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

Every man in his life has a part to play, and leaves a foot-print, seen and followed by some other. How well that part is played depends very largely on the man. It may be played carelessly, without any thought of its scope in reaching, touching, or influencing another's life. It may be footprints, nevertheless, someone may follow it and be stunted perhaps for life.

On the other hand, that part may be played with great care as to every detail, with much preparation, with the thought ever in view that: no man lives to himself alone, but that we are building character for each other for inspiration.

With this idea in view, Prairie View A&M University's 1985-1987 Yearbook staff decided that it was time to reveal the men who were striving to learn the lesson of true success, and thus planting such footprints on the "sand of time" that observing them one will be impressed, and encouraged to follow them, seeing they lead to excellence, not only here at Prairie View A&M University, but in our society. The path had been set in 1983 when Thomas Carroll was selected as Mr. Prairie View A&M University following his performance in the campus Talent and Fashion Show.

Hence, in the late 1980's, Prairie View A&M University was in the process of "Entering a New Dimension" in the sands of time. The year 1987 was embarked upon by the First Annual Mr. Prairie View A&M University Scholarship Pageant, which was held April 28 in the Memorial Student Center Ballroom. The purpose of this contest was to honor those men whose footprints led in the direction of success, leadership, and excellence: men of great caliber who possessed such qualities and leadership characteristics that made them worthy to be "Lord of Pantherland" and hold such a prestigious title as "Mr. Prairie View A&M University."

Although the other contestants were competitive and the sands appeared a little quickening at times, Mr. Ricky Valentino LaFontaine was selected as the winner, thus becoming the first "Mr. Prairie View A&M University."

During the exploration of this "New Dimension," the Yearbook staff discovered that Mr. Prairie View A&M University would not only serve as an honor to men of this outstanding university, but also to women by serving as the official escort to Miss Prairie View A&M University.

In 1988, the pageant received formal recognition by the Office of Student Activities, where Mr. Prairie View A&M University was elevated to the level of Miss Prairie View A&M University and receives some of the same amenities as prizes including scholarships and housing. Homer Smith, Jr. of Dallas, Texas formally participated in the Royal Coronation for Miss Prairie View A&M University. This year also marked the acceptance and respect for the male pageant concept. The increase in pageant contestants cause the pageant to relocate to Hobart Taylor Recital Hall.

The 1990's ushered in a new era for the Mr. Prairie View A&M University Scholarship Pageant. The pageant was enhanced and received widespread recognition and taken to new heights. Mr. Prairie View A&M University participated in various campus activities as well as community based events. The Pageant also served as the impetus for the creation for the Mr. Collegiate African American Pageant for Black College men in 1991. Mr. Deosick Burney, a Junior Accounting major from Los Angeles, California became the first Runner-up to Mr. Collegiate African American at the first pageant on April 4, 1992.