

FIRST EDITION

"A ball and a book can change the world"

The Dwyer

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EARL MONROE HIGH SCHOOL WELCOMES A NEW EDITION

Strike a Pose!

MELANIE SONILAL

Fashion Writer

Earl Monroe High School

Earl Monroe New Renaissance Basketball High School is walking the modeling runway with the work of a young homegrown Bronx clothing designer named Jahmere Jackson. Jackson, a junior at Earl Monroe High, introduced his Sixhearts athleisure line in the school's inaugural fashion show during March Madness at the Knights' gymnasium. The show supported students and provided a ca-

reer path beyond basketball.

The fashion event was created by ENL teacher Stacey Seabrook, who has 20 years of experience in fashion and wanted to assist students in learning the business of fashion and modeling. She saw Jackson's raw talent and decided it was time for Sixhearts to be shown live to the Bronx community.

Three months before the event in Pelham Bay, Jackson rehearsed tirelessly with students and faculty every Wednesday afternoon to see which clothing and style would captivate the audience. He wanted to play bas-



JAHMERE JACKSON

Why The Dwyer?

Welcome to Earl Monroe Community

BY DAN KLORES

School Founder

Jim Dwyer was my friend. When this brilliant and kind writer, columnist, author, and thinker died four years ago at the primetime age of 63, it was a massive loss to so many.

Dwyer, a two-time Pulitzer Prize recipient, was an artist. Quietly fearless, deeply committed to the underdog, he was creative, with a tantalizing voice. He was unique for his generosity in

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JIM DWYER

ketball, but found his fashion calling through his parents, who had always been dressed to a T. Jackson started by designing hoodies, then expanded to sweatpants and T-shirts.

In their different varieties of outfits ranging from '80s Hip Hop to modern-day Sixhearts, the models intended to make a statement with a display of color, elegance, and fashion

history.

On a Wednesday afternoon, before rehearsal started, I walked around the school gymnasium interviewing Jahmere.

Q How does it feel to have the first-ever Earl Monroe High School fashion show?

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Why The Dwyer?

Welcome to Earl Monroe Community

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his ultra-competitive profession. Often, one had to search for his dagger, but hidden behind the beauty of his language, it told the truth.

He was a Fordham graduate, brought up with his three stickball-playing brothers in Washington Heights by his dad, who was a building superintendent, and by his mom, an ER nurse. He had in his DNA the drive to care for people.

Dwyer also had a quirky side. While his pals rooted for the Yankees of Mantle, Berra, and Whitey Ford, Dwyer chose as his favorite: the do-nothing backup catcher out of Ole Miss, Jake Gibbs. I can hear the schoolboy yelling now, chan-

neling the Scooter's TV broadcast: "A long, long fly to center, off the bat of Jake Gibbs. It's going, going...caught."

Dwyer had a reporter's eye and lust for the story. After his early stints with Jersey papers, he landed a prime position at New York Newsday in its heyday, then the dream-come-true columnist job at the Daily News, and finally, the top gun of recognition, The New York Times.

Only Jim Dwyer, while at Newsday, could spend two years living underground in the subway system and love it. He found voices. Stop by stop, he covered the heartbeat of the working class: from the New Americans to the token clerk, the cop to the conductor, to the 3 am guy cleaning the tracks. He cared for the sweeper who looked forward to the morning sunrise, when he'd buy his coffee and tabloid.

Dwyer was a gifted disciple of the art form's most celebrated giants: Kempton, Hamill, and Breslin. These personalities rarely agreed on anything except the foul odors of spoiled elites and corruption – and Dwyer. They uniformly praised their younger officemate.

Jim Dwyer was a poet in prose. His commitment to the Innocence Project and the environment was warrior-like. His disdain for the ambitious and greedy was as daunting as Ali's unmasking of the Big Bear, Sonny Liston. Dwyer loved tweaking Rudy Giuliani and took no prisoners with the equally ambitious Democratic progressive, Mark Green, a career hack who sarcastically whispered to Dwyer about the motives of Gov. Andrew Cuomo's commuted sentence of 60's radical Judith Clark after she had served 40 years in prison. I was there when Dwyer, red-faced, instantly turned around and challenged Green. "Really," Dwyer said, "what the [expletive] did you ever do?"

My friend didn't merely tell stories, he found them. He wasn't assigned, he invented. He was a true New Yorker - funny, loyal, ethnic, curious, sensitive, and forgiving. He didn't forget, though, and he wasn't always on target. The Times sent him to Iraq right after the lies of the Bush/Cheney administration. He watched as the proud residents of the nation's abused cheered for the American invaders searching for the lie of WMDs. Dwyer believed we were doing humanity a favor. I picked and chose my spots to remind him when he was dead wrong. He nodded, understanding my true intent to just bust his chops.

Soon after arriving at the Times in May 2001, he was given, as promised, the especially prestigious "About New York" column, an honor reserved for greatness. He would file two, sometimes three, front-page Metro section stories weekly. He followed a Murderer's Row of truth tellers: Meyer Berger, F.X. Clines, Anna Quindlen, Bill Geist,

and Dan Barry. Like them, he could make readers cry, think, and laugh – all within 800 words.

The newspaper, its changing culture, and the early exits of talented coworkers and editors started to sour him, quietly. Dwyer took a sabbatical to write a book and teach at Princeton for close to a year. He liked it there, shaping and inspiring young people. But he was a guy from Washington Heights, and he must have run out of khaki pants and blue blazers, the uniform for faculty cocktail parties, so he returned, as planned, to the newsroom.

Around that time, Dwyer got sick. First, massive stomach surgery, and then, the tumors in his lungs. He was a nonsmoker. He fought hard and optimistically. He was blessed by his girls: his two daughters, Maura and Catherine, and his brilliant, patient wife, Cathy.

Nobody ever thought they'd get that call. C'mon, Jim Dwyer had faith, youth, and spirit.

At his Covid-affected memorial service at a downtown Irish pub, a former legendary colleague of his, Peg Tyre, introduced a friend, Lara Bergen, who had formed a not-for-profit, NYC Press Pass. The organization was dedicated to bringing back the lost art form, the monthly high school newspaper. They spoke with Dwyer's approval; he, too, was on board. The angel above was clearly at work.

When I started the Earl Monroe School, I wanted to create our own paper, which fit perfectly with our mission of ecosystem professions off the basketball playing court. I, myself, was a product of my own high school paper, Lincoln Log, in Coney Island, 1967. I dreamed of one day being Hamill or Breslin. My career path took me elsewhere.

Now I dream of fulfilling Jim Dwyer's legacy. That's why WE, the journalism students and the faculty at our new school -- a school he would have cherished on so many levels -- honor him. We name our school newspaper, The Dwyer.

This is our first edition. We have a long, long way to go. But I'll tell you something, The Dwyer will find the stories, and in time, rise to be among the best teaching tools for young minds in the nation. I won't stop until this becomes a reality.



The Dwyer

Earl Monroe High School

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Who Rules Knights Nation?

“A ball and a book can change the world.”

CLIFF COOPER

Features Writer

Earl Monroe High School

Those are the words we are told at Earl Monroe High. Ours is not just a basketball school. Yet, in interviews with students, some believe the school prioritizes athletes, even relaxing academic standards for them.

Are there two sets of standards for academic discipline off and on the court? And which is more important? Those questions served as a starting point for this report about the perceived divisions between student-athletes and athletes in the school.

“Some basketball players are treated differently,” said a junior student who asked for anonymity to speak freely. “They treat them like royalty. They can keep (their) phones, skip classes, get excused for low grades.”

The school claims to be the only one in the nation that has a focus on basketball that leads students to different careers in the basketball industry. The school does offer different ven-

ues in the basketball spectrum. However, student interests go beyond basketball. Many felt it was unfair that the boys’ varsity basketball team traveled to China for a tournament. Some student wondered where the money was to improve the school’s necessities.

“To get the facts straight, the Chinese tournament officials paid for the trip for the basketball team to attend the Yaoxin Sports International High School Basketball Tournament,” said an anonymous administrator at the school.

The Knights basketball team, the administrator explained, was the only United States representative in the tournament. The team left China with the Gold Medal.

However, it’s not just the non-athletes students who believe there is a double standard. The girls’ volleyball and basketball teams feel they have taken a backseat to the boys’ basketball teams.

Despite the girls’ basketball team playing in two championship games during the 2022-2023 season, in which the team fell short, some players felt they didn’t get the recognition and praise for their season.



Strike a Pose!

