



FROM DIRECTOR TO DOCTOR

Daphne Valerius' journey from Hollywood to North Carolina A&T

In 2008, the revolutionary documentary film *The Souls of Black Girls* hit the scenes for everyone to see. Written and directed by Daphne Valerius, she wanted to open up a conversation about how the media affected the self-image and self-esteem of young black girls. Even though the creation of the film was a graduate school project for Daphne, it was her ticket to her lifelong dream of entering the entertainment industry.

When she was a child, Daphne got inspiration from her father, who was a saxophone player, and it made her want to be a dancer—specifically a Fly Girl on *In Living Color*, or even a backup dancer for Janet Jackson. Although entertaining was her dream, Daphne was still set on getting her education, so, she became a McNair scholar and got her Bachelor's degree.

Daphne then immediately went on to get her master's; from that came her documentary, and because she needed a break from back-to-back school, she took her film and ran with it. Her film was featured in many film festivals, she spoke about it on the television show *"My Black is Beautiful"*, and she was able to start her career in Hollywood as a producer on different projects.

Daphne Valerius was living her best life in Hollywood, but the industry is fickle, and she began to hit some rough patches out west. So, Daphne moved back home to New York where she needed to regroup with herself.

Back home, she spent a lot of time self-reflecting and looking within herself,

and as a woman of faith, she spoke to God to ask for another shot at her career the way she wanted to do it. It was during this healing journey that she decided to go back to graduate school again, only this time she was going for her Ph.D.

Her mentors and friends nominated her for a fully funded doctoral program at the University of Missouri, and as God would have it, she was accepted. Daphne's plan was to do her dissertation, get her doctorate degree, and go right back into the entertainment industry. However, after becoming DOCTOR Daphne Valerius, an advisor strongly encouraged her to stay within the realm of academia and become a teacher.

She again spoke with God, and after telling him she would only teach at an HBCU that allowed her to continue with her passions, a position opened up at our illustrious North Carolina A&T for Dr. Valerius.

After spending some time here at A&T, Dr. Valerius not only kept up with her creative ideas, but she has found another passion in guiding the next generation of black filmmakers.

She now hopes to continue her work by creating a sequel to her award-winning documentary. Because the conversation she started so long ago is still relevant today, she wants to expand on those ideas by looking across many of the new mediums that we have seen prevail in today's world.

*"we are the ones who
are making inroads
into that industry
with every story that
is told"*

Daphne Valerius

This time, as she brings her students along with her to create new films and ask the hard-hitting questions, she feels it is her responsibility to continue to inspire and teach, as it is her ultimate goal to leave a lasting impact on generations of young black creatives.

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