

## BUFFALO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER ALUMNI AFFAIRS



### Welcome Class of 2022 Alumni!

May 18, 2022 was a day of celebration for the Class of 2022 at the Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center. Graduates of BEOC's academic and allied health programs were recognized for completing their course of study and program requirements.

Commencement was held at the University at Buffalo North Campus Center for the Arts. Dr. Debra E. J. Thompson, current Interim Executive Director of the Center, officiated over the ceremony and conferred the certificates.

Presenting the keynote address was City of Buffalo Council President Darius G. Pridgen who also serves as the Senior Pastor of True Bethel Baptist Church of Buffalo.

Congratulations and welcome Class of 2022 to the BEOC alumni family!



**Distinguished Alumna 2022**  
*Reverend Tanya Spencer*  
Class of 1992



The Distinguished Alumni Award is presented annually to an alumna or alumnus who demonstrates the Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center mission of lifelong learning and who is self-empowered and committed to excellence.

### REVEREND TANYA SPENCER

Reverend Tanya Spencer's achievements are testament to the self-empowerment values of the BEOC.

A graduate of the Dental Assisting program, Reverend Spencer worked as a Dental Assistant for eight years. While working, she earned an Associates in Liberal Arts from SUNY Erie and her Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) certificate from BOCES. From 2005-2019 she worked at Buffalo Pediatrics, initially as a LPN and later as Office Manager. Earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Houghton College, Reverend Spencer was hired as a BEOC Adjunct Instructor teaching Pre-LPN, Electronic Health Records and Patient Services Technician courses.

Reverend Spencer's life re-focused when she answered a faith based calling. Earning a Masters in Strategic Leadership from Robert Wesleyan College and a Masters of Divinity from Northeastern Seminary, she became a Baptist Minister and an ordained Elder for the Free Methodist Tradition. Presently, she serves on the Executive Committee for the NY State Council of Churches where her work on the Poor People's Campaign provides a voice to the Governor to increase wages and expand fair housing opportunities. Last year, Reverend Spencer was ordained and recognized in the American Baptist denomination. Currently, she is the Pastor of Good Shepherd Community of Faith in Buffalo and the Orchard Park United Methodist Church in Orchard Park.

**BUFFALO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER ALUMNI AFFAIRS**

**BUFFALO EOC**  
SUNY UCAWD

**"BEOC gave me the foundation to continue my education."**

**MRS. LOUELLA COLE-BOWENS**  
**Arthur O. Eve Education and Community Service Honoree**  
**2022**



The Arthur O. Eve Education and Community Service Award is awarded to a student or alumna/alumnus who demonstrates leadership, advocacy, community service and/or commitment to education. The award honors the legacy of Mr. Arthur O. Eve, Deputy Speaker of the New York State Assembly for 35 years and spearheader of legislation that launched the EOCs throughout the state.

**MRS. LOUELLA COLE-BOWENS**

**Class of 1995**

Mrs. LouElla Cole-Bowens has empowered her family, students and community through her educational achievements mirroring the lifelong learning mission of the BEOC.

After completing the BEOC Certified Nursing Assistant Program and working at Sister's Hospital, Mrs. Cole-Bowens earned her Associates of Science degree. Shortly thereafter, while working at Erie County Medical Center and Buffalo General Hospital on the weekends, she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and a Long Term Care certification from D'Youville University. She was later canvassed for a teaching position at Bryant & Stratton College and became the Allied Health Program Director for both the Buffalo and Southtown campuses.

In 2005, Mrs. Cole-Bowens was hired as a BEOC Adjunct Instructor and became the lead instructor for the Medical Billing & Coding Program, where she has continued to teach for the past 17 years.

Mrs. Cole-Bowens has been employed



**Dr. Debra E. J. Thompson, Current Interim Executive Director, Presents Award to Mrs. LouElla Cole-Bowens**

by Erie County for 24 years as a Head Social Welfare Examiner and Medical Office Assistant at Erie County Medical Center. She currently works as a county Employment Counselor. In this position, she empowers others to pursue their own success.

Since 2017, as a role model to her family, students and clients, Mrs. Cole-Bowens has volunteered for *Stop the Violence Coalition*, a non-profit community based organization devoted to reducing violence in the City of Buffalo and its surrounding areas. Working along-side community leaders, Mrs. Cole-Bowens mentors at risk youth and young adults by equipping them with personal and professional development tools to transform their challenges into accomplishments.