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A It feels good, I get to express my feelings with fashion. It’s something I like doing, something I enjoy. Everyone is in tune with fashion, so I could get my brand out there to people who want to know more about it and how it looks. It also shows how long it takes me to do things and how much work I put into my creations.

Q What got you into fashion at such a young age?

A My father grew up dressing nicely around his bunch of his friends, going out, and putting on nice clothes. It always made me want to dress like him, like I do now.

Q Do you have a target audience for your clothing brand?

A Mainly, my clothes are like a streetwear type of audience. It doesn’t matter to me; as long as you like my clothes, that’s all that matters.

Q Most students at Earl Monroe High School are either Black or Latino; do your clothes target them? Or do they target the culture and religion in the New York City area and around the world?

A I would say it targets community, and religion, around the world because there is no type of religious or racial diversity between my clothes. It’s like you can wear any way to express yourself in my clothes; it doesn’t matter.

Q Is your clothing for any age group, or only for adolescents and adults?

A It’s for anybody, for all ages. For example, I made my first clothing for my baby cousin. So really, my clothing is for all ages.



The Lady Knights rebounded during the 2023-2024 season by winning the New York City Schools Sports Association championship and the New York State championship. The boys varsity also won city and state championships. And the boys’ junior varsity lost in the city title game.

“We are overshadowed in this school even though we have the most trophies in the trophy case,” said the Lady Knights leading scorer, Janaiya Edwards. “Of all the teams on campus, we bring more discipline, solid grades and work as a team in and out of the classroom and on and off the court. We deserve recognition of being champions at Earl Monroe High.”

However, two players from the boys’ varsity basketball team viewed the criticisms as unfair.

“In life when you work hard and get rewarded, (it) means you have accomplished something,” said Chandler Bligen. “The little ceremonies, the trophies --the spotlight is going to be on us. Because that is what we work for, and that is what we play for, and that is why we are in the gym to practice everyday.”

Added Raymond Kinnard: “A lot of students think we are privileged, walking around the hallways. I think we don’t get the most privileges. I think that we get the same treatment as everybody else.”

So, then, what is the root of the problem: The team or the administration of the school?

“I disagree with the statement that basketball players get more privileges than regular students,” Bligen said. “I feel like basketball players get treated the same as the other students on campus, but teachers and staff try to make it seem like our actions and certain things we do are because we’re on the basketball team, or we think we’re better because we’re on the basketball team. So everybody else, the other students, look at us like, they’re doing such and such because they think they’re better than us.”

Do A Vogue

ASHANTI BROWN

Fashion Writer

Earl Monroe High School

One of the biggest challenges at Earl Monroe New Renaissance Basketball High School is getting students and student-athletes to step outside the basketball court and try different ventures. Stacey Seabrook is an ENL teacher with a fashion background that spans 20 years. She brought the idea of a Fashion Club to the table and -- boom! -- the group arose.

Seabrook was joined by coordinators Carolyn Gutierrez, and Daniella Jauregui to put on the club's inaugural Renaissance Fashion Showcase in the school's gym. As part of her work, she discovered the design talent of Earl Monroe High School's junior, Jahmere Jackson. She saw something unique in Jackson and wanted him to branch out his 6ixhearts athleisure line. Jackson, his classmates, and teachers strutted down the runway wearing his "6ix-hearts" look.

In the upcoming 2024-2025 school year, Seabrook wants to expand the fashion club to explore the fashion industry more around New York City. She plans to take students and faculty to museums and factories in order to see how clothes are designed and made.

A couple of weeks before the final dress rehearsal for the fashion show, I sat down with Ms. Seabrook to reflect on her work, Jackson's line, and the goal of showcasing fashion in Pelham Bay.

Q How do you feel about coordinating your first high school fashion show?

A I am extremely excited, especially because we are doing something beyond basketball for kids here. I would like to see something new and different over time. It's my wheelhouse, this is my background, and I am excited to share it with the school.

Q Can you tell me a little about Jahmere Jackson's clothing, what makes his style different from other young designers?

A The athletic leisure collection is a huge genre right now. The young fashionistas, if you will, are interested in more athletic wear. So he appeals to his peers. It's good quality, and he's

very thoughtful in what he does, and he's very respectful of the female body in terms of color, style, and fit.

Q What is your approach when you're teaching him? Do you teach more as a teacher first or as an artist first?

A I was his teacher first, then he joined the fashion club. He joined us on trips to design houses. We went to museums, went to thrift stores, we looked at conduction, we looked at designs, and we went inside design rooms where they make the patterns. So he saw everything from the ground up. He was fortunate enough to join a program at Parsons College through Judith, our career and college counselor, and I believe he received a scholarship to attend every Saturday. So he's getting a real big jump on his career in fashion.

Q As an English teacher with a big fashion background, how does it feel for you to bring the first-ever fashion show into a basketball school?

A I'm super proud of that. God willing it won't be our last.

A couple of months after Ms. Seabrook produced Earl Monroe High's inaugural fashion show, I sat with her in an empty classroom during the final week of Regents prep to ask her thoughts on the fashion show.

Q How do you feel about the turnout of the show?

A I was very pleased with the turnout. More people attended than I expected. I would love to have more of the school attend. But for the first show, it was spectacular. There were a few details that I planned to pay attention to for the next fashion show, but it was nothing major. It is the result of the first show.

Q Will you do it again? If so, how would you plan this one?

A I would love to do it again. I would like to get more student participation with more marketing, and we would love to have the founder at the next show because he couldn't attend the first one.

Q When you aren't planning major events, what is the club doing?

A More trips for sure. I'm trying to get sewing machines in the building so that the fashion club can start creating their original designs.



STACY SEABROOK

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Presents the 2024**

RENAISSANCE

FASHION SHOWCASE

Friday, March 22, 2024

1617 PARKVIEW AVE | 6:00-8:00 PM

Doors open at 5:00 PM

For more information, contact Ms. Seabrook
seabrook@earlmonroehighschool.org

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Voice Your Opinion



ANAYA BOWMAN
Investigative Reporter
Earl Monroe High School

Grading, Culture & Females

A debate over the criteria for the honor roll arose at the end of the Fall 2023 semester as students disagreed on who belonged on the prestigious list. When final grades came out in January 2024, there was a high rate of honor roll students. The students were proud of their accomplishments, but some were upset that other students with a high absence rate were allowed to make up classwork at the last minute just to get a passing grade of 65 percent. I walked around the campus interviewing students and teachers about the grading policy, school culture, the female population, and ways to improve the school since it opened in 2021.

Students Point of View

Q You just finished your freshman year, what would you like to see improve for the 2024-2025 school year?

Janaiya Dunkley (FR): I would like to see improvement for the 2024-2025 school year: more female involvement, more clubs for example, art, and more sports, for example, tennis, and soccer.

Q In a recent survey completed by students in school on the question; Should the school provide more courses in?

Music

9th Graders - 57%
10th Graders - 70%
11th Graders - 73%

The Arts

9th Graders - 44%
10th Graders - 57%
11th Graders - 70%

Current Events

9th Graders - 71%
10th Graders - 63%
11th Graders - 57%

Business

9th Graders - 83%
10th Graders - 83%
11th Graders - 85%

Q Did the teachers assist you in every aspect of your academics and did teachers challenge you?

Janaiya Dunkley (FR): Yes. My teachers did assist me in every aspect of my academics. Whenever I was confused my teachers were

always there to help guide me through it. My teachers challenged me and made me step out of my comfort zone. Teachers made me try new things I wasn't used to doing. Mr. Modestin and Mr. Greason did help challenge me, they did new things I wasn't used to in the classroom. Both of them helped me with my Government/Economics class. Mr. Modestin and Mr. Greason were a part of my growth in their class, and I have learned a lot from them.

Q Do you agree with the grading policy?

Karla Matos (SO): "No -- with the grading policy. We only get graded off assessments and not off other classwork assignments. Also, some teachers take a lot of time to update my grades in PpowerSchool. If I don't turn in one assignment, my grade goes down, but if I turn in two assignments my grade stays the same.

Emily Linarez (SO): I disagree with the grading policy because we are doing all of this work for assessment only. What is we truly getting graded on? Assessments or classwork?

Jayden Griffin (SO): I disagree with the grading policy because it gives students a lot of leeway not to do assignments. I don't think it is fair for a student to miss school a lot and then get a chance to do some work to boost their grades. I work hard to be on the honor roll and to see some students get on the honor roll without putting in the amount of work or effort as someone who has been on the honor roll for a long period, it stings.

Janaiyah David (JR): I am against the grading policy here at the school. I feel it's unfair because some people like me do not do well on tests. The teachers give us classwork and homework as practice, however, it should still be incorporated into our grades.

