Cousins Properties Foundation donates $200,000

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The Villages of East Lake resident, Delores Ruffin, celebrates her daughter’s graduation from the College of Wooster

Interview by Terez Chapman, Drew Charter School Elementary Alumna and East Lake Foundation Intern

Delores Ruffin, a long-time resident of the Villages of East Lake, is not only a dedicated and selfless young woman. Her daughter, Rhonda Ruffin, graduated from the College of Wooster in May with a Bachelor of Science in Studio Art. A recipient of the College Scholarship, Achievement Scholarship, and College of Wooster scholarship, Rhonda graduated with no college debt. As a new graduate, she joins her two older siblings who have each earned a college degree.

Since graduation, Delores has been living at home and attending school online while working at the YWCA Youth and Teen Development Center. While the pandemic has been isolating to students, so far she has come through. She has enjoyed the increased opportunity to work and the opportunity to work on her original paintings. Delores says when "you have a good relationship with your parents and you call them all of the time, you can have this time of stillness. This time of stress has been a period of internalization that has really been an opportunity for me to be financially stable and wise. Because of the changing economic climate and a new business venture incorporating my painting skills, I don’t need the financial aid.”

Cousins Properties Foundation was named managing broker of Coldwell Banker in the East Lake area, and one of only a few Black managing brokers in the Southeast. With 25 years of real estate experience, Rhonda was selected to be appointed to this role in the AlphaBeta office. "Black women typically have to work twice as hard to receive the same recognition as their white counterparts, especially in the real estate business," said Rhonda Morgan. "I knew I was a great candidate for this type of position as one of the top offices in Metro Atlanta was an amazing feat." Rhonda credits her success to the guidance and support of her family and the opportunity to lead. She is excited about this new journey and hopes to use this new platform to inspire and empower other Black women to succeed in real estate.

In late 2019, Rhonda Morgan became the first Black woman named managing broker of Coldwell Banker Real Estate in the Metro Atlanta area, and one of only a few Black managing brokers in the Southeast. With 25 years of real estate experience, Rhonda was selected to be appointed to this role in the AlphaBeta office. "Black women typically have to work twice as hard to receive the same recognition as their white counterparts, especially in the real estate business," said Rhonda Morgan. "I knew I was a great candidate for this type of position as one of the top offices in Metro Atlanta was an amazing feat." Rhonda credits her success to the guidance and support of her family and the opportunity to lead. She is excited about this new journey and hopes to use this new platform to inspire and empower other Black women to succeed in real estate.

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Cousins Properties Foundation donates $200,000

The Cousins Properties Foundation was proud to announce a $200,000 gift to support the East Lake COVID-19 Relief Fund. The support will be used to provide flexible grants to eligible nonprofit organizations addressing COVID-19-related needs in the East Lake community.

Later this year, the TOUR Championship, a part of the $3.5 million FedExCup Playoffs presented by the Workday Charity Classic, will return to East Lake Golf Club. This tournament is the final event of the FedExCup, which determines the season’s FedExCup Champion. In addition to the East Lake COVID-19 Relief Fund, charitable contributions to the TOUR Championship also support the Individual COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Fund and the PlayOFFs for Education Foundation.

The TOUR Championship also provides a platform for local charities to raise awareness and support. This year, the East Lake COVID-19 Relief Fund was a beneficiary of the charitable contributions from the tournament. The Foundation is proud to have created the East Lake COVID-19 Relief Fund with a $1 million fundraising goal. The Foundation’s philanthropic efforts will help ensure that those most adversely affected during this very difficult time have enough money to pay rent and utilities, pursue higher education, recover financially, and meet the needs of their families.

The East Lake Foundation is working closely with our partner organizations to help families in need through these challenging times.

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Support the East Lake COVID-19 Relief Fund

Drew Charter School

“Drew Charter School Elementary Gymnastics Coach Tom Gyory (1841) completed his PhD candidacy by earning a $30,000 donation to Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. ‘The road to a child’s Leukemia’ is a long one, but Drew Charter School is proud to provide support for our students in this fight. Fly in the face of childhood cancer while inspiring hope for pediatric patients and their families,” said Mr. Gyory. The funds will support the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society’s ongoing research and educational programs. The donation is also in support of the 2023 Spring Court and the Golf Tournament, two events that bring the community together to raise awareness and funds for the cause. The funds will be used to support the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society’s mission of finding and curing blood cancers and improving the quality of life for those affected.

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Party on the Green moves to the Fall: Will coincide with the East Lake Cup

Start:ME East Lake celebrates 6th cohort

4

The East Lake Foundation is proud to announce the certification of Shannon Longino as Certified Property Manager (CPM) by the Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM).

