

Sister Act

Meet the Persauds, four siblings who make UAlbany proud.

They live in different parts of the Empire State, but for Michele (B.S.'98, M.P.H.'00), Sharlene (B.S.'01, M.P.H.'03), Alicia (B.S.'03, M.P.A.'06) and Marcia (B.S.'05) Persaud, Albany is still home base. It's the place "where our parents reside, memories remain, and we return for holidays and school breaks. It's the only place to get good home-cooked meals for free, and pampering we all enjoy," observed Sharlene. The sisters also claim another close tie with New York's Capital Region: Each attended the University at Albany.

MICHELE entered UAlbany through the Early Admission Program to study biology; she also participated in the Charles Drew Science Club and volunteered with Middle Earth. After earning her master's, Michele worked for a year as a senior research associate with an institute in New York City, but was "looking for a new experience." She completed the New York City Teaching Fellows Program, received a master's in science education from Lehman College (CUNY) and is now a high school science teacher. "I had a very good educational experience at UAlbany, which is one reason I work in education," remarked Michele.

SHARLENE graduated from Albany High School a year early and

enrolled at UAlbany as a pre-med student. A biology major, she minored in chemistry and computer science; did research in Associate Professor Rabi Musah's organic chemistry laboratory; and "tutored other undergraduates in general chemistry, organic chemistry and physics through the Career Development Center. After graduation, I followed in Michele's footsteps – she is my role model – and enrolled in the School of Public Health." Now a fourth-year medical student at a school in downstate New York, Sharlene is in the process of applying to residency programs.

ALICIA completed a double major in business administration and information science, graduating *magna cum laude*. She returned to UAlbany to pursue her M.P.A. from the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy while working full time in state government. Alicia credits "my family, friends, mentors and teachers" for her accomplishments. Like her sisters, she attended Albany public schools and encourages students currently enrolled there to "keep focus" and persevere in their studies.

Youngest sister **MARCIA**, now a second-year law student at Cornell University, had a double major in business administration and economics, and a minor in Spanish. "The University is unique,

exemplifying a rich, close-knit community of students, professors and administrators. I established a sound academic foundation that has given me an advantage over other law students who struggle to understand the business concepts that form the framework of legal issues. The work ethic and research skills I acquired through the Ronald E. McNair Program have provided me with essential skills necessary to succeed in the legal field," Marcia stated.

The Persauds appreciate the encouragement and attention they received from their "life-long mentor and friend," Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Associate Dean Carson Carr, who directs the Equal Opportunity Program, as well as from numerous UAlbany faculty, including professors Stephen Brown (now retired); Mary Applegate; Louise-Anne McNutt; Shamsah Ahmad; Rabi Musah and Paul Morgan. They also praise faculty and staff at Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST), Hackett Middle School and Albany High School for providing a "quality educational experience."

Most of all, the sisters are grateful to their mother, Angela Persaud. "Without her tireless encouragement, guidance and support," said Michele, "none of us would have achieved our goals."

– Carol Olechowski



The Persaud sisters, from left: Michele, Sharlene, Alicia and Marcia