

## MBSP Scholar Success Award Series, Alumni Spring 2017

### Setting an Example: Jyarland Daniels

As a student at KU, we are exposed to many different people. Those coming from high school, a junior college, or transferring meet people from different races and backgrounds. It is important that we treat others different from us with the upmost respect and I believe no one sets a better example of this than Jyarland Daniels. As someone whose curiosity began at the age of three and continues today, she offers a role model for all students. She had a different upbringing than most and used it to the best of her advantage. She earned her undergrad, completed two graduate degrees, excelled at one of the biggest companies in the world, and went on to develop her own consulting business; there is a lot to learn from Jyarland.

Jyarland comes from Junction City, KS where she bounced around foster homes from the ages of 1-18. She knew that her only way out was to get an education. One of the things that helped her growing up was going to Japan as a foreign exchange student. She believed it important for young African-Americans to see the world and she believes this is still true today. She was able to make her way from Junction City to KU where she applied and was accepted in the MBSP program. After studying business at KU, she was committed to becoming a CEO, so she enrolled in the MBA program at Michigan.

She began to work at various corporations in the Detroit area. Two of her biggest “Projects” came from working at Ford and one while working at Bentley. At Ford, she managed the budget (over \$100M) for the 2006 Ford Fusion. While working at Bentley Motors, she takes pride in being the only African-American employee (in the US) in charge of introducing the brand to lifestyle media. After working in the corporate arena, she was eager to learn more about societal issues and problems. The process of making laws, how societal issues and injustices arise, fascinated her. Jyarland earned her law degree from Wayne State Law School in Detroit, Michigan. Today she is the CEO (and founder) of Harriet Speaks, which is an organization providing strategies and communications for racial equity ([www.harrietspeaks.com](http://www.harrietspeaks.com)).

She shared this about her current position, **“This is nothing I ever imagined for myself while at KU and when I began my career in Corporate America... What I most enjoy about my current role is the freedom I have to think and pursue ideas, opportunities. But! It is the most difficult thing that I have ever done. EVER. This entrepreneur stuff is hard work.”**

Of this challenging work and that of her work with Race Forward, Jyarland says, **“But, I think for me, the real significance is when I am in a position to change hearts and minds and be a force that teaches about systemic racism and injustice. I came up with the idea for a video series that ‘teaches’ people about systemic racism when I was the Head of Marketing & Communications at Race Forward. I led an amazing team who**

helped to implement it... today when someone goes to Google and types, “What is systemic racism?” the very first thing that comes up is a [series of videos](#) from Race Forward that was my brain child! I can point a dozen statements and [articles](#) I have written and have been shared thousands of times that articulate why and how we must come together and in the face of a shooting of an unarmed person of color.”

Jyarland was accepted into the MBSP in 1992 as part of the inaugural cohort. She believes that MBSP helped build confidence in herself as she journeyed toward these successes in her career.

**“MBSP was instrumental to who I am as a person - even 20 years after graduation. (Wow! Has it been that long? Sheesh.) I think that it’s important that I say directly the benefits of MBSP aren’t limited to finding a position, and my experience bears witness to this...one of the many benefits of being in MBSP was the confidence I developed in interacting with people who were different than me and who also had tremendous influence at their organizations.”**

**“I have exhibited this same courage and willingness to speak directly to those in positions of authority and influence throughout my career. I attribute this partially to being in the MBSP and knowing that 1) I was good, and 2) believing that I had something important to say.”**

Jyarland spoke about Dr. Renate Mai-Dalton, MBSP director while Jyarland attended KU. Jyarland said **“Renate Mai-Dalton is a legend. She was amazing. She was devoted to the students like no one I have ever seen. My relationship with her was probably the best part -- she’s what a mentor should be. In fact, 7 years after I graduated I gave birth to my first and only child. Renate Mai-Dalton was there... The baby is now 17 years old, but Renate Mai-Dalton is still an important part of both of our lives. Relationships are everything. Even in MBSP.”**

Jyarland values MBSP because she was able to meet, interact, and create relationships with students of all different backgrounds. A big takeaway from Jyarland is continuing to ask why, to continue to ask why again and again. She believes it is key to unlock potential for people. She encourages MBSP scholars to stay curious and to do the work, **“You will not always get the credit you deserve for the work you do -- do it anyway!”**

Jyarland also recommends scholars reach out for mentoring opportunities, especially to MBSP Alumni. She herself is open and willing to be a mentor and offer support to MBSP Scholars—just one more demonstration of Jyarland’s exemplary Jayhawk spirit. Rock Chalk.

Derrick Williams, MBSP Scholar, Senior Finance and Marketing