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et al.: The spirit of JMU personified

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The spirit of JMU personified

It's in the fact that I've never met a stranger wearing purple and gold. It's in the way that the men's head basketball coach said sorry after he missed a congratulatory fist-pound from a fan after an exciting overtime win at the Convo. It's in the literal and figurative "opening doors" philosophy we have. It's in my observation of a student holding the door open for a good 20 seconds while waiting for the next student.

It's in running into a former SMAD professor at the suite level of a football game.

It's in the Facilities Management staff waving hello to me in the mornings.

It's in the way cars slow down at campus crosswalks to wait for pedestrians to cross.

It's in the way one student-athlete sat down with a fellow student who had said, "I feel stuck" following a powerful campus event about mental health. It's in my observation of her listening and offering a shoulder.

It's in my witnessing a community member picking up trash on a downtown street.

It's in the way a student was moved to tears while asking a question about a loved one's suicide. It's in the way a fellow student offered a comforting gesture and said, "It's OK."

It's in the way I strike up conversations with random tailgaters before football games. (See above: There are no strangers in purple and gold.)

It's in the way I left a lunch with the vice president for university advancement feeling inspired and motivated to achieve great things.

It's in the way I spoke with pride to parents and prospective students who asked about my Madison Experience while volunteering at two college fairs.

It's in seeing my supervisor on Saturdays at the farmers market and at a local brewery.

It's in the pleasure I got from reviewing and critiquing student resumes at SMAD Day.

It's in the way our student assistants look out for each other. It's in how they text one another to give a heads-up about the parking lot being full before coming to work.

It's in the head nods of approval I get from strangers—er, JMU community members; no strangers, remember—while I walk around town in a JMU shirt.

It's in the feels and positive vibes many of us got after working awesome campaign events.

It's in the way that I fell in love with JMU all over again.

It's in the way I got goosebumps while writing the above.

This is the spirit of JMU. It's what we're known for, and it's what we fully embrace. We are a community of doers, collaborators, leaders, team players, advocates and allies. It's a factor in what drew me back to serve this place I hold dear.

But I don't want to make this about me. It's about all of you. In the spirit of collaboration, we want *Madison* magazine to be a vehicle by which we collaborate on storytelling. There are so many interesting things happening on campus and around the community. We want to tell those stories. Please email madisonmag@jmu.edu if you have a compelling angle, which speaks to the JMU spirit, that you'd like to pitch.

We hope you enjoy this issue. Feedback is always welcome.

Sincerely,



Khalil Garriott

Khalil Garriott ('04)

Executive Editor, *Madison* magazine

"It's in the way that I fell in love with JMU all over again."

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