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# University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



## Alumni at UD: Daria Graham '94

02.01.2009 | Students

Though Daria Graham '94 came to work at UD in 1999, she never really left UD. During the five years between her graduation and her employment, the business management grad continued singing in the Ebony Heritage Singers and provided support to its director, music professor Donna Cox, "in any capacity needed," said Graham, now assistant director of leadership initiatives in the office of multicultural affairs. In January, she spent a half-hour with Laura Edwards, a graduate assistant in University communications.

**Tell me about your work with the Ebony Heritage Singers.** I was in the group for all four years as an undergrad and sang for an additional four years after I graduated since I lived in the area. I have been back in a supportive capacity since then. Last semester, I stepped in for Dr. Cox as co-director while she was on sabbatical, but I am really her support person. I am actually the longest-standing member of the group — 19 years.

**What brought you back to UD?** God brought me back. I was gone for five years, teaching high school, working at a bank and working administratively for the county, and I can now see that each of those places has fed into the roles I now play at UD. There's nothing in my past that doesn't play a part in what I do, and I think that's unique.

**Is there a moment from your time at UD as an undergraduate that stands out?** I learned my biggest life lesson from Dr. Sister Judith Martin, S.S.J. She asked me to do a paper on the gender of God, and I wrote an eloquent piece stating that God's gender doesn't matter, only that we should be exemplifying who God is — and she gave me my first F. She explained to me that I did not do what she asked me to do. This is a lesson I've had to state to my students over and over: Get a good understanding, and follow the directions. Do what is expected of you.

**What is different about the minority student of today, as compared to when you were in school?** The millennial student has clear ideas of what her experience will be and does well with those who support it, whereas I believe our generation was more open to allowing our experiences to "become." We have to show students of color the value of those things that don't necessarily fit into their plan - even experiences that they shouldn't have to go through — that there is value there, too. The student of today has clearly defined expectations, while the student of our generation was more open to the unexpected.

**What's on your iPod?** Tons of children's music because my children are 2 and 3 — so the Backyardigans, gospel music and movies like Horton Hears a Who. Right now, you have a huge pool of individual gospel artists, and the gospel choir is not as popular, but my favorite choir leader is Dr. Charles G. Hayes, and some of my favorite singers are Jamie Foxx and Kierra "Kiki" Sheard.

**For more information, contact Cameron Fullam, assistant director of media relations, at 937-229-3256 or [fullam@udayton.edu](mailto:fullam@udayton.edu).**