Shannon Longino has been a part of the East Lake Foundation team since 2015. Shannon has served as a Community Development Associate, Senior Community Manager, and is currently the Manager of Community Impact at the Foundation. In her work with the Foundation, Shannon has supported the East Lake community in areas of sustainability, education, and economic development. Her dedication to these areas has helped her become an expert in the field of real estate management.

Shannon's certification as a Certified Property Manager is a significant milestone in her career. The CPM designation is awarded to professionals who have demonstrated knowledge and expertise in the field of real estate management. Shannon's successful completion of the CPM program will enable her to provide more effective and efficient management of real estate assets, which is essential for the continued success of the East Lake neighborhood.

The East Lake Foundation congratulates Shannon Longino on this achievement and looks forward to her continued success in providing excellent management services to the East Lake neighborhood.

5

Two married Drew Charter School Alumni reflect on the COVID-19 pandemic

Interviewed by Terez Chapman, Drew Charter School Alumni and East Lake Foundation Board Member, Marilyn and Randi Chapman are proud Drew Charter School Alumni. Marilyn is a 2000 graduate of Drew Charter High School before the Senior Academy was created and Randi graduated from Drew Charter School in 2003. Marilyn is currently a real estate executive and Randi attended medical school at the University of Louisville.

Marilyn and Randi are grateful for the opportunity to reflect on their time at Drew Charter School and how it has contributed to their lives. They both credit Drew Charter School for providing them with the tools and experiences that have helped them succeed in their careers.

The Foundation appreciates both Marilyn and Randi Chapman for their dedication and support of the Foundation. Through their partnership, Marilyn and Randi are working to provide opportunities for other students in the East Lake neighborhood to succeed and reach their full potential.

Thank you to Marilyn and Randi Chapman for your continued support of the Foundation.
The East Lake Foundation is proud to announce Shannon J. Langford as its new President and CEO.

Shannon Langford is a social justice leader and seasoned executive with a 15-year track record of working to drive positive change in underserved communities.

Shannon brings to the role a deep understanding of the critical issues facing East Lake, the surrounding neighborhoods, and the broader community–including affordable housing, education, employment, and criminal justice.

In her new role, Shannon will be responsible for leading the organization’s strategic direction and overseeing its operations, fundraising, and community engagement efforts.

Shannon grew up in East Lake Meadows and was the youngest member of the neighborhood’s crime prevention committee. She later attended Atlanta University, where she was elected student body president. After graduation, she worked as an Arab American caseworker and advocate for public schools in the southeast, where she helped to design and implement a successful school-based outreach program for at-risk youth.

Shannon is a lifelong learner and a tireless advocate for social justice. She is particularly passionate about empowering young people to achieve their full potential and building strong, resilient communities. In her new role, she will focus on advancing the Foundation’s mission to create opportunities and supports for all residents of East Lake and the broader community.

The East Lake Foundation was founded in 1975 to address the pressing needs of the East Lake neighborhood, which was then considered the worst slum in America. Since its inception, the Foundation has worked to improve the lives of residents through a variety of programs and initiatives, including housing, education, and economic development.

Over the past 45 years, the Foundation has invested more than $200 million in programs and services for East Lake families, helping to improve the quality of life for thousands of residents. Today, the Foundation’s mission is to create opportunities and supports for all residents of East Lake and the broader community.

Shannon Langford is a welcome addition to the East Lake Foundation team. Under her leadership, the Foundation is poised to continue its vital work and make even greater strides toward creating a better future for all residents of East Lake.
Drew Charter School recognizes the 2020 East Lake Foundation Scholars

By Teresa Chapman, Drew Charter School Alumni and East Lake Foundation Intern

Drew Charter School hosted the annual Senior Awards ceremony virtually this year due to the pandemic and the safety concerns that accompany gatherings. The Senior Awards ceremony recognizes the academic achievements of the Class of 2020. Unfortunately, we’re unable to recognize these special students from the Class of 2020 with scholarships sponsored in part by the East Lake Foundation. 


Taylor Glove Scholars:
• William “Rocco” George, University of Pittsburgh
• Malik Mohammed, Florida State University
• Payton Gunner, Georgia State University

Reed Family Scholars (500-1,000):
• Jynna-Tracey Ofori, Savannah State University
• Frederick Robinson, University of Miami

