

Spotlight on PVAMU Alumnus and Disney Executive Andre M. Hale

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla., Aug. 18, 2011 – In anticipation of the 7th annual MEAC/SWAC Challenge presented by Disney, Walt Disney World Minority Business Development stopped by the office of Andre Hale, director of Accounts Payable at Disney Worldwide Shared Services, for a brief conversation about the upcoming game.

Scheduled for Labor Day Weekend, Bethune-Cookman of the MEAC and Prairie View A&M of the SWAC are standing at the ready to get this football party started. An alumnus of one of this year's competing teams, the Prairie View A&M Panthers, Hale shared stories of his college days, team spirit and value of being educated at a historically black university.

Hale knew when he left Los Angeles to begin his college years in Prairie View, Texas he was in for a much different experience. From the bright lights, fast-pace and diversity of LA, Hale traded it all in for a small town of about 5,000 people, an accredited Historically Black College and University (HBCU), and the second oldest public institution of higher education in Texas.

"Being a city kid, one gets used to the fast paced city life of things going on all the time," says Hale. "The first six months were the hardest, but after that you could not pay me to go back to Los Angeles."

While this move was a major culture shock for Hale, it also became one of the most valued aspects of his education.

"I didn't realize how lost in the fray I actually was until my experience at PVAMU," recalls Hale. "I wasn't just a number or part of the crowd; my education was about me. I made relationships that have withstood the test of time and I got a great education out of it to boot. You can't beat that."

Attending historically black universities is part of Hale's family history. Both of Hale's parents attended HBCU's and chose to send him to PVAMU, where he thrived academically. Making education his first priority, Hale accomplished a great deal.

He made the honor roll and joined Phi Beta Lambda, a business fraternity aimed at developing aggressive business leaders. Hale was voted Mr. College of Business, Prince Hall Mason and chapter president three years in a row for the "greatest fraternity in the world, Kappa Alpha Psi [Fraternity, Incorporated]."

Hale recognizes the impact PVAMU has had on his success as a Disney Cast Member. Concepts like being a leader and not a follower, and carrying himself with pride and determination are several values that were instilled in Hale during his college days. These values continue to mold him today in his role as a Disney executive in accounts payable where he leads a team that processes invoices for all of Disney North America and European Regions. With all that responsibility, he still finds time to contribute back to the community as a board member of several local organizations.

"In college we were never told what couldn't be done, but rather what we could do if we set our minds to it," says Hale. "Disney shares many of these beliefs within its own culture as a company."

Since the first Disney-sponsored MEAC/SWAC Challenge, Hale has attended each and every game. He is thrilled with the opportunity to see his own "Mighty Panthers" take to the field, right here in sunny Central Florida. "Talk about a dream come true," says Hale, with a smile.

"It means a lot to me to see the company I work for – Walt Disney Parks & Resorts – sponsor this event, especially

since HBCU sports are really second to none,” says Hale. “HBCU’s don’t always have the opportunity, on such a national level, to showcase the talented athletes they have within their ranks.”

For more information about the MEAC/SWAC Challenge presented by Disney, please visit: www.meacswacchallenge.com