

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

JOHNATHAN FELDBOUSE

The Office of Alumni and Events at Youngstown State University promoted personal empowerment through entrepreneurship by inviting businesswoman Carmella Williams, a YSU alumnae, to speak in a virtual lecture last Thursday.

Williams was interviewed on Facebook Live by Jaietta Jackson, senior lecturer at YSU, about owning and running her own business. Williams said it not only gives her confidence, but also inspires the people around her to find empowerment in their businesses.

“Entrepreneurship-- it’s going to show you everything,” Williams said. “It’s going to be a journey for you to reveal to [yourself] who you are. Who you are is an individual with skill sets, an individual who has a passion and someone who can run a business.”

Williams started Carmella Marie Hair and Beauty, a skin and hair care company that specializes in textured and curly hair, in 2013 after being laid off from her previous job. Having grown up in an entrepreneurial household, starting a business felt natural to her, and she wanted to do something that helped others.

Black Periodt. is Williams’ most recent endeavor. The business’ goal is to bring awareness to issues faced by the Black community and raise money to give back to Youngstown’s Black community through business grants and one full-ride

scholarship for a Black YSU student.

Her skills and success with Carmella Marie Hair and Beauty helped her land a position at the Youngstown Business Incubator as the Director of Diversity and Inclusion. She counsels women and minority entrepreneurs with their startups.

“That is definitely an empowering situation right there, to be able to identify someone’s skill set and show them how valuable they are and what they bring to the table. Because if you know what’s in your tool bag, you know what you can bring to the table. You’ll know if you can sit at the table at all,” Williams said.

Jackson, who knows Williams personally, started One2One Communication Consulting, a diversity training company, over one year ago. Jackson went to Williams for advice on getting One2One moving in the right direction.

“I saw the need for diversity, inclusion and equity training in our society,” Jackson said. “And then when I started it, and I was going through the ropes, I went to Carmela and said, ‘OK, so how can I make this work? These are some of my ideas. These are the things that I’m doing.’ I gained guidance from her.”

Jackson said, in her opinion, the most impactful message in the lecture was about journaling your successes.

“I love the journaling and seeing your successes,” Jackson said. “Because sometimes ... you don’t know you’re as awesome as what you really are. When you’re ready to give up and you don’t think you can go any farther, writing down those successes makes you go, ‘I can do this,’ and then it makes you dream a little bigger.”

Heather Belgin, associate director in the Office of Alumni and Events, invited Williams to speak for their lecture series because she thought it would be a good resource for Williamson College of Business Administration students.

“Carmella is a very accomplished alum, and her message about empowerment through entrepreneurship we thought would be of interest to entrepreneurs and to students in the college of business,” Belgin said. “She provided a lot of encouragement and inspiration to entrepreneurs when she talked about the tenacity, research and time commitment needed for a successful business.”

Belgin said the Office of Alumni and Events started their virtual lecture series in April to keep students, alumni and the Youngstown community connected and engaged while apart.

“We want as many alumni as possible to find someone that interests them, so we look for a wide variety of topics from presenters that come from diverse backgrounds, professions and class years to make sure that all five YSU colleges are represented as well,” Belgin said.

The next lecture is tonight at seven, featuring Claudia Berlinski, director of the McDonough Museum of Art, and Chris McCullough, professor of art, who will talk about the Scribe Literary Collaborative and their endeavor to foster a partnership between the literary and visual arts. Follow the Office of Alumni and Events on Facebook for information on upcoming lectures.

MUSIC STUDENTS STRUGGLE WITH ENSEMBLES

JOSEPH CHAPMAN

Youngstown State University students in the Dana School of Music learn critical performance skills when playing in group ensembles. Both large and small group settings teach different but integral skills. The pandemic prohibits group gatherings, and many students feared their ensembles would be disbanded this fall, but YSU’s student ensembles will play on.

Professor Kivie Cahn-Lipman, cello instructor, said the university reduced the number of instrumentalists in order to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

“Most of the faculty at other institutions that I’m in touch with have told me that everything is canceled [at their schools],” Cahn-Lipman said. “Some have expressed surprise, even shock, that we are having any in-person ensembles.”

“The ensembles I played in when I was a student are what I remember most and best, and what I think I got the most out of throughout my music education,” Cahn-Lipman continued. “It’s hard to imagine that not being able to participate in ensembles in a normal fashion isn’t going to impact everyone who’s been affected by this.”

Currently, ensemble students rehearse outdoors to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. However, as cold weather approaches, faculty and administration are still figuring out

how music students can perform indoors without spreading germs. Wind instruments and vocalists face a particular set of challenges.

“A few months ago, we thought everyone could just be six feet apart and it would be fine. Now we’re reading more about how certain instruments like bassoon, trumpet, oboe ... are also big spreaders. We’re understanding that singers are really sort of super spreaders. It could be a long time before singers are able to work together indoors,” said Cahn-Lipman.

Brendan McEvoy, a sophomore music composition major, struggles to find the motivation to practice without the ability to play music with others.

“An integral part of the music school experience is being able to perform,” McEvoy said. “We have composer recitals where all the composition students write something and find a group of people, again collaborating, and then perform it for people. Those are some of the most popular recitals on campus.”

“That’s the great thing about the university experience is getting to hear new music that you and your peers write and perform ourselves,” McEvoy continued. “And so having that opportunity taken away is really difficult to find a reason to try to better myself so it just has to come from within that desire to get better which is there, but it’s hard.”

McEvoy said the practice room restrictions have impacted his motivation to rehearse. Students must schedule times to reserve

practice rooms and disinfect the space after they leave.

“You need that space to go and to have a keyboard, have a music stand, and have a quiet space. That’s been the biggest thing that we’ve all had complaints about: we can’t use the practice rooms like we used to. Everything has to be on a tight schedule,” McEvoy said.

Sara Bucci, a sophomore music education major, said the inability to collaborate easily with her peers is frustrating.

“Especially first years, they’re missing out on one of the greatest aspects of our music program at YSU, and that’s the great community that we have,” she said. “Everything is so split up and separated now that they’re going to miss out on that great environment.”

Bucci said smaller groups are a creative impediment this semester.

“With the smaller groups, it’s going to be a lot more difficult to have that extra element to our major, because music is so collaborative, and you need a lot of people to create an ensemble to make beautiful music. Since it’s getting split up, it’s a lot more difficult to learn about that aspect of music,” Bucci said.

Even though almost every department at the university has been affected by the pandemic, YSU’s musical penguins continue to perform.