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Historical Perspective of Miss Prairie View A&M University Scholarship Pageant

The era of the "seventies" introduced a new dimension of the Miss Prairie View Pageant. Growing out of an earlier period, which focused on the selection of a queen who reigned supreme in "Pantherland". The Miss Prairie View A&M Pageant extended its emphasis to enable the reigning "Miss Prairie View A&M" to become a competitor in the Miss Texas Pageant and ultimately the Miss America Pageant.

Broadening the University's philosophical premise that "education must encompass the personal -social development of the individual as well as his/her intellectual, professional and cultural development", the University purchased a franchise from the Miss Texas--Miss America Pageants, to provide opportunities for its young women to enter the broader social-cultural competitive arena.

On April 28, 1970, the Miss Prairie View A&M University Pageant became the first pageant at the University, which was sponsored in cooperation with the "Miss Texas", and the "Miss America" pageants. Margaret Penn of Houston, Texas was selected as the winner, and became the first Miss Prairie View A&M University to compete for the Miss Texas Title. Prairie View A&M University, once again, made a major thrust forward, as it moved into the mainstream of the America societal system. As it made this move, it also provided for its young ladies a national experience; namely, the State and National competitors for Miss America, as an environment for learning and an environment for studying the concepts of the Free Enterprise System by becoming competitors in the social and cultural environment.

It was the decade of the seventies and Prairie View A&M University was on the move. A new image was being forged and the university was moving boldly to end its first century of service to the State and Nation while charting its future as it moved into its "Second Century". Throughout the University there were visible signs of tangible changes... yes, a change of its physical form. In the intellectual environment the change was electrifying, as the University moved for Excellence. In the world of academics, it broadened its scope and a dynamic faculty, students and administrators, developed programs to serve the State, the nation and the international communities. Therefore, the ushering in of the Miss Prairie View A&M Pageant, as a part of the larger Miss Texas and Miss America pageants, was compatible with the "new philosophy" at the University.

"The decades of the Seventies" was heralded in with the selection of Miss Natalie McKinney of Bay City. The Pageant also made more impact during this period when Ava Malone of Houston was recognized as a non-finalist winner in Miss Texas Pageant. Lillie Taylor of Kinlock, Missouri and Lenice Brown of Prairie View, Texas followed her with the same award. The University received national recognition when Lillie L. Taylor was crowned Miss Collegiate Black America in 1985 and Shari Love was crowned Miss Black College Alumni Hall of Fame in 1987. The highlight for the Miss America System thus far has been the selection of Dellenor R. Miles of Houston, Texas as Fourth Runner-up to Miss Texas in 1984, thus becoming the first Miss Prairie View A&M University to be named as a finalist, in addition to the Most Talented Singer at the Pageant.

The 1990's promised to be the decade of achievement in pageantry for the University. Mary Ann Palmer of Bellville, Texas, Miss PVAMU 1989-90 was crowned Miss Collegiate African American 1990-91; Jolie McKeel of St. Louis, Missouri, Miss PVAMU 1990-91 was named 3rd Runner-up, Miss Black College Alumni Hall of Fame; Elizabeth E. Vaughn of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Miss PVAMU 1991-92, was named 4th runner-up in the Miss Black College Alumni Hall of Fame; Cynthia Lester of Tuskegee, Alabama, Miss PVAMU 1992-93 was named 3rd runner-up in the Miss Black College Alumni Hall of Fame and received the Judges award for being in the top 25 in the Miss Texas Pageant; Rezolia L. Johnson of Abilene, Texas, Miss PVAMU 1993-'94 was named 1st Runner-up, Miss Black Texas Metroplex and later named Miss Black Metroplex. In, 1994, the Pageant saw a major change when an international student, Donna Tomlinson of Westmoreland, Jamaica, was named Miss PVAMU 1994-'95, and named 4th Runner-up in the Miss Black College Alumni Hall of Fame; Kimberly Williams, Miss PVAMU 1995-'96, was named 1996-'97 2nd Runner-up in the Miss Collegiate African-American Pageant; and Chrystal Bender, Miss PVAMU 1997-'98, of Smyrna, Georgia was named 1st Runner-up, Miss Black Texas Metroplex. All of these charming young ladies brought international recognition to the University and the community.

Embarking on the 21st Century, the legacy of achievements in pageantry for the University continues. Kimberly N. Pierson, Miss PVAMU 2000-01, Erin I. Stevenson, Miss PVAMU 2001-2002, and Nella P. Mupier, Miss PVAMU 2002-2003, were all named finalists in the Miss Black College Alumni Hall of Fame. In 2005, Christie Cummings, Miss PVAMU 2004-2005 participated in the Inaugural Miss Southwestern Athletic Conference Pageant (SWAC) in Birmingham, Alabama. In 2006, Brandy M. Byers, Miss PVAMU 2005-2006, was named 1st Runner-up in the 2nd Annual Miss Southwestern Athletic Conference Pageant. Miss PVAMU 2006-2007, Lindsey J. Slay, represented the university during several events including a presentation to the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents Meeting.

The "Miss Prairie View A&M University Scholarship Pageant" has been an experience for the young women of Prairie View A&M University. It has served well as a part of the development of the "whole person." This conforms with the philosophy and is a treasured tradition of this great University.

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