Maynor Jimenez (JR): People who excel in class do solid work. If they even mess up on a test that could decrease their grade and overall GPA, that doesn't reflect their passion for school.

Michael Greason (History/SPED Teacher): I agree with some aspects of the policy but not the whole. Grades should reflect the work of the students. If classwork is not completed and turned in, the students should receive 0% credit, not 45%. Expectations of structure and consistency should be present from day one, so students are aware of their progress.

Mariam Ouattara (Chemistry Teacher): Our grading system needs to improve. This system does not allow students to be held accountable for the work they complete in the classroom or at home. Often, students will determine the quality of their work depending on if

it is graded or "just collected." This allows them to develop poor habits such as "turning in incomplete work" or "becoming distracted during group work" because they are not receiving a numerical grade for work they've completed.

Solutions that can be implemented to improve our grading policy are establishing a department-wide grading policy, creating a weighted grade system, and getting rid of the 45 percent 5% rule. These solutions help differentiate how each class will be graded based on each subject while providing students with a clear breakdown of how each assignment impacts their grades. A weighted grading system will allow teachers to factor in participation, and homework in grades to increase one's opportunity to improve in class if they're not performing well on formative and summative assessments. We need to create a system where students can develop tangible skills that can be translated into the classroom and the real world.

Q You three have among the highest GPAs in the school. Do you think that you work too hard, but then the students below you academics-wise get more of a freebie?

Priscilla Ramirez (JR): Kind of. Like they're very lenient with the majority of the basketball team.

Maynor Jimenez (JR): I would say so as well.

Janaiyah David (JR): I work hard, but not too hard, because the workload here is easy to manage. The students below me, academic-wise, do get more of a freebie because they come to school and don't do any work, but can still pass. This does not bother me because I need to work harder than most people around me to become successful.

Q In a recent survey completed by students in school on the question; Would you be willing to help recruit more young women to the school?

9th Graders - 55.07% Yes
10th Graders - 66% Yes
11th Graders - 74.12% Yes

Q How can the female student body improve the school and do the girls get more opportunities on campus?

Janaiya Dunkley (FR): The school can increase female enrollment by making it less about basketball and showcasing that you can do other things besides basketball.

Emily Linarez (SO): Females can improve the school by speaking up and being more open. If they see a female by herself, talk to her and

see if they're OK.

Karla Matos (SO): Females can improve the school by rising stronger as a group. We should all talk to each other and have no problems with each other: peace and love.

Angie Cruz (SO): This is my first year at the school. I would like to see the school invest more in girls to open up more opportunities that can broaden the spectrum of female participation. You say you want more girls in the school, but with the girls getting outnumbered, there should be more opportunities.

Janaiyah David (JR): The females are now starting to receive the proper respect around the campus because we are using all the opportunities we can to voice our opinions. At first, I felt we were seen as less than the boys, but now we just need to continue standing our ground.

Mariam Ouattara (Chemistry Teacher): Our female students can improve our school by sticking together and supporting one another. With the ratio of male students to female students being 70:30, our female students are a minority. Dividing wouldn't be the best option. Participating in volleyball, cheer, dance, choir, and basketball, and attending a monthly girls' group event are ways our girls showed resilience this year. However, developing strong bonds with their peers and understanding the importance of solidarity would allow them to cultivate a welcoming culture for each other.

Michael Greason (History/SPED Teacher): By coming together, bonding, and showing that we're a team and important for this school. To lean on female teachers to rely on them for open conversations on topics that female students would not feel comfortable talking about with male teachers.

Q What do you think about the culture of the school?

Emily Linarez (SO): When I started here, I felt a good energy. I felt nervous, but a good nervous. I didn't feel anything dangerous or weird energy.

Karla Matos (SO): It's very unique and diverse. I also feel like the energy is chaotic and everyone is all over.

Priscilla Ramirez (JR): I don't know. I feel like it's mainly about basketball, honestly.

Jayden Griffin (SO): The academic culture can grow and do more for other students to put the extra effort into doing well in class to gain and maintain a solid high grade.

Mariam Ouattara (Chemistry Teacher): The academic culture could improve. Our stu-

(continued on next page)



The Purposeful Life

It is not death a man [Humanity] should fear, but he should fear never beginning to live. - Marcus Aurelius

In a world teeming with endless possibilities, it's disheartening to witness a vast reservoir of untapped potential lying dormant within individuals. Failing to live up to one's full capabilities isn't merely a personal setback; it is a collective loss for society. The repercussions ripple through communities and fields as countless innovations, contributions, and transformative ideas remain unrecognized. Imagine the breakthroughs that could revolutionize our world, the untold stories waiting to be written, and the extraordinary impact each person could make. The issue isn't just about unfulfilled dreams, it's about the wasted talent from a world deprived of the richness and diversity that arises only when individuals reach their potential. In exploring self-discovery and purpose, I aim to shed light on this issue that spans from person to person, country to country, and continent to continent by having you, the reader, work towards unearthing your latent potential to benefit yourself and humanity's extraordinary tapestry. It is time to break free from the chains that bind us to mediocrity and embark on a journey toward the possible.

Self-observation brings man [Humanity] to the realization of the necessity of self-change. And in observing himself a man notices that self-observation brings about certain changes in his inner processes. He begins to understand that self-observation is an instrument of self-change, a means of awakening. — George Gurdjieff

In the journey to gain a deeper purpose in life, it is crucial to ask questions that help you discover your purpose and grasp your identity better. If you were to ask a stranger, "Who are you?"

How would you describe yourself?" they might seem puzzled. Many people don't know who they truly are; they might just state simple and rather conventional responses such as "I am smart" or "I am funny." To understand your purpose, think of your life as a puzzle. Questions such as "What am I passionate about?" or "Who - not necessarily what - do I want to be in the future?" can be compared to puzzle pieces. When you "combine all the pieces", you can truly understand the world better.

At dawn, when you have trouble getting out of bed, tell yourself: "I have to go to work — as a human being. What do I have to complain of, if I'm going to do what I was born for — the things I was brought into the world to do? Or is this what I was created for? To huddle under the blankets and stay warm?"

But, it is nicer here...

So you were born to feel "nice"? Instead of doing things and experiencing them? Don't you see the plants, the birds, the ants, spiders, and bees going about their individual tasks, putting the world in order, as best they can? And you're not willing to do your job as a human being? Why aren't you running to do what your nature demands?

You don't love yourself enough. Or you'd love your nature too, and what it demands of you." -Taken from "Meditations" by Marcus Aurelius

Through extensive research on the subject, a recurring theme has emerged across various major religions and philosophies worldwide. Consider the analogy of planting a seed in fertile soil and providing it with sunlight and water. Now, envision placing a glass container over the seed before it matures. Despite the seed's potential for growth, it becomes constrained within the

container's limits. Whether the seed represents a humble bush or an imposing Dragonsblood tree, its growth is limited within the glass enclosure, eventually leading to stagnation and demise. The seed symbolizes our consciousness and spirituality, while the glass container embodies our ego. Despite possessing stable ground (a secure life), adequate sunlight (wisdom), and sufficient water (knowledge), our growth is restricted by the limitations we impose upon ourselves. However, by dismantling our ego - breaking free from the glass container - we can unleash our fullest potential and flourish; whether as a modest bush or a majestic Dragonsblood tree.

Shedding one's ego is much more complex than just humbling yourself. While some view the ego as just a part of self-esteem, it is broader — covering identity, including personality, views, values, experiences, and emotions. This doesn't suggest giving up individuality or embracing a collective mindset but stresses acknowledging that the ego, tied to negative emotions, historically fuels conflicts. Looking at events like the Peloponnesian War, the Hundred Years' War and the Crusades shows how pride and entitlement, driven by ego, shaped our world. In today's context, the Israel-Palestine conflict also illustrates how conflicting beliefs fueled by entitlement and pride contribute to ongoing tensions and suffering.

Overall, the purpose we have in life is to fulfill our highest potential. This is achievable by peeking into the world of philosophy, metaphysics, history, and ancient civilizations to learn more about the evolution of our understanding of life. From there, we can put together the pieces of life.

-Elijah Torres

Voice Your Opinion

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dents need to understand the power they hold when it comes to their education and take responsibility for their learning. Skills such as time and stress management, accountability, and discipline can be developed through the student's academic habits. Once our students understand the importance of their academics, the culture will change.

Michael Greason (History/SPED Teacher): Students need to take responsibility for their education and understand teachers are here to help, giving them transferable skills to prepare them for college and life beyond high school.

