



THE DREXEL 100

A Newsletter for Drexel University's "Alumni Hall of Fame" - Summer 2023

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR



Dear Drexel 100 Members,

I hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying summer. As we approach the midpoint of the year, I am thrilled to have the opportunity to share some exciting updates from campus and a preview of what's on the horizon for the Drexel 100.

24 Hours of Impact, Drexel's annual day of giving raised \$1,331,438 on May 10. Members of the Drexel 100 collectively contributed \$518,000 in donations and challenge dollars toward this record-breaking fundraising total. Thank you to the members who made a gift during 24 Hours of Impact, your generosity plays an essential role in enhancing the mission and student experience at Drexel. I encourage all members to consider the newly established Drexel 100 Endowed Scholarship Fund in their annual giving. Our goal is to build a \$1.2 million endowment, allowing

the Drexel 100 to aid deserving students each year with the scholarships, into perpetuity. You can support undergraduate students in their preparation as future leaders by making a gift to the Drexel 100 Endowed Scholarship Fund. To contribute go to giving.drexel.edu/Drexel100.

We continue to build on our goal of creating new opportunities for the Drexel 100 to connect with the University and each other. It was heartening to see many of you on campus for Alumni Weekend this past May reconnecting and sharing stories with your fellow alumni. In the spirit of strengthening bonds and sharing great stories, I invite you to get to know a fellow Drexel 100 member, University Trustee, and "A Legacy to Share" author, Richelle Parham '91, in this newsletter. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to learn more about some of our most recent inductees in the next issue of Drexel Magazine this fall.

Induction into the Drexel 100 represents the highest honor alumni can achieve. This honor is especially meaningful because it represents recognition by one's peers. The next cohort of elite Drexel 100 inductees will be selected by you — the current Drexel 100 members. I look forward to sharing with you details regarding the impressive slate of nominees and the selection process in September and celebrating at the next Drexel 100 Induction Ceremony during Alumni Weekend in May 2024.

In closing, I want to thank each and every one of you for your continued support of Drexel. Your contributions make a tremendous difference in the lives of current students and future generations.

Best,

Angela Dowd-Burton '74, '79

Drexel University Trustee
Chair, The Drexel 100

Richelle Parham

BS Business Administration '91

BS Design Arts '91



Richelle Parham '91 has never shied away from hard work. Parham received dual bachelor's degrees — one in business administration and one in design arts — in her four years as an undergraduate. With her sights set on a career in fashion, Parham completed all three of her co-ops at Valentino, one the world's most preeminent fashion brands. Over the course of an accomplished three-decade career, she has worked for some of the most recognizable names in business, including Citibank, Visa, eBay, and Universal Music Group, where she currently serves as president of Global eCommerce and Business Development.

Parham's drive was always there, but as a Drexel student, she channeled inspiration into action, a mindset that would ultimately define the rest of her professional career.

"I'm most comfortable when I'm balancing a lot of different initiatives, when no day is the same," says Parham. "Being a part of two very different schools, I had to learn how to balance, for example, economics and completing a light installation, all in the same day. Throughout my career, I have had really strong creative and innovation focused components to my roles, including now at UMG. Drexel prepared me for that."

Following her graduation in 1991, Parham worked at Citicorp Telemarketing Services in Baltimore, quickly rising to the role of supervisor, and eventually, accepting a role on the retail banking side of Citi. Later, at advertising agency Bronner Slosberg Humphrey, which is now known as Digitas, Parham lent her teleservices and eCommerce expertise to clients like AT&T, IBM, and Motorola. She quickly ascended the corporate ladder, thanks in large part to her knowledge of eCommerce, digital marketing, and customer experience design, and in 2003, she assumed the role of senior vice president, general manager of Digitas Chicago.

"Among the many lessons I took from Drexel was that once you learn something, it's always in your toolkit," she says. "My dream was to be in the business side of fashion. I wasn't just taking design classes to learn more about the technical side of fashion, I was doing it because I wanted to understand the entire fashion industry. I wanted to make sure that I walked into the room smarter."

According to Parham, Drexel co-ops played a significant role in providing hands on learning experiences, many of which shaped her own vision for the future.

