

A portrait of Kayla Young, a young woman with long, dark, wavy hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a blue and white vertically striped, off-the-shoulder top. She has large hoop earrings and a necklace with a small pendant. Her hands are in her pockets.

Kayla Young M'22

Elyria, Ohio

*Physician Assistant Studies,
University of Mount Union*

*M.S., Clinical Exercise Physiology, Ohio University
B.S., Exercise Physiology, Ohio University*

Kayla Young wants to help people. That much she seems to have known for most of her life. Yet it was not until halfway through her undergraduate career at Ohio University that she realized her calling as a physician assistant (PA).

Majoring in exercise physiology, the Northeast Ohio native worked as a medical scribe at University Hospitals to bolster her résumé and gain valuable experience prior to graduating. Having the opportunity to work hands-on with a variety of medical professionals solidified Young's future career path.

"I worked with physicians, nurses, EMTs, and other members of the healthcare team. Still, it was a PA that showed me the importance of being an expert in medicine and how to treat patients in any situation compassionately," Young said. "I knew that I wanted to work in medicine, but this interaction sparked the fire in me wanting to be a PA."

Upon earning a Master of Science degree in clinical exercise physiology from her undergraduate alma mater, as well as becoming a certified clinical exercise physiologist from the American College of Sports Medicine, Young took the next step and applied to Mount Union's Physician Assistant Studies program. Though she is only a few courses into her time at Mount Union, with some of those courses being offered in a virtual setting, she has already developed meaningful relationships.

"I believe the PA profession has a unique role in enacting significant changes within healthcare and other structural systems that negatively affect social determinants of health."

- Kayla Young

"My first interview was with Professor (Roger) Kunes, and I was extremely nervous," Young said. "Professor Kunes recognized my nervousness, made eye contact that made it feel like he was looking into my soul, and said 'It's okay to be nervous, we understand. Just remember that we are here to get to know you, but you are also here to get to know us.' In that moment, I felt seen. I was more than my GPA, GRE score, and patient care experience."

Young's ultimate career goal, and what she describes as her purpose as a human and future PA, is to be an advocate for disenfranchised populations. While at University Hospitals, she witnessed firsthand how urban and underserved communities can struggle with healthcare providers to get the care that they need to survive and thrive. During a study abroad experience in Cuba in 2017, she learned more about the coun-



try's nationalized healthcare system, giving her a breadth of understanding when it came to patient care.

Currently, Young is doing her part to be a leader in both the Black and PA communities. The capstone for her aforementioned master's degree was an in-depth analysis on hypertension in African Americans, and she is the founder and co-chair of the national PA student organization named Physician Assistant Students for Leadership, Equity, Anti-Racism, and Diversity (PA-S LEAD).

"I believe the PA profession has a unique role in enacting significant changes within healthcare and other structural systems that negatively affect social determinants of health," Young said. "We hope to create positive change within PA academia and support underrepresented minority students." ■



KENDRICK BROWN '93

Provost, Morehouse College

Ph.D., M.A., Social Psychology, University of Michigan | B.S., Psychology, University of Mount Union

Kendrick Brown chose Mount Union as he sought a challenge academically. Not only was this request for a challenge fulfilled, but the institution also provided Brown with his initial leadership opportunities. Although he was unaware of it at the time, his decision to choose a challenge would aid him in his journey to become provost at Morehouse College.

Originally from Cleveland, Ohio, Brown decided to attend Mount Union after receiving a Presidential Scholarship and being able to experience campus during his initial visit. During his early days at Mount, Brown was elected president of the freshman honors society, Alpha Lambda Delta; this would be the beginning of Brown's efforts to develop his leadership. His extracurricular learning came through leadership opportunities in student organizations and student government positions, including Mount Union's Black Student Union.

"I connected with the campus when I came to visit. It was the little things that added up, and it just made sense," Brown said. "Little did I know that getting a liberal arts education would be the focus of what I would do for just about the rest of my life."

Upon graduating with a Bachelor of Science in psychology with the support of advisor Dr. Steven Kramer, Brown went on to earn his Master of Arts degree and doctorate in psychology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Although Brown had been accepted into multiple Ivy League schools, Michigan stood out to him because there were prominent Black alumni in the field of psychology who began their journeys at Michigan.

characteristics of an effective ally, you have to determine how this ally's relationship benefits underrepresented populations."

With a solid base in leadership and beginning his research in allyship, Brown was now off to continue his professional journey. After his time at Michigan, Brown went on to Macalester College where he taught as a tenured professor of psychology and was eventually promoted to associate dean of the faculty.

"When I was in grad school, I asked myself, 'What is it that I want to do when I have my degree?'" Brown said. "And my thought went back to Mount Union again. What kind of education did I get? I got an education that allowed me to interact with faculty and enjoy a small campus experience, and this led to what I want to do."

With 18 years of experience and continued development of his leadership skills in faculty and administrative roles, Brown went on to become the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Redlands. Through this rich experience, Brown felt prepared to take the next step in his journey with his current role as provost at Morehouse.

"As a leader, you have to know what things you personally have to touch and the things that require you to simply interact with people who you trust to accomplish them," explained Brown. "The roots of my leadership expression started at Mount Union in having the various leadership opportunities in student organizations. What does it take to lead? What's the work you have to do?"