Q Maynor, you have been here since day one. Have you seen a difference in the

culture around campus?

Maynor Jimenez (JR): There has been more emphasis on careers surrounding basketball.

Q How can you change it since you're the top student in Knights Nation?

Maynor Jimenez (JR): Well, if people don't want to change it, there's no need to. But

if people want more options, then I could accommodate that.

Q Are teachers doing a good job in preparing you guys ready to go to college?

Maynor Jimenez (JR): The majority of them are.

Priscilla Ramirez (JR): Yeah, I would say some. A select few are helping

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

The Dynamic Duo

ASHANTI BROWN
Features Writer

Earl Monroe High School

When Earl Monroe High has special events, only two voices in Pelham Bay can bring the noise and captivate the crowd of students and faculty. We call them the dynamic duo of James Ennis and Ricardo Spence. Both men bring a diverse, charismatic style to the mic. Together, they have both stage presence and grace.

Ennis and Spence are Bronx-born and raised. Both were student-athletes in college. Ennis played football at DePauw University and Spence started playing football at SUNY Maritime and later became a walk-on at Morgan State. His college football career was cut short due to medical reasons. The NCAA declared Spence was not fit to play because of coronary heart disease.

Both are passionate and caring teachers for each student who comes into their classroom.

They walk the halls with a positive energy, engaging with students and faculty and genuine interest that gives the building a boost of love. These men wear so many hats on the Knights Nation campus that sometimes they forget who they are.

Ennis can be located in Room Five teaching Financial Literacy and Sports Foundations and roaming the sidelines as an assistant coach for the boys' freshmen basketball team. He educates students about podcast creation. He teaches students on how to direct a podcast. And he also instructs them on how to interview with a broad delivery with the right voice techniques, along with providing questions and answers to the listeners.

Ennis served as host at Earl Monroe High's first-ever fashion show on a Friday night during March Madness and was dressed to the T. He finished off the year hosting the Knights' sports banquet.

Spence, the actor on campus, balances his

time between teaching his theatre/drama classes and coordinating school events as the Town Hall Director and head coach of the flag football team. With a sellout crowd on hand at the last school year event with parents, faculty, and students in attendance, the booming voice of Spence introduced the choir before giving out student academic awards. He even had a dance-off against the dance team. His moves got a standing ovation from the crowd.

During the upcoming 2024-2025 school year, the dynamic duo can be seen alongside Stacey Seabrook, and Shantoi Douglas in collaboration with Riverdale Country School in a musical production of "The Capeman," a Broadway musical written and produced by Grammy Award winner and Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Paul Simon.



RICARDO SPENCE



JAMES ENNIS

College and Career Readiness

BY ELIJAH TORRES

Here at Earl Monroe High, there's an ongoing debate about how the school is truly preparing our students for the next stage of their lives. But one part of that preparation process has never been in doubt: the valuable guidance and advice the students receive from college counselor Judith Redlener. "Ms. Judith," as she is called, works day and night to ensure our students are connected with the best possible opportunities to succeed in whichever path they choose.

A recent survey completed by students in school answered the question: Do you want to go to college right after high school?

9th Graders - 88%
10th Graders - 77%
11th Graders - 79%

On paper, Ms. Judith the Director of College and Career Readiness is tasked with working with students to identify colleges that would put them on the road to personal and professional success. But her work goes beyond the job description. Ms. Judith does whatever she can to coach the students, encourage them, and ensure they have taken the necessary steps to be fully prepared for their next academic level after high school.

She organizes college visits and coordinates meetings to assist in researching majors

of student interests and check on college essays. And maybe most importantly, she also listens – to where students are, and what they want, in school and out. If you talk to Ms. Judith, she will tell you this is a perk of her job. She enjoys helping our students.

No doubt, Ms. Judith is a superstar and Earl Monroe High School is lucky to have her. But she cannot do it all alone. Students have a role to play, too. Students need to take responsibility for the next steps, develop academic discipline, motivate each other, and listen and guide each other in the right direction. As the school goes into its fourth year for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year and prepares for its first graduation class, Ms. Judith wants to develop this sense of accountability that will become the norm in college prep.



JUDITH REDLENER

A Limit for Disrespect. Girls Voice

Editor's Note: The author wished to remain anonymous in order to write freely and to bring about change.

Can a girl survive in a boys' environment?

I am a girl in a generation of boys, boys who don't know the difference between something funny and hurtful. Boys catcall me. They laugh. But are they laughing with me – or, as it generally feels, at me? Do they think the hoots and hollers make me feel good? The truth is they make me feel bad – and angry.

After school every day I go with my friends to get a drink and a snack at the deli. Walking back to the school for dance practice one day, I realize I forgot something, so I go back - alone. As I open the deli store door, I see basketball players from different teams. I stop, hesitant to go in. I've heard stories about some players and how they mistreat women. I step in anyway and as soon as the door closes a bad vibe is clear.

The first thing I hear is: "Let me kill." I know what it means. I know just how inappropriate it is. I get very uncomfortable and feel tears in my eyes. So, I grab my drink, pay for it, and dart out the door. The team of play-

ers passes me on the way back to campus. I see them turn to look at me and laugh.

When I got to the school, I told my coach what happened. She said she would take care of it, but I still feel the tears welling in my eyes. I see one of my guy friends coming down the hall toward me. I start crying as I recount the story to him. He tells me not to let them get the better of me. That's how they've always been since the school started three years ago. But why, I ask him with a mixture of sadness and anger, why should I be one crying because of how they behave? Why should I be the one who feels badly when they don't show respect for women??

It's so crazy to me how I remember every detail of this event. The place, what time it was, who was there. I know not every basketball player on one of the school's teams was present that day and that the others should not be held accountable for the behavior of their friends. But the sad truth is, that most of them don't respect or treat women with respect. And if most of them act one way, they defend each other as a team and become known for it. What I would like to say to them – if they are willing to listen -- is this:

treat a woman how you would want your sister or your mom to be treated. If you show no respect for the girls you see every day in school, then you show no respect for any of the women in your life.

Plenty of other things have happened to me in this school but I am only telling the one that upset me the most. This episode made me cry for days and made me feel like I was less of a person, less of a deserving human being, because of a few words a boy had said. Worst of all, when he was forced to apologize, all he did was make excuses.

Can a girl survive in a boys' environment? Sure, but the scars will be lasting, and the price will be high. And she will be the only one to pay them.

-The Dwyer



ILLUSTRATION BY MELANIE SONILAL

The Round Table

BY SAUDA MOULTRIE

On the journey to be the best, have we been blinded by ego

Chasing greatness and forgetting morals and integrity

Striving for accomplishment without teamwork

Everyone wants to sit at the table of success by themselves without acknowledging the table itself

Every part of the table matters, not just the part that holds the feast.

The Screws that hold the legs together

The polish and sandpaper kept you from getting splinters while the meal was enjoyed.

The saw that shaped your seat

The Prep of the meal itself.

Down the bus boy, who cleaned up so you can prepare for the next.

Greatness doesn't just appear overnight.

We have a place of great talent, but to be the best we must shatter the fragile ego that stands in the way of our goals.

The one that consumes a feast of patriarchy and misogyny.

In order to be the best, first you have to stop running from your worst.

Acknowledge every part of you.



love poem

My True Gold

I never thought this could happen

You are my everything

You are my good and bad

Addiction

My strength keeping me here

In this lonely world

My true gold

My true gold

I question at first why it was you

But with you

I finally feel safe

You're like my Friday

A warm feeling

A feeling of excitement

A feeling that I know I love you

In this copper world

My true gold

My true gold

I know sometimes we are distance

But I can't live without the thought of you

Attachment

When I hear your bittersweet voice

I'm finally calm and I can forget about anything

It makes an aura in my heart

Filled with bright colors knowing your

In this black-and-white world your

My true gold

My true gold

I know gold never rots

But now you are leaving

Everything comes to an end

Coal

Nothing last forever

In this dying world

But no matter what your

My true gold

Friendships

-By Infinity Cortijo

Student Clubs



ART CLUB



SCIENCE CLUB



FASHION CLUB



FLAG FOOTBALL



CHOIR



COMIC BOOK CLUB



CHESS CLUB



HER HONOR



VIDEO GAMES CLUB



NEWSPAPER CLUB

“Eventually”

ELIJAH TORRES

Features Writer

Earl Monroe High School

Eleven students embraced a vision and mission. Earl Monroe High School founder Dan Klores established a business class during the inaugural opening in 2021, teaching students about building the foundation of a business plan for fashion sportswear.

