You came to Trevor in 9th grade. What were your first impressions, when you were deciding on schools?

The moment I walked in, I felt like this was home. I liked the students’ quirkiness. I looked up and saw the glass circle in the lobby and saw somebody just doing their homework, people sharing that space. ... I thought, "This could be a place that I enjoy and love."

I saw the dance and photo studios, and there was this sense of freedom of expression. I loved that the arts were embedded in the curriculum. I realized, "I don’t have to be just a math person here; I don’t have to be just an English person. I can be an English lover who adores history, loves to dance, and who loves to take photos and who loves to paint and draw." That’s something that has served me well moving forward in my career, in college, and even currently, because it has taught me the importance of being a well-rounded person.

What impact did your Trevor years have on you as a person and on your educational journey?

Trevor shaped everything. Whether it’s being comfortable with public speaking or being present onstage, in every job I’ve had, I’ve needed to be comfortable speaking up—and not to be afraid of people who are older than I am. Often I’m the only Black woman or the youngest person in the room. Trevor taught me not to be afraid of that.

Ms. Roth [Grades 9–12 Dance Teacher and Ancillary Performance Coordinator] also taught me about presence, having great posture, and the importance of owning the space that you’re in. That’s so important when you’re working with politicians. You can’t shrink; if you can feel yourself physically shrinking, that means that you are shrinking from the task at hand.

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Can you summarize your education after Trevor?

I earned my BA in Global and Comparative Governance from American University, along with two fellowships from NYC’s Urban Fellows Program and the Public Policy International Affairs Program at Princeton University. PPIA is the largest diversity fellowship in the country and that fellowship gives me preferential treatment to apply to Princeton’s School of Public and International Affairs or the other top 20 American policy schools for free. I definitely want to get my Master of Public Administration. I also know that I need to sharpen my quantitative skills in data analysis and data gathering through working with the arts and culture sector.

My parents, especially my dad, want me to go to law school. The jury’s still out on that.

Please tell us about your career.

I’ve worked within the U.S. Attorney’s Office, U.S. House of Representatives, NYC Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit Office, and the Domestic Policy Council’s Office of Urban Affairs, Justice, and Opportunity when I was a White House intern during the Obama administration. I lived abroad and traveled to 19 countries in Europe to study the European Union’s economics, governance, security, defense, and cultures.

For years, I wasn’t directly engaged in arts and culture and felt I was missing something critical. So I found my way to the Brooklyn Museum, where I was the head of Government and Community Affairs. I am currently the Founder and CEO of Afeni Creative Studios and City Council Campaign Manager.
I continue to create my own space, and I think that’s very much in alignment with Trevor’s mission.

**What are some fond Trevor memories?**

- It was fun being a part of *Cabaret*.
- Frost Valley our senior year.
- When Ms. Casey [Grades 6–12 Library Media Specialist & Director of Community and Global Partnerships] began to run community projects outside of New York City and we went to Jonestown, Mississippi, an under-served Delta town, where we made home repairs and helped renovate Granny’s Daycare Center.

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In what ways are you living Trevor’s mission?

I firmly believe that I’m a global citizen. I studied international relations and care about arts and culture, and how we can preserve them to feed the souls of people.

I’m a lifelong learner. Trevor taught me that you question, you listen, and then you seek answers. I remember when I went to one of my first college classes, I learned about the Socratic method and thought, “We did that at Trevor.”

We’re all unique beings. I’m living a unique life because I’ve created my own niche: I know that I’m going to focus on arts and culture and be a government relations person for the arts and culture sector.

In addition, I’m the Campaign Manager for Kenya Handy-Hilliard, who is running to be my city council member in District 40. I’m putting my all into it because I think my community deserves the best.

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Therefore, this is our mission statement: "Afeni Creative Studios utilizes policy, art, and design to connect different parts of the African Diaspora so we can sustain and expand the creative economy. We provide resources, programs, and services such as government relations, community engagement, program development, project management, research, data collection, and analysis.

"We are committed to making the necessary changes to have an equitable and just society for Black creatives."
What advice about the workplace or life ahead do you have for current Trevor students?

Don’t let people tell you who you are; you define that for yourself. Trevor is giving you the skills to ask questions and listen; those are the two most critical qualities you can have as a human being—and key to being successful. Trust yourself, trust your gut, trust your instincts. Because if you don’t trust yourself, then you won’t trust the success that’s coming your way.

Is there anything else that you would like to share?

The teachers! I loved my Trevor teachers so much. They have been such a critically important part of who I am.

Everyone at Trevor is different, and the teachers understand that; they cater to what you need. Once, for example, I approached Mr. Tarbath and asked, “Can you give me a different essay question because I don’t connect to any of these?” He created individual questions relating to my thesis statement.

During college, I often checked in with Ms. Roth. She might observe, “You look sad. Are you dancing? Are you stretching?” And she would be right. I’d realize that I hadn’t danced in a while; I hadn’t stretched in a while, and I wasn’t happy. Trevor became a critical part of my mental health and how I sustained myself. I have to be balanced. I have to be an artist just as much as I am a scholar. Trevor taught me that.

The patience, the kindness, the love that Trevor teachers afforded to me helped me become the confident woman that I am today.