**Update**

**CLASS UPDATES**

**WAY TO GO!  
CONGRATULATIONS!**

**LaShawn Chinn '96**

Current Director Villa Maria College Food Pantry, Adjunct Instructor

**de'Arcy Johnson '02**

Current IT Specialist  
Small Business Administration Office  
Capital Management Buffalo

**Yvette McCarter '01**

Celebrating 29 years as a  
Certified Pharmacy Technician at  
Buffalo Veterans Hospital

**Shanese McCoy '19**

Current Nursing Student  
Niagara County Community College

**Adam Murphy '21**

Current Sous Chef  
K:Dara Noodle Bar

**Alumni Affairs knows you are all doing great things!  
Where are you working? Are you retired?  
Are you in school? Did you get a degree?  
Are you volunteering?**

**We'd love to share your good news!**

BUFFALO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER ALUMNI AFFAIRS

## Alumni Raise Their Hands ... Support Center Events



### BEOC OPEN HOUSE



Left: Nicole Johnson '22  
Right: Sascha McLaurin '04

On October 8, 2022, the Admissions Office hosted an Open House inviting the community to learn how the Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center can support their academic and career aspirations.

After welcoming remarks from Dr. Julius Gregg Adams, BEOC Executive Director, Admissions Advisors presented a slide show highlighting the programs and services offered by the Center. Attendees had the opportunity to apply online during the event.

Formatted as a market-place, the Open House allowed the public to peruse information tables and have their questions answered directly from faculty and staff. BEOC alumni



engaged the public who visited the alumni information table by sharing their insight as to how the BEOC assisted them in achieving their academic and career success.

Attendees enjoyed light refreshments and received BEOC swag bags.



Marlyce Godoy James '11

### KIDS BOOK DRIVE



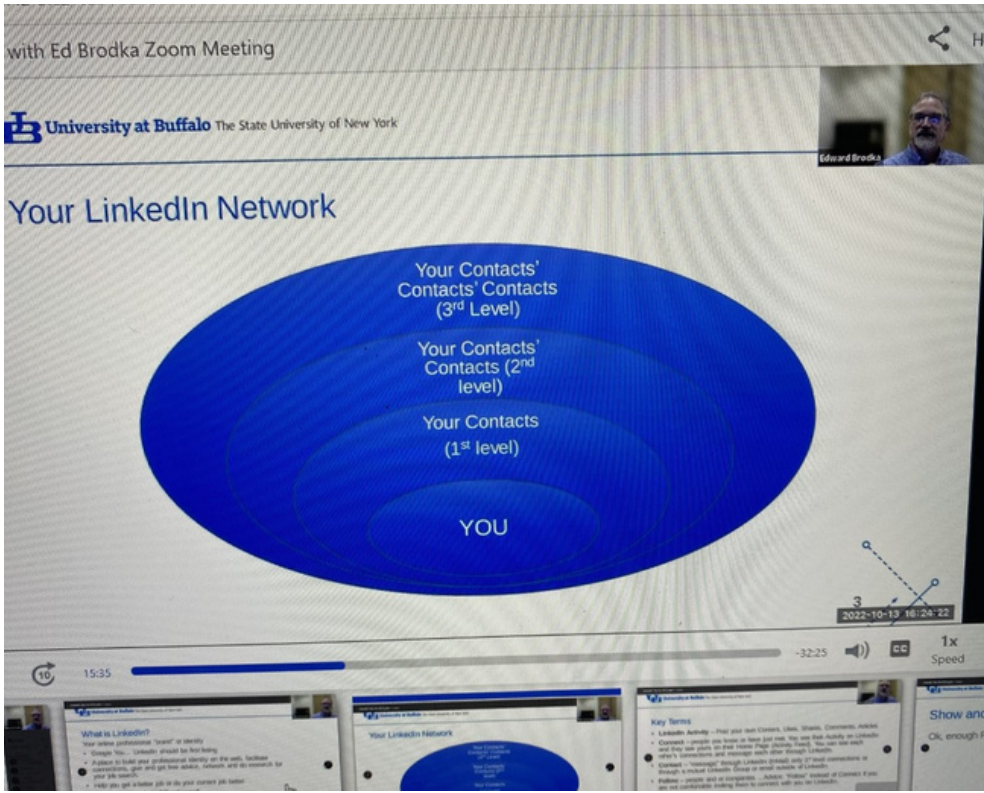
Left: Cheryl Williams-Manney, ParentChild+ Program Coordinator  
Right: Margot Barrett Keysor, Alumni Affairs Administrator

BEOC Alumni Affairs sponsored a book drive during the months of November and December to benefit ParentChild+, an international organization with a local site at the King Urban Life Center. The mission of the early childhood program is to develop literacy and language skills in children aged 18 months to 4 years, ensuring they enter pre-school and kindergarten reading at grade level. 42 families graduated last year from the program after completing 2 years of home based literacy activities.

