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Student Events

Agent *of* Change



Mason P. Ashe '89

Students of Color Dinner features noted sports lawyer Mason P. Ashe '89

Mason P. Ashe '89, a successful sports and entertainment attorney who was listed by *Sports Illustrated* magazine as among the “101 Most Influential Minorities in Sports” was the featured speaker at this year’s Students of Color Dinner, held April 8 in the Buffalo Niagara Marriott. The dinner is an annual event honoring UB Law School’s students of color, especially those in their final year of school.

Ashe, president of Ashe Sports & Entertainment Consulting Inc., represents such sports figures as Daunte Culpepper, quarterback of the NFL’s Minnesota Vikings, and Stromile Swift of the NBA’s Memphis Grizzlies. Beyond negotiating contracts, his firm concentrates on clients’ branding and marketing opportunities as well as helping them to find reliable guidance in managing their wealth.

He recalled his UB Law School days, a time when he was known for carrying Federal Express packages around campus because he was doing small research projects for a law firm. “Ten hours a week, \$300 in my pocket. I might have been the richest black man on campus,”

he laughed.

His life changed, he said, when he discovered a classic of self-help literature: Napoleon Hill’s book *Think and Grow Rich*. From those ideas and his own experience, he provided this counsel: “Dream big and believe in yourself. Discover your passion or your burning desire. If there is a career you love, learn everything you can about it. And once you do the research, write a plan of action to achieve that goal.”

Among Ashe’s other pieces of advice:

- Advising those in attendance to cultivate diverse interests but master at least one specific skill, he cited one football client of his who “runs like a house is on his back, but he is one of the best block-



Upperclassmen passed on their legacy in a candle-lighting ceremony.

ing tight ends ever. There is always a job waiting for him.”

- Develop multiple revenue streams. “You have to be diversified. You never know when that fee is going to come.”

- Do not be afraid to attack new opportunities. Ashe quit the law firm where he was a second-year associate and started working as a sports and entertainment agent out of his townhouse. He built his business by driving to summer sports leagues and scouting clients.

- Collect your fees as soon as you can.

Success, he said, has to be seen as a path, not a destination: “I have learned that the laws of nature will work against you if you think you have made it.”

And he is enthusiastic about trying new ventures. Among those, he said, he is awaiting final approval for a reality television show about playground basketball; launching an African-American figure skating tour; and finishing a novel.

Awards were given to a number of prominent figures in the legal communi-



Hon. Julio M. Fuentes '75



Carolina M. Felik '07



Lourdes M. Ventura '98

ty, including:

The Trailblazer Award, presented to Crystal D. Peoples, who serves the 141st District of the New York State Assembly. “I stand on a lot of people’s shoulders,” the legislator said. “There is no need to climb if you are not going to lift people behind you.”

The Jacob D. Hyman Professor of the Year Award, which went to Barbara A. Sherk '02, who teaches advanced legal research and writing. “It is always special when a student comes to me and says, ‘I have a job, I passed the bar, I’m getting better grades, I have more confidence.’ Please continue to know and nurture your own unique talents,

to get where you want to be in this wonderful profession.”

Two Distinguished Alumni Awards, given to Hon. Julio M. Fuentes '75, who serves on the U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit; and Lourdes M. Ventura '98, an assistant attorney general with the New York State attorney general’s office.

Said Fuentes, the highest-ranking judge to graduate from UB Law School: “I really envy all the opportunities open to you to make a difference in our society. The legal profession can take you in unexpected directions. Remember the reasons you went to law school, and allow them to guide you.” Said Ventura: “UB Law School prepared me to be an attorney but also an advocate. It is your job to ensure that other people who look like us get the same opportunities that you are going to have.”

Also presented were three Lift as We Climb Scholarship Awards, given to three young women who are seniors at Buffalo’s City Honors School.