

RATTLER PRIDE

BY [Kanya STEWART]

Every year, Florida A&M University (FAMU) students, alumni, employees and supporters participate in National College Colors Day, a day reserved in August that challenges Rattler fans to display their school pride by donning variations of the university's official colors – orange and green. Last fall, thousands of FAMUans of young and old flooded social media with a sea of orange and green all in the name of showing their **RATTLER PRIDE**.

In preparation for College Colors Day, participants are encouraged to purchase gear and paraphernalia in support of their school. But, according to alumna Sabrina Thompson, FAMU's coordinator of collegiate licensing, while College Colors Day is a great way to promote and celebrate FAMU, displaying school pride and wearing school colors should be something Rattlers commit to year-round, as the benefits are more than meets the eye.

"When our alumni, faculty, staff and students wear the university's officially licensed paraphernalia, it let's the world know that they are proud to have matriculated or served at our great institution," said Thompson. "It's like wearing the jersey of your favorite sports team, you want the world to know that you support and represent that team."

Thompson explains that Rattlers who don FAMU gear have the opportunity to become ambassadors for the university.

"Displaying your Rattler Pride is also a great way to promote the university and connect with other FAMUans. When people see you at an event sporting orange and green Rattler gear, there is an instant connection to the reputation of excellence that precedes our university," Thompson said.

Alumnus Stephen Roberson echoes Thompson's sentiments. He explained that in the midst of the hustle-and-bustle of everyday life in Washington, D.C., it is not uncommon for someone to stop him after noticing his orange and green attire to chat about FAMU.

"Whenever I have on my FAMU hat, FAMU jacket or any type of FAMU attire there's this instant sense of community," said Roberson, recording secretary for the Washington D.C. Chapter of the FAMU National Alumni Association. "People come up to you and say, 'you went to FAMU, I went to FAMU, too' or ask you about the university in general and that is important to have."

According to Roberson, it is equally important that Rattler's wear their FAMU colors whenever possible in the workplace and when serving in the community.

"It's important that we show that Florida A&M University has a number of successful people from all walks of life, making all types

of positive impacts in the world," he said. "It instills a sense of pride. Especially, when on a daily basis, people can associate the good work that you do with the school you represent. It does nothing but improve our brand and helps us tell our story."

As the director of FAMU's Office of Alumni Affairs, alumna Carmen Cummings-Martin makes it a priority to wear FAMU colors and gear as much as possible. In fact, it is very rare that you will see her on campus without proudly displaying some form of orange and green or Rattler gear. For Cummings-Martin, wearing the school colors is an honor, as it is an opportunity to remember and promote the university's rich history.

"The colors represent our history. They represent the origin of head, heart, hand and field, which are central to the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University foundation," Cummings-Martin said. "Our constituents often comment about the fact that I wear them so very often. For me, adorning the colors reaffirms that I am a proud ambassador of this historic institution, that I am a part of its fabric, that I am FAMU."

The colors of orange and green were selected to represent FAMU to pay homage to two of Florida's most notable features – agricultural plants (green) and Florida's citrus industry (orange).

According to FAMU Student National Alumni Association President Chardinal Bains, the efforts of Cummings-Martin and other alumni are important when it comes to setting the standard for students who will one day go out and represent FAMU around the globe as alumni.

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