The students were introduced to Jason Rabin on a Wednesday afternoon in his office of Centric Brands situated in the Empire State Building. Rabin, the Chief Executive Officer of Centric Brands, a multi-billion-dollar, global leading company in the life-

style industry. One of Centric Brands' biggest clients is the Messi Brand, the sports fashion collection of 2022 World Cup champion and Argentin-

“The goal of creating the business class for students was to provide them with insight, skills, and knowledge about business”

**- Dylan Schneider
10th Grade Counselor**

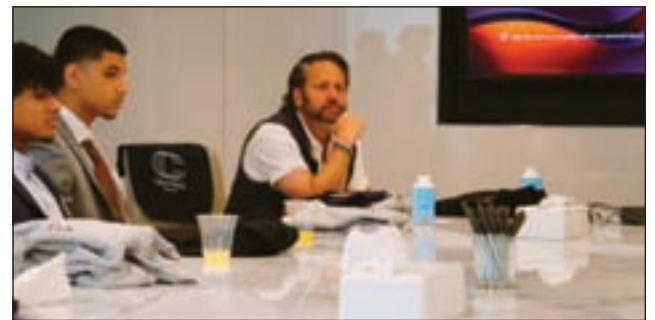
ian football superstar, Lionel Messi, now playing for Inter Miami FC of Major League Soccer.

Marcella Leeds an Executive Assistant to Rabin, told the students how to realize their dreams of pursuing a business career. Leeds broke down the principles of generating interest in building a business and creating a business plan to the students. Jordy Santos a junior at Earl Monroe High walked away with a strong feeling of impacting the world around him. Santos added that he felt confident and comfortable with Rabin's organization hospitality and professionalism “Overall,” said Santos, “we all believe we have a bright future ahead, as long as we make the sacrifices that need to be made to accomplish our mission to spread.”

Traveling from Pelham Bay, the 11 students delivered the pitch for their sports streetwear fashion, “Eventually.” The advertising pitch



above & below Business class



L-R) Jordy Santos, Angel Cruz, & Centric Brands CEO Jason Rabin during Earl Monroe High School Business Class trip to pitch ‘Eventually’.
Photos by Coty Peterson

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The history
The past of our future
The seeds that grow into roses
For the people who sleep away from
The history of racism

The history
The past that impacts us now
The glass heart that shatters because of slavery
For people to look back and say wow
The history of racism

The history
The past of inequality
The gunshots from people that
are supposed to be our friends
The cages that lock up “animals”
cause people to start hollering
The history of unity

The history
The past laws that are now in light
The sound of music turns into a song of protest
and civil disobedience
For the problems remain not in sight
The history of unity

The history
The past to be cleared that now we can celebrate
The shadows can only be created in the sun
For us to say we came a long way to not be frustrate
Cause at the end of the day
It's the history of black history

-Infinity Cortijo - The Dwyer

was a slam dunk to Rabin and executives from the marketing, design, and internship departments from Centric Brands. This unique experience provided the students with invaluable insights, knowledge, and guidance, helping them move closer to their goal of building a million-dollar company.

CEO Khary Williams of the business class expressed how he walked away with a deep understanding of the business world. Throughout our journey, Williams communicated how everybody developed their networking and marketing expertise through the different lessons they learned in class from Klores. Khary was tense and nervous at first - to be frank, we all were - but we all managed to leave Centric Brands on a positive note.

What was your goal of creating the business class for the students at Earl Monroe High School and what did you and the students accomplish to finish the school year?

(Dylan Schneider/10th Grade Counselor): The goal of creating the business class for students was to

provide them with insight, skills, and knowledge about business. We also wanted to educate them on how to budget a product and the various ways to make money.

All the students in the class expressed a desire to learn “how to make money” via a business class taught by Klores. The best way to do so was through creating their business brand. The brand is called ‘Eventually.’ a sports streetwear fashion line. The team designed a logo, business cards, social media accounts, a website, and a prototype hoodie.

The students met with CEO Jason Rabin of “Centric Brands” to pitch their company. Sitting in a corporate-style meeting, the students and Rabin discussed areas of improvement. He discussed the next steps for an official launch of the product. These young men are committed to working hard, and learning the value of communication, teamwork, accountability, and resilience as they pursue their goal to establish their brand globally and make millions of dollars.

'Energy is Everything':

Girls' Volleyball Hopes to Build on Promise of Last Year

EDEM MESSANH

Sports Writer

Earl Monroe High School

The girls' volleyball team had a bumpy roller-coaster ride this past season.

Entering its second season, the Lady Knights were coached by History teacher Vanessa Reyes and Chemistry teacher Mariam Ouattara. Reyes, a former captain at the Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics, and Ouattara, a three-time City University of New York champion out of Hunter College, had major challenges and obstacles to overcome.

The coaches had to build a team of players with varying amounts of experience while attempting to carve out time to practice in the gym that shares four other teams.

The Lady Knights had an auspicious beginning, clinching the opener by defeating CompSci High School, 2-1 in the best of three sets in front of a sellout crowd. The stands were filled with parents, faculty, girls, boys freshman, junior varsity, and varsity basketball teams cheering.

"Energy is everything," Ouattara said after the win. "If you're not ready, your opening will destroy you."

The Lady Knights battled for playoff po-

sition throughout the season. They swept a doubleheader by forfeit to improve to a 5-4 record and climbed into the NYC Charter School Athletic League's top eight at one point in the season. Earl Monroe High was awarded a win over Our Saviour Lutheran when the school decided not to make the trip to Pelham Bay. Later that night, Capital Prep Harbor, a Bridgeport, Connecticut-based school, was stuck in traffic, causing the referee to give the Lady Knights the contest.

However, with the season on the line, the Lady Knights fell 2-1 in three sets to Law & Science High School to finish with a 9-9 record to miss out on the playoffs.

Still, the Lady Knights showed they can compete against the best. The players proved Earl Monroe High will no longer be known for only being a dominant force in basketball.

"Keep your eyes open on the years to come," Reyes and Ouattara said.

I sat down with Reyes and Ouattara to talk about the season and the future of women's sports at Earl Monroe High.

What were the tactics for the girls coming into the season, knowing that some girls haven't had the opportunity to play under the whistle yet?

Coach Reyes: "By helping the girls teach themselves routines that work for them and be-



#12 Kemoya Salmon spiking vs CompSci High

Photograph by Corner Pocket shots

ing for them anytime we notice something or if they need our guidance"

With the support you had from the students and faculty section, what was something, you had to remind your girls?

Coach Ouattara: "Preaching that they have to build off of each other, and that energy is everything."

What made this group of girls special.

Coach Reyes: "The girls wanted to be pushed more and wanted to be great."

How does being a teacher benefit when it comes to coaching during games and practice?

Coach Reyes: "Being a teacher helps us ex-

plain things in different ways to make sure all of our players understand the assignment."

If you could ask anything from the school to benefit the team in the years to come and next season, what would it be?

Coach Reyes and Ouattara: "Gym time, give us more respect, more help with transportation,"

Is there anything you want students to know?

Coach Reyes and Ouattara: "This season was just something bigger than us, let's see if you have what it takes to be a Lady Knight. Tune in August, 2024."

The Surface of Greatness: *Sometimes, the only way to succeed is through failure.*

NYC CSSA CHAMPS AND NY STATE CHARTER SCHOOL CHAMPS

EDEM MESSANH

Sports Writer

Earl Monroe High School

After losing two championship games in the 2022-23 girls' basketball season, the Lady Knights entered this year with one mission: championship or bust.

Expectations were high. The team returned with a core of solid performers from last year's squad, including sophomore leading scorer Janaiya Edwards.

She was joined by 5-foot-6 junior transfer Shanice Smith from DeWitt Clinton High School, and incoming freshmen Juliet Kanu, Nathalia Ramirez, Leah Montalvo, and Rebekah Alvarez.

Second-year head coach Jeremy Logan bolstered his staff by adding incoming ELA teacher and assistant coach Isaiah Williams to build up the team's defensive skills, along with academic advisor and assistant coach Naomi Smith to keep the student-athletes performing at a high level academically. Their main message to their players: be disciplined, on-and-off the court, or find yourself sitting on the bench or off the team.

They were disciplined. And they were undeniably great.

The Lady Knights compiled a

30-0 UNBEATEN RECORD thanks to better-prepared, all-around players such as perimeter sharpshooter sophomore Kyasia Kinsey and the front-court starting threesome of Smith, and juniors Ayanna Sanders, and Aaliyah Pharr. Logan's first call off the bench to secure rebounds was junior Kaylene Zayas.

