

By Otesa Middleton Miles

Marriott Executive

Credits Business
School for Success

When Norman K. Jenkins studied accounting, “The School of Business was in a little clapboard building — small, cramped, but mighty,” says Jenkins, who fondly remembers trekking from “the yard” on the main campus to Sherman Avenue, the School’s former home. That was more than two decades ago.

Today, Jenkins, Marriott’s highest ranking African-American, carries cherished memories of his days at the School of Business and a sense of gratitude for what he learned at Howard.

Inside those close quarters, said Jenkins, he learned the leadership and networking skills needed to get from campus to corporate America. He even credits the School for helping him land his current post at Marriott International, Inc., where he is a corporate officer and senior vice president for North American Development.

“One of the benefits of attending Howard that I really didn’t appreciate until after graduating, was the exposure it gave you as a student to world leaders, politicians and to captains of industry,” Jenkins says.

Looking back, Jenkins says he hopes that today’s students can appreciate and take advantage of similar outreach opportunities and all that the School of Business has to offer. “It is critical that students spend their time wisely and prepare themselves to compete,” says Jenkins, who is confident that “a newly minted graduate of the Howard School of Business can compete with anyone, anywhere, anytime.”

The California native calls his ties to Washington, D.C., strong. His father was born in the old Freedman’s Hospital, the forerunner of the Howard University Hospital. “I was very familiar with the campus and felt at home there,” Jenkins says. He chose to attend Howard because of the caliber of people the University and School of Business produced. Jenkins calls them the “difference makers.”



CHAD DOWLING

“I quickly became convinced that if I had an opportunity to walk the same halls as those very impressive graduates, my chances for success were pretty good.”

As the University expands and further solidifies its place as a producer of future world leaders, Jenkins says that the School’s mission has been accomplished. “Howard’s role and duty is clear,” Jenkins contends.

“For more than 140 years, the development of local, national and global leaders in a variety of fields has been the primary focus of this great institution and that cannot and will not change — it’s a part of Howard’s fiber.”

When the corporate leader ponders what the future could look like for Howard, real estate and expansion come to mind.

“I’d like to see the University take a more aggressive role in expanding its footprint in Washington, D.C., and take a lead role in the development of the entire Georgia Avenue/Florida Avenue corridor,” Jenkins says. “There has been and will continue to be a significant amount of real estate development in the area. As one of the most significant land owners in the area, Howard can and should be an integral part of shaping this community — and retaining ownership — over the next 20 years.

“If done properly, Howard will have a real opportunity to transform itself into an 18-to 20-hour-a-day university, and more effectively compete with area and national institutions of higher education.”

Jenkins, a 1986 graduate, says he is indebted to his *alma mater* for his professional life as well as his personal life. “Howard is where I met some lifelong friends and my wife Cammye, the mother of my two beautiful children.” **H**