

Winston-Salem native leaves Wake Forest debt-free and employed

Michael Green, raised by single mom, overcomes the odds

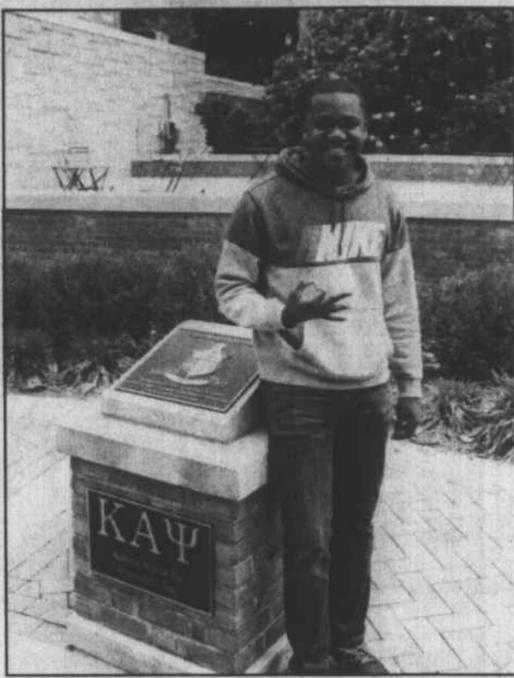
BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Michael Green, a Winston-Salem native, is a 22-year-old 2015 Wake Forest University graduate with no debt and a job lined up with Deloitte Consulting in Washington, D.C.

The youngest of three children, Green was raised by a single mom. When he was in high school, his mother, Carol, worked two jobs hoping to help her son with his upcoming college expenses, but knowing she could never afford to pay for a college like Wake Forest.

Then one day, she took a call from him saying that he'd gotten the Joseph G. Gordon Scholarship, a full-ride scholarship covering all his expenses at Wake Forest University. She was so happy she hollered and screamed with joy. The Winston-Salem State University graduate promptly returned to having one full-time job as a teacher's assistant at Southwest Elementary School.

The Gordon Scholarship is a merit-based scholarship for underrepresented students, such as African-Americans like Green. Up to seven scholars are chosen annually. Green said he always knew he'd get in a good university because he had



Michael Green poses with a monument to his fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi.

good grades; it was just a matter of paying for it.

"My family has a very strong tradition of higher education, and so it was always expected that I go to college," he said. "That was always part of my plan. I always knew whatever I wanted to do would require a college education."

As a child in Winston-Salem, he walked to school at Kimberley Park Elementary and Paisley IB Magnet School, where he attended sixth through 10th grade. At Paisley, he started in the International Baccalaureate program, which he would finish at Parkland Magnet High School. He said the rigorous program helped him

prepare for college with diverse, challenging courses that emphasized writing.

His exposure to college began at an early age. While attending Paisley, he participated in the Duke TIP (Talent Identification Program) for four summers. TIP lets young students who score high enough on the SAT to participate in three-week summer enrichment programs held on college campuses. In Green's case, he went to Appalachian State University and the University of Georgia.

In his sophomore year, his English class got library cards to the Wake Forest University Library. Going there to do research was his



Michael Green's family congratulates him after graduating from Wake Forest University on May 18. They are (L-R) Gloria Green, his grandmother; Carol Green, his mother; and Latoya Hunt, his sister.

first exposure to Wake Forest.

"I just remember it being a huge library," he said. "I remember coming here with my friends and just being in awe."

Green's scholarship required him to live on campus for all four years. The university was only a few minutes from his house, so he was able to keep his barber and attend his home church, and his mother was only a phone call away.

During his sophomore year, he lived in the H.O.P.E. (Helping Our People Excel) House, a student residence with a community service theme. House residents mentored students at low-income schools, like his former schools, Paisley and Parkland.

This was a cause near to Green's heart. He's been involved with Big Brothers, Big Sisters and mentored students at Kimberley Park Elementary. He said it's very important to him to mentor disadvantaged youth.

"For them to see that

there are people who look like them in these spaces – going to college, being successful – I think that's very powerful. I think that can be very influential in the lives of young people," he said.

Green said it was a change of scenery going from the predominately poor, minority public schools he attended to the largely white, affluent Wake Forest, but he always felt welcome. He said that he found his niche to fit in and become involved on the campus, joining Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity and serving as a President's Aide, being a part of a group of student advisers to Wake's president.

"If you give a lot to the campus, it'll give a lot to you," he said.

Green initially wanted to be a business major, but eventually landed on politics and international affairs. He did an internship at a lobbying firm that worked in Washington, D.C. and fell in love with the city. During the on-campus Summer Management Program

(SMP), representatives from Deloitte came down to talk about their company and do a case study with students. He was able to connect and network with people from the company.

"When they told me they worked with federal organizations and that they're based in the Washington, D.C., area, I was basically sold," he said.

Eventually they hired him, and he'll soon move to Washington, D.C. to begin his job as a human capital analyst, helping federal organizations with their human resource needs.

Carol, whose daughter is a teacher and other son is attending WSSU, said she was very glad her youngest son got the chance to attend Wake Forest.

"It's one of the best experiences he could have had," she said.

For more information about the Joseph G. Gordon Scholarships, go to <http://financialaid.wfu.edu/merit-based-scholarships/joseph-g-gordon-scholarships/>.



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