Edwards and Smith combined for 109 points in the playoffs. Edwards scored 19 points and Smith recorded a double-double (16 points and 11 rebounds) in the Lady Knights' 55-46 win over Queens-based The Renaissance Charter School in the City Schools Sports Association New York City championship game. Earl Monroe High used a late 8-1 run to put the game away. Edwards took home the MVP honors.

The twosome of Edwards and Smith were dominant again in the New York State championship game at home against unbeaten champions, the French American School of New York of the Greater Hudson Valley. Edwards had a strong all-around game scoring a game-high 27 points, pulling down five rebounds, dishing out four dimes, and having four steals. Smith notched another strong double-double with 17 points and 15 rebounds in the 66-56 win and was named MVP.

"I knew coming to this school I



Aaliyah Pharr

Photo by James Ennis

knew the team was good, but I did not realize my energy and hard work on the court would have a big impact," Smith said after the game. "I am happy with both championships and happy my energy helped us win tonight."

To be clear, the Lady Knights were not a two-player team.

Junior floor general Angelina DeLaCruz returned from a devastating right knee ACL injury suffered before last season's title run. DeLaCruz (6points& 5assists) knocked down a crucial free throw down the stretch and forced her opponents' star player Camila Castillo (18points) to commit her sixth foul to foul out with just over a minute in the game to secure the Lady Knights' NYC championship.

And then there were the freshmen

foursome.

Kanu, Ramirez, Montalvo, and Alvarez challenged the coaching staff for playing time. With Logan out and Williams roaming the sidelines, the young freshman shined in the second half of the Lady Knights' 54-11 win over Atmosphere High in early February. The quartet outscored Atmosphere 15-6 in the final 11 minutes of the rout.

After the season, I sat down with Coach Logan.

Which player outside Janaiya Edwards and Shanice Smith stood out during the season?

Coach Logan: A lot of people stepped up during the season. Kaylene stepped up a lot when she was asked to step up, Leah made big shots when she had the opportunity, but it

was an all-around team effort.

Now that you have two championships, how will this group of girls continue to improve?

Coach Logan: Creating a program and a pipeline for the young ladies to continue and play college basketball.

How much of an impact did Assistant Coach Williams have on your coaching program?

Coach Logan: It was tremendous having another coach that can see things on the spot and understand how to fix it. He always has four eyes on the floor at all times.

What are you and your staff doing to keep your student-athletes away from poor academic situations?

Coach Logan: By both coaches understanding what a student-athlete is. We put out GPA standards. And Ms. Smith as Academic Advisor takes control of all academic standards whether it be study hall, grade orders, and making sure players respect the ideology of being a student-athlete.

As a History Teacher and the Girls' Basketball Coach, which is more difficult: to teach or to coach?

Coach Logan: Coaching basketball has been the hardest thing I've done in life. I'm constantly learning. I have experience coaching college basketball at Hostos Community College in the Bronx. But you have to keep learning. I can teach history in my sleep, but coaching is the most difficult.

Came Up Short in The Chip

JAYDEN MARTINEZ

Sportswriter

Earl Monroe High School

The Knights' junior varsity squad dominated throughout the regular season but fell short of a title, losing to Success Academy 82-80 in the City Championship game.

The Knights finished the season with an overall record of 40-4, playing in a combination league of JV and varsity teams across the five boroughs.

I sat down with head coach Jared Rivers and assistant coach Jacob Schneider to reflect on the season.

What were the strengths and weaknesses of your players during the playoffs?

Jared Rivers: Free throws and turnovers were our weaknesses. We turned the ball over too many times, for sure. We needed to take advantage of the free opportunities to capitalize on opponents that led to victory. Our strength was scoring in the paint. Our players got to the rack a lot during games.

What are your thoughts on this season?

Jacob Schneider: We had a good season. A lot of growth was shown from our players from the start of the season to the end. We couldn't pull through in our championship game. Unfortunately, but besides that, our season was impressive considering when you factor in the fact that we went from facing the JV league to varsity.

What were the positives and negatives of the season?

Jacob Schneider: Well, for starters, a positive this season was our offense was incredible. We were able to outscore anyone outside the perimeter and inside the interior. But on the other hand, a negative was our defense. Our man-to-man defense needs to improve, and we need to learn how to defend the blow-by better, that's all.

What are your thoughts on playing the JV Knights in a varsity league?

Jared Rivers: Our mission is still the same: build up young players, make them more physical, and tougher. We're, trying to mature their bodies and their minds for when they're playing against older kids.



Eric Bush (0) vs (24) Lucas Prestifilippo

The speed of the game is faster, so we got to be faster. We have to get better playing together, if we do all these things right, we can succeed.

What are your thoughts on the championship game and why do you think you lost?

Jared Rivers: We didn't get stops. We were supposed to get stops. We didn't box out. There were a lot of turnovers, we came out flat-footed in the second half of the game. We didn't make winning plays that gave success to our game; free throws killed us all year, and turnovers, etc. We got too complacent, and when the other teams made runs, we couldn't withstand it. We weren't in shape, we got too tired. Foul trouble was a big problem, the other team went on a late run, which cost us. Honestly, we didn't play smart. We were up 13 [but] couldn't put the other team away. When you're up that much you have to keep your foot on the gas. We were taking a lot of tough, quick, and bad shots, and we didn't get stops, they made the final push that we couldn't.

After sitting down with both coaches, I talked with starting point guard Sasheen Liz, and starting power forward and team MVP Eric Bush.

How did you feel about the championship game?

Sasheen Liz: We underestimated

the other team. We should've played harder from the get-go. Not only that, but the court was also bigger. Our team was used to the smaller courts. When we went on the big stage the court wasn't as small as we usually played on. Because of that factor alone, we lost stamina very easily, we were fatigued running up and down back and forth faster than usual.

What are you looking to improve on next season?

Sasheen Liz: Our mentality before games, most definitely. We need to do a better job of getting locked in throughout the entire game.

For the second straight year, you made it to the final game. What was the

difference between last year's championship loss and this year's loss?

Eric Bush: The intensity of the games was different. It was a faster pace, the other team had consistent shooters we should've played upon, accurate facilitators, and some players bigger than our players. It was like we played an actual basketball team that we weren't too worried. We took this as a challenge and started to kill it. Even though we lost, in the end, we put up a good fight.

A couple of freshmen were added to the team this season, in which they played a valuable role. Can you elaborate on the freshmen that stood out and if they'll be on the team next year?

Eric Bush: Our point guard Elijah, who plays alongside Sasheen, stood out. He was either our first or second-leading scorer. He's 100 percent going to be on JV next year even if we're moving up to a varsity league.

What are you looking to improve on most next season?

Eric Bush: We need to improve how we approach the game. We didn't prepare right for the shining lights of championship games, and that's the reason we lost. We have to learn to keep our pedal on the gas -- even if we're up 20, 15, or whatever -- because at the end of the day, the game is never over until it's over.

Intro To Basketball

Yet a champion?

The bottom of the hill

Where people pick him

Always stay on the benches

while everyone staring at them

To always stay in the trenches

This is his world

I'm in the shadow

Yet a Champion?

Climbing up the hill

I walk onto the court floor

My skills are better more

I see a light

I hold the bouncing density

My hoops come bright

I'm seeing a trilogy

Coming out of the shadow

Yet a champion?

I am at the middle of the hill

I aim for the top

The other team will meet their demise

The grind will never stop

As we march towards the prize

Getting out of the shadow

Yet a champion?

I finally made it to the top of the hill

Where people finally know my name

The destination is great,

but the journey was a thrill

My passion combust into a ball of flame

This is my world

I'm no longer his shadow

Now a champion...

-by Infinity Cortijo



The Knights Claim Gold in China

ELVIS MARTINEZ

Sportswriter

Earl Monroe High School

The trip lasted 10 days.

The flight from New York to the Henan Province in China took more than 24 hours. It covered a little more than 7,000 miles.

And for the Earl Monroe New Renaissance Basketball High School Knights, it was a new

life experience that culminated with history.

The Knights became the first American high school program to win the Yaoxin Sports International High School basketball tournament.

“The experience of playing in China is something special that will stick with me forever,” said Devin James, the floor general of the Knights during the parade of champions when the school celebrated the Gold Medal. “I learned a lot about myself, the Chinese culture, and the game of basketball in different ways. The discipline of how the game is approached in China is very different from what I see back home. Winning is great, but winning the gold is awesome.”

