Louisiana Native Donates $100,000 to Grambling State University

Photo: Bernadene High Coleman

By: E’Vonne T. Gipson

A native of Plain Dealing, Louisiana knows the value of receiving a higher education, and because she does, Bernadene Coleman donated $100,000 to support Grambling State University in helping others achieve that milestone.

“All of us should be willing to share and not be selfish about what we do, we need to pass it on,” Coleman said.

The donation will greatly assist the university in its vision to continue to be a distinguished institution that produces accomplished top-tier graduates sought by global employers, particularly in the fields of science, engineering technology, mathematics, business, nursing, mass communication and teacher education.
Although Coleman did not receive her degree from Grambling State University, she understands the role and relevance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities and the importance of giving back to ensure HBCUs continue to survive.

Coleman’s early education was in Shreveport, LA. She and her family moved to Los Angeles, in 1944, where she received her BA degree from California State University and her MS degree from Loyola-Marymount. She also attended UCLA School of Writing.

Coleman believes that pursuing a higher education is a decision that will have a positive impact on the decision makers’ life. As a strong African American woman, she believes those who have received their education should be leaders and encourage those who are in the process of receiving a higher education to do the same.

"More black females should be encouraged to enter fields of math and science,” Coleman said.

Coleman emphasized the need for woman to take a stand because not only is she an educated woman, but she is a role model to her siblings. Coleman is the second eldest of five girls.

After retirement from the school district as a reading specialist, Mrs. Coleman began to pursue her deferred dream to become a writer by becoming a student all over again in order to sharpen her skills.

As time passed along, and she continued to work hard and dedicate long hours to her dream she became a published author. She has three published novels, “Mama Rose”, “I Leave You My Dreams”, and “Beyond Color.” She has also published two books of poetry, “Listen My Children” and “Saffron and Sage”.

Coleman enjoys her craft and is available to speak to groups and participate in poetry readings. The donor remains a busy body as she is not only a life-long supporter of higher education, but she is a life-long learner.

Coleman continues to serve as an elder in the Presbyterian Church where she has taught junior and senior high Sunday school for 36 years. She has also taught Adult Bible Classes and Marriage Encounter and Fitness groups. She is also involved in community activities such as the Culver City Library, Culver City Sister City Program, her sorority, and is a fund raiser for UNCF. She is also a member of 2 writing groups and still finds time to give to her 8 grandchildren.

Coleman’s generous donation is greatly appreciated by the students, faculty and administration at Grambling State University because these are the types of contributions that make receiving a quality education possible.