The drive was very successful. BEOC alumni, along with faculty and staff, donated 170 books in support of this community initiative.

Margot Barrett Keysor, Alumni Affairs Administrator, presented the books on behalf of alumni, faculty and staff, to Cheryl Williams-Manney, ParentChild+ Program Coordinator. Ms. Williams-Manney extends her sincere thanks to all who participated and to Sascha McLaurin, BEOC Alumna and Literacy Specialist at ParentChild+, for her supporting efforts.

## BUFFALO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER ALUMNI AFFAIRS



### LINKEDIN ZOOM SESSION



**Ed Brodka, Presenter**

Mr. Ed Brodka is a Career Design Consultant and Career Counselor at the University at Buffalo Career Design Center. He is also a Career Readiness Competency Advocate and *LinkedIn* Educator.

Mr. Brodka has been a professional at UB for 30 years and holds a Masters degree in Communications.

On October 13, 2022, the Alumni Affairs and Student Retention Offices sponsored a virtual workshop via Zoom on *LinkedIn* to BEOC alumni and currently enrolled students. The session, presented by Mr. Ed Brodka, offered information as to the benefits of using this professional network to enhance one's career development, and inside tips as to how to make the most of this business-oriented website.

*LinkedIn* is a social platform that allows members to market career skills to managers, network and build relationships with companies and employers, build a career profile by creating a professional brand, search employment opportunities and post resumes.

*LinkedIn* is the world's largest professional network with more than 850 million members worldwide.



### MONTHLY SERIES

Each month the Alumni Affairs Office researches webinars presented by national and international professionals to enhance the personal and professional development of alumni. The links to these webinars are directly sent to alumni email accounts via the BEOC Alumni ListServ.

The webinars, all free of charge, cover a variety of topic areas including but not limited to: Family, Career, Finance, Education, Health and Wellness and Business.

If you would like access to these webinars, and are not on the Alumni ListServ, please email Margot Barrett Keysor at [keysor@buffalo.edu](mailto:keysor@buffalo.edu).

## BUFFALO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER ALUMNI AFFAIRS

**BUFFALO EOC**  
SUNY UCAWD

Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center



**ALUMNI WELCOME THE CLASS OF 2023!**



*"EOC was a first step I took to a brighter future. Things are possible if you fight for them. Don't quit. Stay focused."*

**INOCENCIA ACEVEDO 1990 ACADEMICS**  
Erie County Employment Counselor  
BS Computer Information Systems Buffalo State College

**ALUMNI AFFAIRS OFFICE**

**BUFFALO EOC**  
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**ALUMNI WELCOME THE CLASS OF 2023!**



*Congratulations!*


*"Yesterday's slice doesn't cut today's meat. Push forward.*

*The best is yet to come."*  
**DONALD PAULK CLASS OF 1974 COLLEGE PREP**  
2019 BEOC Distinguished Alumni Honoree  
Masters Degree Buffalo State College  
United States Marine Corps Veteran  
Former Coordinator WNY Veteran Housing


**ALUMNI AFFAIRS OFFICE**

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**ALUMNI WELCOME THE CLASS OF 2023!**




*"You have defied all odds.*

*Blaze new trails. Seek new horizons. Maximize every opportunity."*


**BERNARDA ARIAS 2017 MEDICAL BILLING AND CODING**  
Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center,  
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Administrator  
BS Business Administration Buffalo State College  
2021 BEOC Arthur O. Eve Education and Community Service Honoree

**BUFFALO EOC**  
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**ALUMNI WELCOME THE CLASS OF 2023!**




*"It's okay if you're not sure where to start.*

*Set small realistic goals. It's all about facing your future."*

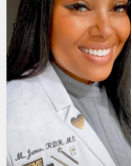
**NICOLE JOHNSON 2022**  
Central Sterilization

