

Tribe Spotlight: Hans Goff '05

BY ERIC PESOLA

Jan. 9, 2009

Hans Goff '05 is making waves up in New Jersey, where he's working to make things better both in local government and as a volunteer. We caught up with Hans -- who graduated with a double major in government and black studies -- and asked him how he was getting the "dirt" out of politics.

Tell us about what you do for a living.

I am currently a research analyst for the commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs for the state of New Jersey. I focus mostly on local government services ranging from municipal consolidation to affordable housing.

The commissioner is Joseph Doria and he is a former state senator and speaker of the General Assembly.



Photo courtesy of Hans Goff '05

Hans with senior Obama advisor Rick Wade.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your job?

Working in the public sector, I have the opportunity to help people and at the same time see the fruits of my labor. I love going to work every day facing a new challenge and having the opportunity to solve it. Politics is often described as a "dirty" or unethical profession but what people don't realize is that it is essential to helping out those in most dire need. Whether we like it or not, "politics matters."

What do you think some of your long-term career goals are?

I honestly don't know where I will end up but as I get older I do see myself running for office one day.

This year marked my ninth year in politics/government. I started when I was 16 years old working for the mayor of the city of Trenton, N.J. I didn't know that this would be the field I would eventually enter, but I stepped out on faith and I continue to do that to this day.

What advice would you give a recent graduate if they want to go into your field?

Any recent graduate looking to get more involved politically or work in the governmental sector I would tell them to volunteer, network and stay true to themselves.

We just had an amazing presidential campaign season and people need to continue to hold their elected representatives accountable by staying abreast of what's going on in their communities. Everyone — Democrats or Republicans — should volunteer for their municipal and state party. Graduates should go to as many fundraisers or political functions as possible. It is important to have a good mentor and build relationships. Finally I would tell graduates to never go after the money because that will eventually come. If people work in the field they are passionate about I am certain they will be compensated and build the necessary skills to advance.

Tell us about your volunteer activities, and explain what your group is trying to accomplish.

I am active in the Young Scholars Institute's Alumni Steering Committee, the Northfield Mount Hermon Alumni Admission Ambassador Program, and the College of William and Mary Northern New Jersey Alumni Chapter. I was recently in a December *Trenton Times* article describing my work with the Young Scholars Institute in the city of Trenton.

The group is comprised of alumni of the after-school program and our goal to mentor to the students currently enrolled and also act as a fundraising mechanism to enrich the services the Institute provides. YSI had a major impact on my academic life and I feel it is important that I give back so that it can have an even bigger impact on someone else. YSI is also responsible for me becoming aware of the boarding school I attended in Massachusetts.

I had the opportunity to attend the after-school program in middle school and I took advantage of the many services including: tutoring, SAT preparation, Saturday Lectures at Princeton University and college tours.

A lot of recent W&M grads are working a job and getting out there and volunteering. What about W&M gets into people to effect them in this way -- why do you think so many of your comrades are volunteering in their communities across the U.S. and beyond?

Since W&M is a liberal arts college it is no surprise that its students would want to have a diverse educational experience both inside and outside of the classroom. In this day and age it is vital to think globally and across many spectrums. I think W&M encourages "thinking outside the box" and wants its students to see the world and have a multicultural outlook.

What were some of your favorite study places on campus?

The best place to study was the top floor of Swem or the business school library.

What do you miss most about the College?

Besides my freshman year... I would say Wawa hoagies.

Tell us a few things about yourself that no one would believe.

Before I got involved politically I wanted to be a pediatrician and while I attended high school I took Latin, Chinese, and yes -- fencing.