

Dawn Turnage, Class of 1988

### **Professional Experience & Honors:**

Cardinal Mooney alumni pursue many unique professions. Dawn Turnage, a 1988 alumna and a 1994 graduate of Youngstown State University uses her bachelor's degree in criminal justice and Master of Science in Administrative Justice and Security (2009 - University of Phoenix) in the parks and recreation field.

Dawn has over 25 years' experience, working with diverse populations in social & public services as well as criminal justice. That passion, coupled with her experience working with the City of Westerville Parks and Recreation, set her course. In March 2018, Mayor Jamael Tito Brown appointed her as Youngstown's Director of Parks & Recreation.

Dawn's responsibilities as director include oversight of a 2.5-million-dollar budget, marketing and publicity, fund raising, creation of recreational programs, and grant applications.

Responsible for 42 properties, including 20 parks, the Henry Stambaugh golf course, historical Wick Park, and the Northside Pool, Dawn also oversees the operation of the 111-year-old summer camp program. Dawn was instrumental in developing learn to swim programs and lifeguard training, reading programs, and *Youth of the Year* awards.

Dawn is one of only nineteen African American female parks and recreation directors in the United States. Redeveloping parks and open space became the catalyst for revitalizing city neighborhoods. Dawn has been committed to providing a safe place where individuals and families can engage in community activities.

In addition to her work for the city, in January of 2022, Dawn was elected to the Youngstown City School Board, serving as the Athletics Committee chairperson.

Her community involvement is extensive. Dawn has volunteered with the Healthy Community Partnership of Mahoning Valley, the Mahoning County Children First Council and Ohio School Board Association.

Dawn's accolades & upcoming events include:

- 2019 Hometown Hero Award
- 2022 ATHENA Award Nominee; American Heart Association Women of Impact Nominee; League of Women Voters Women's Hall of Fame Honoree; Speaker Series Panel Member of the Women of Color in Recreation and Parks
- October 2022 Panel Member at the OPRA Women in Leadership Seminar in Dublin, OH
- November 2022 OPRA Scholarship Judge

### **Mooney Reflection:**

The tradition of embracing Gospel values, service and discipline, molded Dawn and plays an important role in her life. She balanced challenging courses crediting Cardinal Mooney's smaller classes and nurturing environment. She recognizes the value that Mooney places on love, life, and family.

Dawn will always remember attending Mooney football games, especially activities with Mooney- Ursuline Week. The most thrilling game was the 1987 State Football Championship her senior year. She enjoyed attending basketball games and track and field meets, ringing of the Victory Bell, and of course, the best pep rallies! While Dawn did not play sports herself, Ms. Nancy Shugart asked her to assist with stats for track meets, a role she was eager to take on and still truly values.

Other favorite memories include the famous "Mooney rolls & sauce" during lunchtime and her performances in *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Grease* theater productions, and it was her senior year that

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**Prom** returned to CMHS! Because of the bonds and relationships built at CMHS, Dawn maintains contact with many of her classmates today.

### **Personal Life – Accomplishments & Interests**

In her spare time, Dawn is a wedding coordinator & event planner for *Details By Dawn*. And she is a member of the Cardinal Mooney Minority Alumni Council.

Dawn enjoys spending time with her family and credits her strong work ethic to her parents, Frances Turnage and the late Gary Turnage.

The oldest of three girls, Dawn is the proud sister of Damika Withers, MPA, Chief Economic Equity and Inclusion Officer for Franklin County, and April Washington, Physician Assistant, PAC at The Ohio State University Hospital. Also known as “TeTe”, she is the proud aunt of Cameron (18), Kindall (10), Naomi (9), David (5) and Kerri (4).

Currently residing in Youngstown with her mother, she is excited about relocating to Canal Winchester, Ohio in September 2022. She will then begin her new position as Assistant Director of Recreation and Parks for the city of Columbus, Ohio.

Best of luck Dawn, as you begin your new role and share your passion and talents with the Columbus community!