**BUFFALO EOC**  
SUNY UCAWD

Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center



**ALUMNI WELCOME THE CLASS OF 2023!**



*"It's either 'Day One' or 'One Day.'" (unknown)*

**MARLYCE GODOY JAMES 2011 DENTAL ASSISTING**  
Program Director SUNY Erie School of Dental Hygiene  
President Buffalo Dental Hygienists Association  
Masters Career and Technical Education Buffalo State College  
Registered Dental Hygienist RDH, Certified Dental Assistant CDA  
2020 BEOC Distinguished Alumni Honoree

### ALUMNI MESSAGES INSPIRE CLASS OF 2023

#### *Words of Wisdom from BEOC Alumni...*

Who better is there than BEOC alumni who have "walked the walk", to offer words of inspiration to 2022-2023 prospective and enrolled students?

In this initiative of the Alumni Affairs Office, alumni share their personal and professional insights through encouraging messages that are marketed by BEOC Admissions and displayed on the Center's internal electronic digital boards.

These words of wisdom serve as an incentive to others to work towards the realization of their own goals by highlighting the academic and career success of alumni who initially started their journey at BEOC.

If you would like to participate in this initiative and motivate others who follow in your BEOC footsteps, contact Margot Barrett Keysor, Alumni Affairs Administrator, at [keysor@buffalo.edu](mailto:keysor@buffalo.edu).

### CENTER PERSONNEL UPDATES

*Congratulations!*

Michael Baugh Ph.D. - Associate Professor, Retired

Michelle Debergalis - Director of Administrative Services

Larry Donalson - Admissions Supervisor

Jamie Eisele - Admissions Advisor

Chris Fredrick - Instructional Support Technician

Anthony Funigiello - Coordinator of Institutional Effectiveness

Misty Garrett - Coordinator of Dental Assistant Program

Nancy Lane - Associate Professor, Retired

Elaine Megna DDS - In Memorium

John Mong - Staff Assistant, Administrative Services

Shana Richardson - Director of Student Support Services

Beverly Taggart - Admissions Advisor

Debra E. J. Thompson Ph.D. - Interim BEOC Executive Director; Earned Doctorate from UB Educational Leadership & Policy Department

Lynette Towns - Career Services Supervisor

**BUFFALO EOC CELEBRATING 50 YEARS 1973-2023**

BUFFALO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER ALUMNI AFFAIRS

**BEOC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S RETIREMENT  
FIRST BEOC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S AWARD  
COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP RECOGNITION DINNER**  
*Congratulations!*



**Ms. Marlyce Godoy James**

**BEOC Class of 2011**

**Professional Accomplishments:**

- Current Department Head SUNY Erie School of Dental Hygiene
- Currently pursuing doctoral degree in Health Professions Education at D'Youville University
- Accepted into Leadership Buffalo's Class of 2023
- President of the Buffalo Chapter of the American Dental Hygienists' Association
- Director on Board of NY Dental Hygienists' Association
- Master of Science and Bachelor of Science in Career and Technical Education, Buffalo State College
- Launched scholarship "Minorities Aspiring to Become Registered Dental Hygienists" (MarDH) SUNY Erie



**Dr. Julius Gregg Adams**  
**BEOC Executive Director**

*"I want to take this opportunity to thank the faculty and staff for their work with our students. Being the Executive Director has been one of the most important professional roles that I have had. It has been an honor to serve a group of students who are passionate, bright and willing to go the extra mile for their families and themselves."*

On December 9, 2022, the BEOC hosted its Community Leadership Recognition Dinner celebrating the retirement of Dr. Julius Gregg Adams, BEOC Executive Director, and honoring Ms. Marlyce Godoy James and Mr. Garnell W. Whitfield, Jr. as the first recipients of the BEOC Executive Director's Award. The award recognizes former students who have demonstrated leadership in their respective field.

Dr. A. Scott Weber, University at Buffalo Provost, announced the appointment of Dr. Debra E. J. Thompson as Interim Executive Director of the BEOC.



**Mr. Garnell W. Whitfield Jr.**

**BEOC Class of 1982**

**Professional Accomplishments:**

- Current national and community advocate against gun violence, testifying before the US Senate Judiciary Committee
- Assistant Commissioner of Homeland Security for NY State
- Former City of Buffalo Fire Commissioner
- Former City of Buffalo Deputy Commissioner of Emergency Medical Services
- Former City of Buffalo Commissioner of Personnel and Administration

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**ALUMNI AFFAIRS OFFICE**

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**BEOC knew you THEN.  
We'd like to know you NOW.**