

Alumni Spotlight Featuring Dennell Hines



Dennell Hines, 30, of Fort Washington, Maryland, attended Westmoreland County Community College from 2015-2017 and is our featured alumnus.

With Hines living out of state, how did he hear about Westmoreland?

“I went to Allegany CHECK SPELLING! College of Maryland in 2013. I tried out for their D1 basketball team.

My first year, I felt like I should have gotten picked up, but I didn’t. The second year, I felt like I probably didn’t do enough but halfway through the season, we were playing Westmoreland, and my teammates and I said to ourselves that we could definitely play for that school. So myself, Jordan, and Caleb walked up to the coaches and said, ‘We want to come to your school and play basketball.’ I knew I could do some great things at Westmoreland. The coach told us that there were open tryouts in March and to come up. We made the team and the rest is history,” explains Hines.

Hines chose liberal arts as his major because the business path at Westmoreland seemed a little too tedious for him, plus it would mean fewer math classes. After graduating, he obtained his bachelor’s of Business Administration degree at Morgan State University in Baltimore, MD. He is currently a tech coordinator at Eastern High School but is mainly a business coach. As the CEO of Secure Consulting, LLC, he teaches people how to leverage their assets and credit and improve their adult report card (i.e. their credit score).

For Hines, Westmoreland provided more than just an academic learning experience; it provided a lifelong learning experience, too.

“I give a lot of props to Westmoreland and Coach Stu and my teammates,” says Hines. “When I started, I was really uncomfortable. New home. New demographic. I was away from my twin brother and just ended a serious relationship. I knew I had to change my mindset in order to become comfortable. But I realize if I can do this, I can do anything. I realized that I was enough. I was a go-getter. Westmoreland was six hours away from home and I was able to conquer it. I went from a kid who had nothing to a kid who didn’t want to leave Pennsylvania; but reality set in and I knew I had to go back home after graduation. I felt like I didn’t have a lot of

shots at life, but I took this chance at Westmoreland, and when I came back home, I came back a changed person. I'm proud to say I'm an alumni of Westmoreland County Community College."

But just as life happens, so do some setbacks.

Hines reflects, "I unfortunately hit a huge financial setback which led me into a dark place. I was able to secure a mentorship with someone I believed in, and who taught me three things: you can't run a business without having your credit in order, never use your own money to run your own business, and create an LLC to protect yourself and assets. This has all brought me to where I am today. I am a risk-taker. I am the true epitome of 'If I can do it, you can do it, too'."

When looking back at his college days, Hines has a particular memory that stands out.

"My fondest memory was when I was on stage as a guest speaker for a Westmoreland County high school," he recalls. "My basketball coach chose me and two other teammates to speak to them about being an athlete in college, transitioning from living in Maryland to moving to Youngwood, and the challenges that I faced. I like public speaking and do it now for a living. My goal one day is to speak in front of 40,000 people."

Hines gives credit to the important people in his life.

"My teammates: Jordan Johnson, Marcus Mullen, Jalen Stevens. My boys were my bromates and I went through a lot with them. They helped me grow up. We lived in Hempfield Heights while we were at college and I still talk to them today. I'd also like to mention Coach Stu Silverberg, and my science professor, Rick Oliver," says Hines.

He'd also like to thank his twin brother for inspiring him with the poem, "See It Through" by Edgar Allen Poe. He sent it to him when he was outside of Founder's Hall (now the Student Achievement Center). He kept telling him that he better not leave. That if he stays, it will change him forever. This was his test. He's proud to say that he passed with flying colors.

His advice to current college students?

"If I could go back and talk to a twenty-year-old me, I would tell myself to focus on me and not others. I would have told young Dennell to see the resources around him and that I didn't have to keep going all over the place to find help that I had the whole time. Don't give up on yourself so fast. Just because today it doesn't seem like it's working doesn't mean that tomorrow won't. Learn. Find opportunities. Work as hard as you can. Be proud of what you have done so far," concludes Hines.

For tips on financial literacy, you can visit [Secureconsulting.info](https://secureconsulting.info) or on Instagram @Dennellwillwin