

# Georgia Student Kimberly Hadaway Overcomes the Odds to Receive \$1.8 Million In Scholarships

By **Tabitha Berg** - May 24, 2017 8:00 AM EDT



The Foundation for Ensuring Access and Equity today announced that on Sunday, May 28, 2017 the Turner Chapel AME Church in Marietta, Georgia will host its 10th Annual High School Graduation Celebration Worship Service. The blessings will be flowing for several students who have been offered full college scholarships. However, for Paulding County High School's Kimberly Hadaway, the blessings are overflowing with full scholarships to 6 of the country's top colleges: Princeton, Duke, Vanderbilt, Washington and Lee, Amherst, and Williams.

For the past ten years, the church's Education Ministry Leaders, Mychal and Nina Wynn, a college planning couple, who operate the Foundation for Ensuring Access and Equity's nationally recognized 'College Planning Cohort(TM) Program' began inspiring elementary

school students through the church's biannual academic celebrations to aspire toward big college-bound dreams.

As a third grader, Kimberly approached Mr. Wynn with a request, "Mr. Wynn, I want to go to college and my mother cannot afford to pay for me to go to college. Since you know all of this college planning stuff, tell me what I need to do."

Since that fateful request for help, the Wynns have been guiding Kimberly's college trajectory. First, through test prep for Georgia's CRCT testing as an elementary and middle school student. Then, by developing a 7-year middle-through-high school course schedule, heavy in advanced math, science, and Advanced Placement classes. Then, by encouraging Kimberly to make a commitment to leadership and community service. Finally, putting Kimberly on the radar of selective institutions with need-based, 'no loans,' financial aid policies by applying to their 'Diversity Weekend' programs.

Kimberly and her mother worked together as a team to follow the plan. The three-way partnership of Kimberly doing the work, her mother providing the support, and the Turner Chapel Education Ministry providing the guidance, achieved remarkable results. With grit and determination, Kimberly took each class that Mr. Wynn outlined, earned an 'A' in each class, earned a final grade of 100+ over 50 times, earned a passing score on 17 AP exams, and achieved an ACT Score in the 99th percentile nationally ('33') by Mr. Wynn's deadline—June of her junior year of high school.

Kimberly's full college scholarship offers could not come at a better time. After suffering through years of long-term unemployment, Kimberly's single-parent mother has lost their home to foreclosure. Kimberly and her mom will be vacating their home within days following Kimberly's graduation, as class salutatorian, at Paulding County High School. As her mom seeks temporary housing, Kimberly will be on her way, on a full scholarship and an all-expenses paid 'Summer Science Program' at the top ranked liberal arts college in the United States—Williams College where she will major in mathematics.

Kimberly is 1 of 183 high school seniors from throughout the State of Georgia to be selected as 2017 Georgia Scholars, will serve on the National Elks Scholar Advisory Board, and was offered admission to the prestigious Meyerhoff Scholars Program at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County. Kimberly was also offered admission and scholarships to Swarthmore, Xavier University of Louisiana, Spelman College, and Howard University.

Mr. Wynn reflects on Kimberly's remarkable achievement, "The advice that we offered Kimberly, as a third grader, is the same as we offer every student—a student's coursework, grades, and test scores represent the most direct pathway to being offered a full college scholarship. As a result of accepting our guidance, putting forth the effort to become a top student, and applying to the 'right' colleges, Kimberly is deserving of her \$1.8 million in scholarship offers."

Kimberly's mother, Yvette Ifill, still overwhelmed by the enormity of it all, comments, "I am a native of Guyana who knew nothing about the U.S. public education system. Without the Wynns guidance, the Turner Chapel AME Church's College Planning Cohort, and our small group coach, Mrs. Kim Sackey, this would not have been possible. My daughter has always been a good student, but being a good student is not enough. The Wynns exposed Kimberly to Diversity Weekend opportunities, reviewed all of her college essays, assisted her in preparing for interviews, and interacted with college admissions and financial aid officers on our behalf. They have held our hand, step-by-step since Kimberly was in elementary school."

Rev. Don Ezell, Youth Pastor of the Turner Chapel AME Church, notes, "For the past 10 years, as Education Ministry Leaders, Mychal and Nina Wynn, have been guiding students in our church into top colleges and millions of dollars in scholarships. Many of our students have attended the best undergraduate programs on full scholarships, with many of whom now attending and graduating from the best graduate schools, law schools, and medical school programs. As a parent, I cannot think of anyone better qualified to assist students with their college planning, particularly students from lower-income families. This year, we also have students who have received full scholarship offers to Amherst College, Clark Atlanta, Tennessee State, Indiana University Purdue University-Indianapolis, Brenau, and Dillard University."

In addition to providing private college planning consulting, the Wynns College Planning Cohort(TM) Program has been implemented in the Guilford County Schools (NC), Florence County School District 3 (SC), and Judson ISD (TX); has been adopted by the faith-based, Crossroads for Teens program; and is currently under review by Clemson University as a National Dropout Prevention Model.

More information: <http://www.accessandequity.org/>.