
FLORIDA MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

NEWS RELEASE

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**FLORIDA INDEPENDENT COLLEGE FUND AWARDS PRESTIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP TO FLORIDA
MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY STUDENT**

(MIAMI GARDENS, FL, SEPTEMBER 7, 2005) – “I just can’t believe it! Things are really falling into place for me,” exclaimed Ereatha C. McCullough, a recipient of this year’s Florida Independent College Fund’s (FICF) Degree Completer II Scholarship Award. Based in Deland, the purpose of FICF’S Degree Completer II Scholarship is to offer a monetary award to deserving students who have expressed financial need and are near completion of earning a bachelor’s degree from one of Florida’s accredited colleges and universities.



Ereatha McCullough (right) beams while accepting her FICF Degree Completer II Scholarship Award from mentor Roscoe Warren, Director of Enrollment Management at Florida Memorial University.

Ereatha is one of Florida Memorial’s most noteworthy and motivated seniors, balancing a major in Interdisciplinary Studies/Humanities while working full-time as a Data Entry Representative in the university’s Office of Admissions. “She impresses me with her unique ability to multitask with a smile,” stated Mr. Roscoe Warren, Director of Enrollment Management. “My co-workers have nothing but wonderful things to say about this young lady and we are confident in her ability to succeed in all of her proposed endeavors.”

When asked about her prior college aspirations, Ereatha is not shy about admitting that she previously had “no initial desire to go to college.” Her lack of interest in pursuing a college education quickly changed once she was introduced to a representative from Florida Memorial who enticed her with an attractive opportunity. In September of 1985, she met a recruiter named Erma Williams who traveled to her hometown high school in Chicago, Illinois in search of talented students who would be interested in accepting one of Florida Memorial’s available music scholarships.

An opportunity to earn a college degree in sunny South Florida while pursuing her passion to sing with a gospel choir was a deal too sweet to ignore. The following fall, she enrolled in Florida Memorial to pursue her interests in singing and drama. After facing several personal trials and tribulations, she was forced to withdraw from school, which marked the beginning of her miraculous spiritual journey and renewed faith in Christianity. Once undergoing what she refers to as her “emotional healing phase,” she returned to Florida Memorial University to resume the mission she initiated a decade ago: earning her bachelor’s degree.

One of the secrets to Ereatha's personal success lies in her religious faith and strong roots in the Baptist church. She is currently a member of the New Vision for Christ Church and looks forward to counseling young adults in the church's Single Ministry, which is a work in progress. She is also active with the Florida Memorial University Drama Guild and boasts about her popularity as a frequently requested vocalist for weddings, special events and church functions.

Other recent honors include the Women's Day Committee Certificate of Appreciation, the Outstanding Drama Instructor Appreciation Certificate, and a Certificate of Completion as a Spiritual Counselor.

Once Ereatha receives her bachelor's degree next spring, she will dedicate her efforts to developing "RUDY (Reach Up Determined Youth)," a nonprofit organization she founded and incorporated on July 9, 2003 while residing in Los Angeles, California. This feat is what she described as her "first leap of faith towards empowering the dream." Her ultimate goal is to open a successful performing arts center for at-risk youth in the inner city. "This center," she says, "will provide me with a setting where I can apply the knowledge and skills I learned within my college major. This scholarship is a blessing because I take it so personal. I may not have been the quickest person in completing my education, but this gesture is all the incentive I need to run the race. It makes me realize that getting a degree is something I have to do to make everything worthwhile."

Located in the City of Miami Gardens, Florida Memorial University is a private, historically Black institution offering 41 undergraduate degree programs and 3 graduate degree programs to a culturally diverse student body. Since its inception in 1879, the university has upheld a commitment to providing a solid foundation for thousands of young people and opening doors to educational opportunities that may have otherwise been closed to them. As South Florida's ONLY Black university, it is best known for being the birthplace of the Negro National Anthem, "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing." For more information, please contact Joyce R. Forchion, Communications Coordinator in the Office of Public Affairs at (305) 626-3624 or jforchio@fmuniv.edu.

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