, formally known as Fitness Pro Wellness Center.

Gina says that the beauty industry is tough but that fitness is even tougher, particularly for women. Women going through bad break ups, divorce, job changes and issues from their youth can experience weight gain because of stress.



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“Ninety percent of the time women are crying in my consultation meetings,” said Gina.

Gina’s clients know her as being strong in character and physical stature, but she empathizes with them and relates to their body image and fitness challenges.

Gina changed her lifestyle in her 30s after having two kids and being 165 pounds at 5 feet tall. She was fed up with her body and said she “I took off running for miles everyday to find my balance.” A few months later Gina lost a few pounds and met her husband, Roc Shabazz, who helped her in her new clean-eating and health lifestyle. As a result, Gina helped Roc begin and sustain a winning streak of prestigious body building competitions, ranging from the popular NPC Nationals to The Olympia, where only the best in the world are invited to compete.

Gina is known as Roc’s rock. Roc is an International Federation of Bodybuilding and Fitness Professional (IFBB). “It takes so much out of you to be so consistent, when you prep for such a [prestigious] show,” said Gina. “The best looking bodies in the entire world [do] this show!”

The blood, sweat and tears were not in vain, when, at the 2008 Olympia, this dynamic duo placed sixth in the world.

As operations manager, support trainer, and a certified National Physique Committee (NPC) judge, Gina understands that women are obsessed with the images portrayed in media and fashion magazines.

“Young women in their 20s are doing liposuction, butt injections, breast augmentations and not working out. They’re skipping the training part,” said Gina. “Squats build butt, bring down your waistline and will improve the look of your butt.”



Gina (seated center) and clients at Roc Fit.

Now that Roc has retired from competing, the couple focuses completely on their by-referral-only business. Roc Fit is home to many NFL, NBA and IFBB professionals, including Shaquille O’Neal, Ray Lewis, Ray Rice and Simona Douglas among others. Roc Fit has more than 75 people training between the hours of 5 a.m. and 9 a.m. most days.

“You come with a plan and I will give you the blueprint to achieve it,” said Gina, “this is where change happens.”



For more information on Roc Fit visit their website, [here](#).

- Le’Dor Phoenix

# AABJ HAS BIG PLANS FOR 2017

On January 14, 2017 the AABJ held its first meeting of the New Year at WSB TV. Cheryl Collier, AABJ President, discussed important dates and upcoming events, including workshops for journalists who want to improve their skills. Many were in attendance for the first annual meeting, such as AJC reporters, producers for major networks, potential members, college students, and well-respected working journalists. The meeting began with everyone introducing himself or herself and getting familiar with each other. Collier then began noting the special dates to look forward to:

## WORKSHOP & CONFERENCES

**WHAT:** NABJ The Basics Bootcamp

**WHEN:** Feb. 10- 11, 2017

**WHERE:** Heritage Hall

University of Alabama at Birmingham  
1401 University Blvd  
Birmingham, AL 35233

<http://www.nabj.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=906587>

**WHAT:** 2017 NABJ Region III Conference

**WHEN:** March 10-12, 2017

**WHERE:** Dallas, Texas

<http://www.nabj.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=916436>

**WHAT:** 2017 NABJ Conference & Career Fair

**WHEN:** Aug. 9-13, 2016

**WHERE:** Hilton New Orleans Riverside

Two Poydras Street

New Orleans, LA 70130  
EARLY BIRD by March 1<sup>st</sup>

Pre-registration by June 1

<http://www.nabj.org/event/2017nabjconvention>

# FELLOWSHIP, INTERNSHIPS, & NABJ SCHOLARSHIPS

## **NABJ/NBC Summer Fellowship Program**

NABJ is pleased to announce our continued partnership with Comcast NBCUniversal for the NBC News Group Summer Fellows Program! NBCUniversal will offer fellows the opportunity to join an NBC program for summer 2017 as interns. This is a paid internship based in New York City. The deadline to apply is Friday, February 24, 2017. You can find more information and application form at: <http://www.nabj.org/?page=NBCFellowship>

## **NABJ Spring/Summer Internships**

The NABJ National Office is looking for interns to assist the full-time staff. Interns will gain experience in day-to-day operations of a national, non-profit membership organization devoted to providing quality programs and member services. This is a paid internship based in College Park, MD (accessible by Metro/MARC from Washington, DC and Baltimore, MD). The deadline to apply is Friday, February 24, 2017. You can find more information and the application form at:

<http://www.nabj.org/?page=NABJInternships>

NABJ awards a number of scholarships annually to deserving students interested in pursuing careers in journalism. Scholarships are worth up to \$2,500. All applications must be submitted online by the specified deadline. You can find more information and application forms at: <http://www.nabj.org/?page=SEEDScholarships>

## **JOBS**

**Gannett Senior Engagement Editor** - <https://850.dayforcehcm.com/CandidatePortal/en-US/gannett/Posting/View/1212?src=email>

**Gannett Business Reporter** - <https://850.dayforcehcm.com/CandidatePortal/en-US/gannett/Posting/View/1154?src=email>

**AJC Local Digital Reporter** - <http://www.ajc.com/hiring/contract/local-digital-content-producer/>

**Freelance News Writer/Blogger, First We Feast** - <http://jobs.complex.com/apply/VZ11fO/Freelance-News-WriterBlogger-First-We-Feast>

**The Dallas Morning News Homepage/Social Producer** - <https://ahbelo.mua.hrdepartment.com/hr/ats/Posting/view/450>

**SCETV President and CEO** – The ideal candidate will be experienced in broadcast management and have a record of success in challenging budget environments. Candidates must show a history of accomplishments in fundraising and other revenue enhancement activities and a commitment to using public media to enhance the educational, cultural, and economic life of South Carolinians. A track record of working effectively and successfully with legislative, governmental, or private sector groups is critical to success in this position.

Resumes with references should be submitted to South Carolina ETV, c/o Myra Boyd, 1041 George Rogers Boulevard, Columbia, SC 29201.

# CONGRATULATIONS XERNONA FOR WINNING THE GOLDEN TRUMPET AWARD



Congratulations to Ms. Xernona Clayton for receiving the Golden Trumpet Award at the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Trumpet Awards! Clayton is the first Black person to have her own TV show. The AABJ Scholarship is named for Ms. Clayton!