The international tournament was covered by NBA.com. The lessons learned in China were put to good use as the Knights won the Charter School Athletic Association city and New York state championships for the 2023-2024 basketball season.

Earl Monroe, himself, came to celebrate the gold medal with the team and the school named after him.

“Watching the celebration today of these young men winning



(Above L-R) Yaoxin Sports International High School basketball tournament officials, Earl Monroe High School Executive Director Brandon Corley, Devin James, Head Coach Kenny Miller, Raymond Kinnard, Chandler Bligen, Dwayne Pierce (Rens Athlete), Malik Ouro Adoyi, Damier Burton, Jagilhack Ali, Tracey, and Athletic Director Oz Cross.

the tournament in China brings joy to me as I remember when I made the trip on an Asian tour with fellow NBA basketball players to spread and connect the game of basketball,” Monroe said to reporter Keyon Scahnd during the festivities. “This is a great day for the school and students. The players bringing home the gold is something they will cherish.”

These Knights, some of whom flew outside the United States for the first time, embraced the experience. Along with winning the tournament, the team learned about Chinese culture.

“The Earl Monroe New Renaissance Basketball School’s boys basketball team spent the last week in China on a trip that included culture, new experiences, and basketball,” said News 12’s Dan Serafin during a report at the school team’s victory party, hosted by Earl Monroe’s founder, Dan Klores.

To catch more on the Earl Monroe New Renaissance Basketball High School historical event, you can also view the interview of Earl Monroe Executive Director Corley and Chandler Bligen on News11.



Coaches Oz and Miller in a huddle with the Knights

The Rude Awakening

EDEM MESSANH

Sports Writer

Earl Monroe High School

An inconsistent season ended in confusion.

The Earl Monroe High School Knights Boys’ freshman basketball 2024 season ended with a 43-21 loss to the Equality High School Eagles. But the Knights walked into their home



Earl Monroe High School Knights Boys’ 2024 freshman basketball team

gymnasium for what they thought was the last game of their regular season. Unaware of the stakes, head coach Corey Grant and assistant coach James Ennis played most of the game with role players.

They later learned that it was a playoff game. When the final whistle blew, New York City Charter School Athletic Association officials, the school’s athletic department, and coaches met to discuss the decision.

The parties declined to comment when contacted. The freshmen team finished the season with a 7-5 record.

The disappointment from the defeat turned into shock when the Knights learned their dreams of being the first-ever freshman team to bring a championship to Earl Monroe High were crushed.

While the tough loss was hard to swallow for young players playing in their first high school basketball season, the Knights’ mental-

ity, toughness, and grit laid the foundation for the future.

After watching the Knights win their first two preseason games by a combined 55 points, Grant wanted to see how his team would match up against the best of the Catholic School League, specifically 6-foot-5 big man in the middle, Jaden Finikin, and 6-foot-1 small forward, Hector Sosa.

The Knights lost four straight games to Cardinal Hayes, Xavier, St. Francis, and St. Raymond to drop their record to 2-4.

Despite ending the preseason with four straight losses, the Knights opened the regular season by winning their first three games with 5-foot-4 point guard Beniah Milteer leading the charge.

The Knights followed Milteer’s lead. Small forward Jayden Manhe led the team in scoring with a 12 points-per-game average, and Timothy Hickson Etan Martinez, and Reiny Ortiz Jr.

played well defensively.

Knights season ends on miscommunication

I caught up with the coaches to summarize the season.

After going 0-4 in the Catholic School League games, and not having the opportunity to play in a freshman season, how were you able to get your team ready??

Coach Corey Grant: With everyone coming out of 8th grade, they have never had to work this hard to get on the court and blend into the rotation, so teaching my players that if you put the right amount of hard work and dedication into playing basketball, you will be all good. I saw it, and it was visible once we started winning games.

With a deep roster of players who can play different positions, how did you get players into your rotation without players losing faith in getting on the court?

Coach Corey Grant: At practice I never have the same starters go over and over again. We have different guys in different sets and different rotations so everybody can get a feel of the game.

A high point this season was the growth of PG Beniah Milteer coming into the year when nobody knew what he could bring to the table.

Coach Corey: He is one of the hardest workers on the team. I do not call him Patrick Beverly for no reason. We give him that nickname because he is one of the guys I believe would run into a wall for the team. When we

(continued on next page)



#11 Jayden Manhe pulling down a strong rebound Equality High Eagles
Photograph by r3vOlzz

EARL MONROE BASKETBALL PILOT PROGRAMS

ELVIS MARTINEZ

Sportswriter

Earl Monroe High School

Basketball History Pilot

The basketball project-based learning academic program in which students are introduced to professions off the playing court kicked off this past semester with history classes based upon the role of 'law' in the game.

Our history teachers, Jacob Schneider and Jeremy Logan, used four scenes from school founder Dan Klores' critically acclaimed 10-part 20-hour masterpiece, "Basketball: A Love Story," broadcast on ESPN as its basis for the curriculum.

Each scene runs for approximately 22 to 25 minutes, including interviews with many of the sports leading emissaries, and covers the legal issues, battles, cases, and personalities that shaped today's game: free agency, the formation of the NBA players association, the birth of the WNBA, and the injustice heaped upon numerous players, such as Connie Hawkins, who defined the 1960 nationwide gambling scandals.

The documentary includes Basketball Hall

of Famers Spencer Haywood, Bill Russell, Lenny Wilkens and David Stern, as well as current NBA commissioner Adam Silver, WNBA founding commissioner Val Ackerman, and Phoenix Mercury All-Star, Diana Taurasi.

What court cases impacted your students during the history basketball pilot?

Jacob Schneider: The pilot was geared toward students interested in law and justice. We gathered the students for a debate on the documentary court cases that changed the dynamic aspect of NBA players on and off the court to find a solution. The class dove into how the WNBA was created and founded in 1996, with the backing of the NBA, and the launch of the WNBA's inaugural season in 1997. The class researched the proceedings of Connie Hawkins' point-shaving scandal in college and how he fought back to get into the NBA at age 29. We looked into how Spencer Haywood wrestled the NBA league office to change the direction of the NBA draft rules, and the founding of the NBA Players Association. After watching two series from Klores' "Basketball: A Love Story," we opened up a round table discussion of Hawkins and Haywood, and the rise of women's professional basketball.

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have a 1-on-1 conversation about his game, he takes it to heart and works as hard as possible to improve it. He's a humble kid, a great kid. Beniah's hard work will make him a better player for a long time if he continues to work hard like that.

Working the sidelines with the first-year student team, there are two levels ahead of you all. As the head coach, how are you preparing your players ready for that next level?"

Coach Corey: We have a solid basketball program at Earl Monroe High and two amazing

coaches at JV and Varsity with K Mill [Kenneth Miller Varsity Head coach] and Jared [Rivers, the junior varsity head coach]. My main focus is teaching them that the patience I have for them this year as first-year student-athletes will be different and challenging for playing time with JV and varsity. The players have to learn that you have to pick up on things quicker, the learning curve is way faster, and they don't have time to repeat themselves twice. I'm disciplined with my players on the freshman team to get them ready for years to come if they want to continue playing basketball.



Hector Sosa shooting a floater shot.

Photograph by r3v0lzz

JAYDEN MARTINEZ

Sportswriter

Earl Monroe High School

True numbers of basketball

The Numbers of the NBA in the basketball math pilot are based on the Statistical Analysis course. This is an introduction to how an NBA organization budgets during the NBA Playoffs.

The goal at the start of the pilot was to have students learn how to collect and summarize data.

The course began with predictive statistics via linear regression. Students applied their basic knowledge of linear functions to the world of data. The reason for starting with linear regression was for students to gain confidence and feel they can succeed in statistics.

At this point, students began their first project called the "Free-Throw Shooting Contest." Each student was tasked with taking 20 free throws and recording the data in Excel. Collier wanted students to take a large data set, clean the data "structurally," create a multitude of identifiers, and finally bring the data to life by visualizations of statistics that popped out from the data.

This is the goal of the pilot project. Next up the students dove into distribution, and the NBA playoffs. The task was taking on the role of an NBA General Manager.

Working as a GM, students were exposed to creating a budget ceiling and floor for the NBA playoffs for the groups' respective teams. The second task was to establish the role of a budget and financial analyst. This assignment involved creating player payroll predictions for the next NBA season and factoring in the updated salary cap, player options, and available free agents.

With the NBA Playoffs blooming, every organization started looking at ticket sales that will define the budget for next season. Students probed ticket sales analysis. The students used predictive models to use historical ticket sales to predict the distribution and ticket sales for the next season. The students factored in the correlation of the highest player contract to the average ticket price into their model.

