

Inside Alumni Relations BY ABIGAIL HOLMES

MAYOR SAMUEL PARHAM

As a Richard Bland College Alum, the Mayor of Petersburg shares memories of his college life-long friendship with Sean Robertson, Class of '96.



Mayor Samuel Parham and his good friend, Sean Robertson grew up in Petersburg, VA where they attended school together from their time at Stuart Elementary to RBC where they graduated in May of '96. Sharing his experiences at RBC, the Mayor fondly looks back at the school and the foundation it gave him

"Growing up in Petersburg, I have always loved this city. I met some of my best friends here, including Sean. I remem-

ber staying late with him after elementary school to help my mom, who was a teacher, crank the mimeograph machine." The two friends gravitated toward each other during school, playing sports and video games as some of the first Madden NFL interactive series kids.

In high school, Mayor Parham worked in the family business where his father encouraged him to attend RBC to pay less for a quality education close to home. Mayor Parham says, "My dad offered to help keep my sister and me out of debt. He would say, 'you're getting more

bang for your buck at Richard Bland while adding the necessary tools to your belt to get you to the next level."

Robertson's mom gave Mayor Parham gas money to give him a ride to campus every day, and the friends' college adventures began. "We spent most of our time in the commons between classes, hanging out and eating taco salad. Before our afternoon classes, we would head to the gym to play intramural basketball," remembers Mayor Parham, adding, "Time was a lot slower back then."



"Every professor wanted us to succeed. My history professor, William Jefferson, and communications professor, David Majewski, were some of the best professors I've ever had." With the support of faculty, the friends started a Multicultural Alliance Club to unite all ethnicities and nationalities on campus, organizing dances and fashion shows to gather students.

He says, "Graduation was a bittersweet moment for Sean and me because it meant we wouldn't be riding to school together or seeing each other every day. He went on to Virginia State and I transferred to Virginia Commonwealth, and I was separated from my brother by a school for the first time."

"Robertson went on to become a Sports Anchor for Channel 6 News, and Mayor Parham is serving his 6th term in office. Because of the mayor's love



Robertson's mom gave Mayor Parham gas money to give him a ride to campus every day, and the friends' college adventures began.

for the city and his desire to revitalize it, he is developing a program to get the next generation involved in city government where high schoolers can shadow first responders and local government departments. I didn't have a clue what was going on in the city's government when I was growing up. I want to lay the groundwork for the next generation of leaders by exposing them to current events and potential career paths," says the mayor. "RBC is helping to revitalize the city of Petersburg by educating students who can enter into the city's labor market."

The two friends thoroughly enjoyed and grew in their few years at RBC, which prepared them for where they are in their careers today. Their life-long friendship and experiences at RBC are special memories and a testament to the nature of RBC.