Year by the Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM). Shannon Heath Longino named Certified Property Manager of the Year by the Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM). The East Lake Foundation is proud to call Shannon a resident of the East Lake neighborhood and at Drew Charter School. Shannon grew up in East Lake Meadows and was the youngest member of the real estate management planning committee led by her mentor, Teresa Chapman. Eva Davis. She has been involved in the real estate profession for more than 10 years and was elected to the Board of Directors of the 500 Club of the Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM). After being on the Board of Directors for the 500 Club for several years, she was thrilled to join the Board of Directors as a Board member. The 500 Club of the Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM) has found her voice and is talking about it. The COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult for everyone, from Drew Charter School alumni to the Foundation. But if you know of a company who would like to partner with the East Lake Foundation to make a difference, please email Janie Bond at jbond@eastlakefoundation.org.
Early this year, the TOUR Championship made a commitment to continue its annual 150,000 donation to the TOUR Championship COVID-19 Relief Fund, which provides financial assistance to families with children in the Villages of East Lake and The Villages of East Lake as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The TOUR Championship Relief Fund support was part of the $3.5 million charitable donation from the 2019 TOUR Championship — a tournament record — to its four primary beneficiaries, which include the East Lake Foundation, Drew Charter School, Banker Realty in the Metro Atlanta area, and The Atlanta Braves.

In addition to the East Lake Foundation’s COVID-19 Relief Fund, charitable contributions from the TOUR Championship also supported the individuals and families of the Drew Charter School and the 2020 Junior Ryder Cup. The 2020 Ryder Cup Tournament, which was scheduled for the first time in East Lake Golf Club, will return in Sept-Oct, when the top 30 players from the FedExCup standings will vie for the championship and their $10 million FedExCup purse. The final rounds will be contested at East Lake for the first time in its history. The PGA TOUR and East Lake Golf Club, which is the home of the TOUR Championship, will host both events.

In late 2019, Rhonda Morgan, a TOUR Championship intern, became the first Black woman appointed to the role of managing broker at Coldwell Banker Corporate Office. She will serve as the lead organization working closely with its partners within and across these pillars to benefit our youth.

Rhonda Morgan is the first Black woman to be appointed to this role in the Alpharetta office. “Black women typically have to work twice as hard to receive the same recognition as their white counterparts, especially in the real estate business,” said Rhonda Morgan. “I knew I was able to thrive off this type of position because the top offices in Metro Atlanta was an amazing feat.”

Rhonda believes that this is just the start of a new journey and uses this new platform to inspire and empower other Black women to succeed in real estate.

Black people can do this type of work and be extremely successful.

Rhonda is a proud member of the East Lake Women’s Alliance and supporter of the East Lake Foundation and TOUR Championship. At one point in her real estate career, Rhonda became disillusioned with the transformation of the community and the lack of community support and resources. She then joined the East Lake Women’s Alliance, which is a part of the Drew Charter School Girl Scout Troop 18411.

“I joined the East Lake Women’s Alliance to be a part of its mission to support and educate young girls,” said Rhonda Morgan. “I believe that this is just the start of a new journey and uses this new platform to inspire and empower other Black women to succeed in real estate.”

Dr. Drew Charter School’s new business venture incorporating the Girls Scouts of America is called Drew Charter School Girl Scout Troop 18411. It is one of the first Girl Scouts to be involved in a digital cookie baking experience. The girls also volunteered their time and efforts to help staff Easter eggs for the annual Easter egg hunt.

The East Lake COVID-19 Relief Fund received a $200,000 donation from the Foundation’s East Lake COVID-19 Relief Fund in support of the East Lake Foundation’s COVID-19 Relief Fund.

The East Lake Foundation is proud to present the 2019 Annual Report. To view the report, please visit the East Lake Foundation’s website.

Support the East Lake COVID-19 Relief Fund

During disasters like the COVID-19 pandemic, vulnerable populations are the most affected. In East Lake, essential services that the East Lake Foundation provides are more critical than ever. Unfortunately, some families have been disrupted.

With schools closed, children miss out on often lack access to food and learning spaces. Parents who run essential businesses or are home-schooling are often required to work without pay and rent utilities, putting their jobs at risk.

Community Vision

The East Lake Foundation is working closely with our partners to help organizations in the East Lake area. We are proud to have created the East Lake COVID-19 Relief Fund with a $1 million fundraising goal. The Foundation’sphilosophy is to be more than just a financial supporter. It is to set an example and empower our partners to meet short- and long-term needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

With 20 years of real estate experience, Rhonda Morgan has more faith than ever about advancing her family and their goals, both professionally and personally. “Black women traditionally face more obstacles than less,” said Morgan. “I believe that this is just the start of a new journey and uses this new platform to inspire and empower other Black women to succeed in real estate.”

The Villages of East Lake resident, Delesia Rufﬁn, celebrates her daughter’s graduation from the College of Wooster

Delesia Rufﬁn, a longtime resident of the Villages of East Lake, has become a role model for other girls in the community. Her daughter, Donyea, graduated from the College of Wooster in May, and is currently making waves as a portrait painter.

Donyea is excited about her future and the possibility to work on her own. “When I grow up, I want to work at the Los Angeles Dodgers or another baseball team,” she said. “I want to make a difference in this world, and I know I can do that.”