"I felt like I had amassed all this great learning from the people and places I had interacted with," she says. "When you look at my career, many people ask me 'how can you switch industries?' It's because the fundamental skills I learned along the way were transferable. They're industry agnostic."

For the last 20 years, Parham has held senior-level and C-suite positions at some of the most influential, global companies. Still, she remains closely tied to place that inspired her professional exploration, serving as an active alumna of Drexel University, both through various leadership roles and as a frequent mentor and guest lecturer.

"When I was in school, I didn't have a lot of answers, and what's more is I didn't have a lot of people to ask," Parham recalls. "For me, it's important to be a part of the institution, number one, because I'm so proud of how far Drexel has come, but also because it's a chance for me to give back — to be part of the fabric of something bigger than myself."

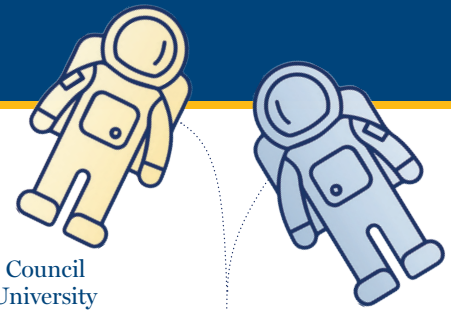
Parham has served as a member of the University's Board of Trustees since 2014, most recently, co-chairing the Enrollment Management and Student Success Committee, which gives her an opportunity to play a greater role in Drexel's efforts to enroll the next generation of students. In addition to her role as a Drexel Trustee, Parham is a member of the Drexel University Black Alumni Council, and she was inducted into The Drexel 100 — representing alumni who have made significant contributions to their profession, community, or the University — in 2013.

"We want to make sure that when we enroll students at Drexel, we are doing more than bringing students in, we are working to make sure they have a successful experience," she says.

Now, more than 30 years since she left campus a graduate, Parham has an even greater appreciation for the role Drexel played in her professional career, and its enduring impact on her own life.

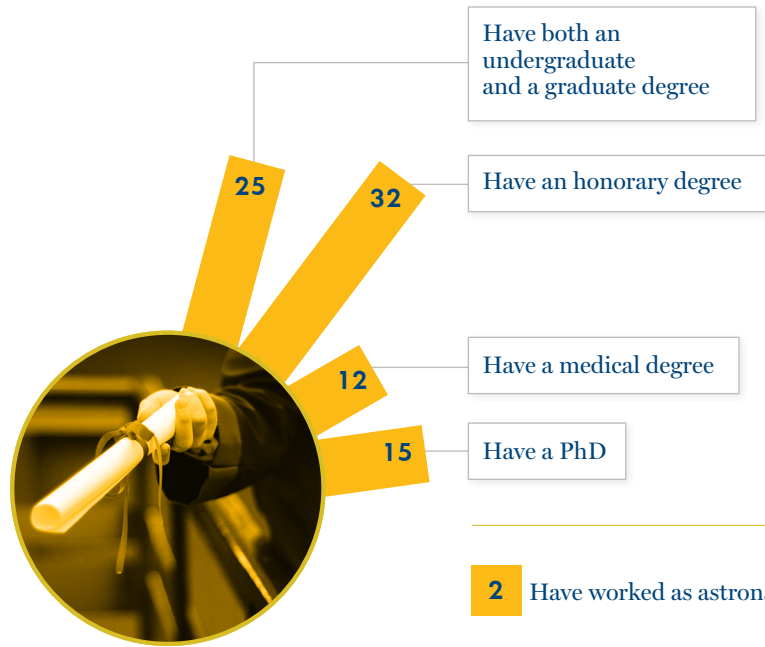
"The Drexel I was a part of then and the Drexel I am a part of now are very different," she explains. "When I was a student, I was just trying to get it all done, but now I have a lot of heart for Drexel. Knowing that we're creating something that is lasting, that we're creating opportunity — that's what makes Drexel really special to me." •

THE DREXEL 100: BY THE NUMBERS



5 Serves on a Presidential Council (other than the Drexel University Board of Trustees)

20 Served on the Drexel Alumni Board of Governors



57 Participated in Greek organizations — a fraternity or sorority



43 Participated on a sports team while a student

Top colleges/schools represented by the Drexel 100

LeBow College of Business

66

College of Engineering

63

College of Arts and Sciences

16

