THE REWARD OF SACRIFICE

Bynikini Frazier (BSED ’08) has always known she wanted to be a teacher. She embraced the gift of teaching to continue her familial legacy. As a third-generation teacher, it’s in her DNA. Bynikini sees education as transformative and exciting; she strives to create a supportive, fun atmosphere for her students every day in the classroom. “I want to groom the next generation of thinkers and leaders,” she said.

Teaching comes with its challenges, though. “The field is dwindling,” Bynikini said. “We have to do so much with so little.” She admitted that she often sacrifices her personal time and finances for her students to have the best experience and opportunities. “Teachers carry heavy banners,” she said. With students who span the spectrums of financial and food security and domestic stability, she sees her role as a teacher vital to providing a safe and steady environment for her young students. Bynikini often loses sleep over the students she knows do not have a safe situation outside of school. “You’re more than just a teacher.”

However, the rewards of teaching outweigh the challenges and burdens for Bynikini. “I get to help children and unlock the passions that are within them! I try to have fun and bring learning to life for the kids,” she said. Bynikini strives to build personal connections with the students and their families to create a community of learners and supporters; she hopes to use her gift of teaching to show students, and parents, that they matter inside and outside the classroom.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Bynikini learned the importance of feeling included early on. In high school, she had the opportunity to tour UGA during a dance event in Athens and knew that she was supposed to go to UGA. “The spirit of UGA drew me in,” she said. As she explored going to UGA, recruiters and UGA ambassadors made an effort to genuinely connect with her and her mother. “I felt like I mattered [at UGA]. I wanted to be a part of that.”

At school, she jumped right in and made her voice heard. From leadership roles with the Black Affairs Council to peer mentoring to building connections within the Athens community off-campus, Bynikini sought out opportunities to empower others, serve people, and cultivate her own leadership capabilities.

COMMIT TO YOUR PASSION

What’s your cause?

BYNIKINI FRAZIER (BSED ’08) wants every child to feel included.
Beyond that, her professors at the College of Education invested in and challenged Bynikini to grow. She still maintains relationships with her mentors, which she hopes will be lifelong. At the College of Education, she learned how to work with and connect with all different kinds of people, through student-teaching experiences and collaborating with her peers. “I finished college prepared,” she said. “I was ready to teach.”

**OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL**

Recently, Bynikini served on the College of Education’s Board of Visitors and presently serves as the President of the College of Education’s Alumni Board. These prestigious leadership and alumni experience helped her to learn about the financial plight that many UGA students face. Even after these students receive the Zell Miller Scholarship and Pell Grants, there are still so many expenses that inhibit students from receiving an education. Bynikini gives back to UGA and the COE Board of Visitors Scholarship Fund to eliminate the gap between students’ ability and available financial resources. As a recipient of scholarships herself, Bynikini was able to attend school and make the most of every opportunity thanks to the financial freedom granted through scholarships. “They just need the financial push,” she said, acknowledging that these students are the high achievers who have the ability to impact the world if they can get a college degree. “I want to help students who I see myself in,” she said.

Written by Hannah Glass ’19

“*I felt like I mattered at UGA. I wanted to be a part of that.*”