A JOURNEY WELL TRAVELED

Utilizing Leadership and Allyship as Building Blocks to Success

{BY DARNELL TUCKER '15}

Impactful Research

Brown's graduate research focused on allyship and attempting to understand the conditions in which people who have different social statuses effectively interact and learn from others. Traditionally, allyship is discussed from the perspective of a majority population and how they can become allies to those of a minority population. But Brown had an interesting take on allyship that had not been brought to light in the field of psychology. This led him to research allyship from the perspective of people of color.

"You can think of allies as having two kinds of essential characteristics – interpersonal support, which determines an ally's affiliation and how supportive and non-judgmental the ally is, and informed action, which is being an ally that does something in their own community and not just when they are around people of color," Brown said. "When looking at the

How can you be responsive to the people who are looking for you to lead? These are the experiences that prepared me."

Advice to Future Leaders

Brown's advice to future leaders is to note that leadership will look different to everyone. Effective leaders give their time and energy to provide the small things such as just being present in spaces where you can provide assistance. Brown notes that valuable experience along the journey involves including other people by participating in organizations and being open to replacing "I" with "we."

"If your notion of leadership is myopic, you miss the opportunity to connect with people, to learn from other people, challenge yourself, and expand who you are," Brown said. "We need a multi-faceted complex notion of leadership that is expansive enough that many of us can experience it." ■

H O O P

Dreams

WINNERS



CHICAGO

Robyn Brown '17

*Team Reporter and Marketing Coordinator,
Connecticut Sun and
New England Black Wolves
M.A., Sport Journalism,
Quinnipiac University
B.A., Integrated Media, Sport Business,
University of Mount Union*



Basketball has been a passion of Robyn Brown's since her youth. The former Purple Raider forward was humble enough to know early on that she was not going to play professionally in the WNBA, but that did not stop her from becoming part of the WNBA family and being involved in one of the most notable seasons in the history of the league.

Brown's path to the pros began at Mount Union, but the Los Angeles native had to first discover where Mount Union even was before her journey began.

"I knew I wanted a smaller school where I could play basketball and be part of Greek life," Brown said. "My dad found out about Mount through (college readiness software) Naviance, and Coach Suzy (Venet '98) Pietz called me and had me on campus for a recruiting visit. I definitely had the cliché, 'Oh it feels like home!' moment, but that's important when you're moving more than 2,000 miles away."

Still wanting to have a career on the hardwood, Brown decided to major in integrated media and sport business with broadcast aspirations in mind. Engaging with sport business alumni and having a network of sisters in Alpha Delta Pi gave Brown a wealth of meaningful connections when she walked across the Commencement stage.

"Something that was really cool for me when I was at Mount was when ESPN's Toni Collins '03 came back and visited campus, and I got to meet her with Dr. (Jim) Thoma," Brown said. "She was someone who sat in the same chairs I had, with the same dreams, doing what I hoped to one day achieve. It was great to have a visible female figure who came from this small school and made it to a large stage."

Incredible Internship

Less than 20 miles from the SportsCenter desk behind which Collins spends most of her mornings is Quinnipiac University, at which Brown enrolled to earn a Master of Arts in sport journalism. Her academic advisor knew Brown's career aspirations and set Brown up on a phone call with a colleague she knew at the Connecticut Sun.

"I had no idea who she was going to set me up with, but I said 'Absolutely, I'll take the phone call,'" Brown said. "The woman on the other line happened to be the vice president of the organization, Amber Cox. Once I sent her my demo reel and other information, she called me back later that night and said the internship would be mine if I wanted it."

The internship involved being the sideline reporter for the WNBA franchise, a position that had not existed prior to the 2018 season. Her first day on the job, the former college basketball player found herself working a broadcast with Rebecca Lobo, a member of the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame. Brown was so successful in her internship that Cox called her when it had concluded and indicated that, should she want it, the job would be hers full-time when she graduated nine months later.

Brown has also been able to expand her broadcasting portfolio to the growing sport of lacrosse. The New England Black Wolves, members of the National Lacrosse League and owned by the same group as the Sun, needed a reporter, and Cox approached Brown for the job. With the Mount Union lacrosse program only having been in its infancy during Brown's undergraduate career, the sideline storyteller immersed herself into learning the sport and successfully made it through her first season in 2019.

Life in the "Wubble"

Just as she had begun to hit her stride in her second WNBA season, the coronavirus pandemic swept the world. The WNBA followed the lead of the NBA and committed itself to safely continuing and concluding its season in a monitored "bubble," known as the "Wubble," in Bradenton, Florida. With an emotional backdrop of not only the coronavirus, but also protests against systemic racism following the death of George Floyd, Brown was at the epicenter of some of the more influential moments in the 23-year history of the league.

"As a white woman who comes from a privileged background, the experience of being in the Wubble and part of conversations about Black lives and systemic racism was eye-opening," Brown said. "To listen to a player on my team say she gets nervous walking through the grocery store just because of the way she looks made me get closer to understanding things I would have never thought about."

With that emotion and the condensed, frenetic game schedule, Brown described the 86-day experience as exhausting at times, but one of the most rewarding experiences of her life.

Though Brown may not be playing professionally, her career as a media professional has only just begun. Working for a team whose nickname is the "Sun," it makes perfect sense that it has a bright, rising star telling its stories to the masses. ■