At the end of the season, students were tasked with creating a presentation detailing and executing a budget and learning the mathematical business side of NBA finances.

What did your students grasp at the end of the basketball pilot based on the NBA Playoffs?

Julius Collier (Statistics Teacher): The students did everything an NBA General Manager and a coach do to win an NBA Title. With 16 teams in the playoffs, each GM in class picked a team and had to create a budget during the playoffs. The challenges at the start of the pilot were

overcoming the obstacles of balancing a budget that included player's salaries and bonuses during the playoffs, ticket sales, travel expenses for players, coaches, and team management, and collecting financial data after every game to analyze how the budget was unfolding during a seven-game series.

MALASHA JENKINS

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Earl Monroe High School

Music & Arts Pilot

As Earl Monroe New Renaissance Basketball High School looks forward to its fourth year of operations in Fall 2024, 16-time Grammy Award Winner and Rock and Roll Hall of Famer singer and composer, Paul Simon rose to the occasion. His foundation donated a generous gift of a full slate of musical instruments for a collaboration musical play between public school Earl Monroe High School and private school Riverdale Country School in the Bronx.

The musical collaboration will be based on a Broadway play written and produced by Simon in 1998 called, "The Capeman: The Songs of The Capeman." Earl Monroe High founder Dan Klores, a friend of Simon, along with the support of Riverdale Country School Trustee Milton Sipp, will produce a series of "The Capeman" performances on both campuses in June 2025.

The musical piece will be led by globally renowned drummer Bobby Allende, who was introduced to Klores by Simon. Allende and a team of musicians will have the students performing a diverse collection of music ranging from salsa, do-wop, mambo, and pop. The band will consist of musicians made up of strings, brass, woodwinds, percussions, piano, and horns.

Representing Earl Monroe High faculty will be ENL Teacher/Fashion Advisor, Stacey Seabrook, Theater and Drama Teacher/ Town Hall Director, Ricardo Spence, Financial Teacher/ Knights MC Host James Ennis, and Literacy Teacher/Choir Director Shantoi Douglas. They will lead the multi-faceted effort encompassing music, drama, and theater classes. The partnership hopes to bridge a culture and diversity gap between the schools and build meaningful relationships that can last a lifetime.

What do you guys bring to the table in Paul Simon's musical, "The Capeman: The Songs of The Capeman" in collaboration with Riverdale Country School?

Seabrook: As every performance or staged production requires wardrobing, my role in this epic event is to research the clothing of the era of the story. Further, along with a team of design

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Knights Bank Two Chips

ELVIS MARTINEZ

Sportswriter

Earl Monroe High School

It has taken three years, but head coach Kenneth Miller and the Earl Monroe New Renaissance boys' varsity basketball team have implemented a winning culture.

Bouncing back from the 2023 semifinal loss in the playoffs to Broome Street Campus, Miller planted the seed that formed the Knights into a championship contender in the Charter School League.

An early-season loss at Xavier Catholic High School in Manhattan was a major wake-up call for the Knights, who learned how to play against a disciplined team with shooters and a point guard who controlled the game.

Despite the loss, the Knights learned they could play against top-level teams. As a result, they finished the season with a 36-9 record against Charter Schools, Non-League, Catholic Varsity B teams, and a couple of Varsity A team competitions.

Miller and assistant coach Johrod Lide implemented an inside-outside offensive attack built around starting point guard Devin James and junior Raymon Kinnard, who had transferred from Great Oaks.

During the 2022-2023 season, Kinnard showcased his all-around skills against the Earl Monroe High JV squad. Miller and Lide took notice and recruited Kinnard. It paid off in the 2024 City Schools Sports Association NYC Championship Game.

Kinnard was named the game's MVP after a 20-point and 5-assist performance in the Knights' 77-66 win over Broome Street Campus.

Miller and Lide brought 6'5 sophomore Malik Oru Adoyi to Pelham from Central Park East to play alongside juniors Chandler Bligen and Kuno Santos in the interior. Another major move that the coaching staff made to improve the Knights' rebounding was to promote sophomore Daniel Stevens from the JV team.

With the team intact and Miller's implementation of game strategies, the Knights captured the New York State Title by blowing out Charter School of Educational Excellence Owls, 96-52 in front of a sellout Knights Nation raucous crowd. James scored 21 points and had 6 assists to win the game's MVP. Dajon Green came off the bench to add 19. Kinnard had 16 and Bligen poured in 14.

Now two championship trophies in the Earl Monroe High School trophy case stand alongside the Lady Knights' two championship trophies. Can the boys' team add more? How good can a team full of seniors be? In an interview, Miller addressed these questions and more.

Are you going to stay in the NYC Charter School League? Earl Monroe High faculty, students, and fans know the league is weak against the talent you put on the court.

Kenneth Miller: "No, we do not plan on staying in the Charter School League. We have recently [spoken] to a national prep league. We have had conversations with the AD on going independent and playing a lot of public and private schools. I think the experience of my kids



#5 Raymond Kinnard - Dunk

Photo by James Ennis

playing at a higher level, they'll get that in the summertime with AAU.

Which player had the biggest impact on your season this year?

Kenneth Miller: "Raymond Kinnard was an excellent man from start to finish. He is an energetic guy and supportive of his teammates. Devin James was consistent all year long. Devin was big for us, and down the stretch, Chandler Bligen was big in helping us win the two championships. Chandler is a good teammate. He is the motor of our team showing high energy and playing on both ends of the floor. He brought a toughness to us that we normally didn't have, so those three guys pretty much did everything."

With your experience of training high school ballers and getting them into top Division I programs, now that your players are going into their senior and final season at Earl Monroe what advice and guidance are you giving to reach and play at the next level?

Kenneth Miller: "Preparation, man. You stay ready, you [have] to get ready, a lot of days where you don't have off, you need to have consistent days of hard work. You [have to be] able to be taught and [apply] the things on the court that you are being taught on the fly to actual gameplay. Drills and stuff that you know, that

is my job to make sure that the players not only have an opportunity to play in college, but then when they do go to college, they will understand what's going on and what's expected of them to be successful."

Outside the basketball court, what is one accomplishment you are most proud of for your players?

Kenneth Miller: "Having six guys on the honor roll this year. We had the highest percentage out of all the athletic teams this year. I think we, out of all the athletic teams on campus, had the most kids make an honor roll which was a big accomplishment. Seeing guys like Devin make [the] honor roll, who struggled his first couple years in high school. I am impressed with how Chandler, Malik, and Aiden stay [structured] in academics. Guys making the honor roll applied themselves in the classroom is something we talk about. A lot is discipline on and off the court and to see them be successful in the classroom and outside of the classroom was not only big for our team's success but for our program and the expectations that we want to set where we want to be as young men."

You won the city and the state championship this year and the team is at a high level, are you adding any incoming players to blend into your rotation, or do you stand with the same

players since day one alone with Kinnard and Malik Oru Adoyi?

Kenneth Miller: "I guess you have to wait and see. But we've had some conversations with a couple of guys that could come in and make an impact and probably make us a higher-level team. We just have to wait and see how it turns out."

EARL MONROE BASKETBALL PILOT PROGRAMS

Music & Arts Pilot

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and styling students, we will recreate the characters in the production. We will shop thrift and vintage shops in and outside the city for outfits that align with the musical. We will also design and construct outfits, utilizing the design of the technical skills of our students. I will oversee this endeavor and allow the students to display and share their creative energies in fashion design and costuming. It's an exciting venture for those who love fashion.

Douglas: My love for singing, dancing, and choreography along with my experience on a live stage singing in Amateur Night at The Apollo, and dancing in Nike competitions has prepared me to take the next step of guiding the students and actors for the upcoming musical between Earl Monroe High and Riverdale Country School. I have the experience of learning to be confident in the art of music through singing and dancing. Teaching each student how to grow in both talents and guiding them in whatever role they decide to play in the musical, whether that is singing or dancing.

Ennis: With my MC background experience and being host to most of Earl Monroe High's major events, I will bring the voice of conducting the structure of the musical. My teaching skills of exposing students to a Podcast will provide practice for students in enhancing the correct delivery in the musical. Backstage, my experience with the media, photography, and videography, will bridge connections of students understanding the culture of a musical and working as a team. In addition, I will help with the business component of event planning.

Spence: As someone who grew up in the theater with a diverse background in creative writing, and acting, and a communication specialist connecting the audience to the musical, my experience grants the students and producers an opportunity to learn from an artist with longevity and knowledge that they would receive at a professional level.