

A Leader on the Court and a Leader in Life

Text by Erin Miller

Photos courtesy of Amani Johnson

This story illuminates the passion and drive of a Kennesaw State University (KSU) Student-Athlete finding her voice and influencing others along the way.

Walking into the interview, I was nervous. I already knew so much about Amani but I had never met her before. I found I was immediately put to ease because of Amani's kindness and warmth. She spoke with such passion and humility about her accomplishments and her dreams, it was hard to believe that someone as talented as her could be so humble.

Amani Johnson is a legend on and off the basketball court. If you don't know her, you know of her, and if you don't know of her, then you must be living under a rock. Johnson is a Kennesaw State University basketball player out of East Allegheny High School in Pennsylvania who has contributed four, going on five, seasons with the owls as the starting point guard. She is a two-time ASUN All-Conference Team recipient, leader in all-time assists, steals, and minutes played, three-time ASUN All-Academic Team, and a four-year captain, but this is just the tip of the iceberg with Amani Johnson.



Amani Johnson wearing Sigma Gamma Rho's prestigious colors, blue and gold, in Atlanta.

Throughout her time at Kennesaw State, Amani has also been involved with SAAC, Student Athlete Advisory Committee, as a secretary and Co-President. She joined Student Government, SGA, as the director of diversity and inclusion and was elected President in 2021. Amani is also a member of Sigma Gamma Rho Incorporated sorority and held positions as financial secretary and fundraising chair. On top of all of this, Amani graduated in the Spring of 2022 with a bachelor's degree in accounting and is now in a Graduate Program for Business Administration.

Amani's time at Kennesaw State may be coming to an end but her career is just beginning. She expressed to me that she wants to continue playing basketball and growing sports opportunities for women and girls. Amani feels it's her responsibility and other players' responsibility to grow the game, but she also understands that this requires people in administration and media to help. She explained that the system is broken; the NBA has 30 teams whereas the WNBA only has 12. This makes it so much harder for women to get an opportunity to play professionally. Amani's leadership has progressed throughout her time in college, and she feels she can take what she's learned as a leader at KSU and apply it to the rest of her life.

"I want to be known as a leader and an advocate no matter who it's for. I want people to be better and I want the world to be better. I want to give back to the places and people that influenced me. I'm not going to forget where I came from."

There's no doubt that Amani Johnson is going to influence many people during her lifetime. She spoke on the concept of intersectionality and how this idea informs her awareness of today's intercultural world and applies to her own life.

“Intersectionality is the best word ever to me. I’m a part of so many communities because I’m a woman, I’m black but I’m mixed so I’m also a part of the white community, and I’m an athlete.”

Amani explained how there’s so much that goes into your identity and how we all have commonalities between each other that we can connect on. She talked about her own identity and how it has shaped who she is and began talking about the stigma behind strong women.

“It’s an impossible balance. If you’re assertive then you’re too aggressive, but if you’re passive then you’re not taken seriously. If you’re black then you’re the ‘loud black woman’, and if you’re white then you’re the ‘white savior’ and talking about things you shouldn’t be talking about. Someone in charge needs to be advocating for everybody no matter what they look like.”



Amani in her KSU uniform in the Convocation Center where the KSU basketball team plays.

Amani seemed beyond her years when we spoke on these subjects. As a 22 year-old, she’s already learned that everyone is going to have their opinion on everything and all she can do is accept this and not care what other people may think. She wants to do what is best for herself regardless of other people’s thoughts. She can set her own example and make known her perspective.

“I’m glad I’ve figured that out now and not when I’m older because I’m someone that wants to get married and have kids, but I don’t feel like this means I’m giving up being a strong woman.”

It became clear to me by the end of this interview that Amani Johnson is an exceptional leader and person. She believes so heavily in doing what is right and just and she advocates for everyone. Amani wants to leave a legacy behind of passion and change. She wants to be remembered as someone who cares about others and wants to make the world better. I walked out of this interview having an even greater respect for Amani Johnson and the inspiring person she is.

Student Biography

Erin Miller is a Senior Interdisciplinary Studies Major at Kennesaw State University. She is also a 4-year member of the KSU women’s soccer team. She will be graduating in the Spring of 2023 with a Bachelor’s Degree. She intends on graduate transferring for soccer to play her last year of eligibility and get her Master’s Degree in Writing.

