



CHRIS MOORE

CLASS OF 1996

>> **YEARS AT PARK:** 1990-1996

>> **COLLEGE:** Daemen College

>> **CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:** Branch Chief, Physical Security Specialist, U.S. Secret Service; City of Buffalo firefighter

>> Inducted into The Park School Sports Hall of Fame in 2016



JOEL MOORE

CLASS OF 1999

>> **YEARS AT PARK:** 1989-1999

>> **COLLEGE:** BS Chemical Engineering, Howard University; MBA, Case Western Reserve; JD, The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law

>> **CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:** Assistant Legal Council, Buffalo Public School District; City of Buffalo Office of Corporate Counsel

>> Member of The Park School Board of Visitors

Chris and Joel Moore are brothers, both graduates of Park School, and both make their living in a form of public service. Chris (Park Class of 1996) is a branch chief with the U.S. Secret Service. Joel (1999) is an assistant legal counsel for the Buffalo Public School District.

The Moores have each built upon the educational foundations they received as Pioneers, then found success in their chosen careers.

Chris Moore was a basketball star in high school, scoring more than 2,000 points in his varsity career. He is a member of the sports halls of fame at both Park and Daemen College.

After graduating from Daemen, Chris served as a Buffalo firefighter for a few years, then joined the Secret Service in 2005. He is now a physical security specialist.

"We wear two hats," Chris says. "The first hat is protection of the President and Vice President and any other leaders who come to the United States. What I'm also heavily involved in now is criminal investigations. I provide technical security. On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday I might be protecting the President or Vice President, wherever they are, and then on Thursday or Friday I might be back in DC doing surveillance as a part of a criminal investigation we've got going on."

Recently, Chris started a new posting based in Los Angeles, after spending most of his career working in Washington.

Joel Moore served in student government at Park, achieving the rank of school president his senior year. He then attended Howard University, where he received a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering. Joel went on to earn his MBA from Case Western Reserve University in Ohio and then attended law school, graduating from the Mauritz College of Law at The Ohio State University. Looking back, Joel says Stephen Dombrowski, who taught history at Park, was a "big influence" on his academic direction.

"He used to give us these assignments where every two weeks we would hand in a three- or four-page paper based on some research and analysis that we had done on a particular subject. Exploring some of the ideas in those assignments really planted the seeds that I would develop a few years later when I went to law school."

"All the seeds that Park planted and Howard (University) cultivated really started to develop when I left school and no one was telling me what I needed to absorb in terms of information," Joel said. "They gave me the real tools and then my curiosity was allowed to peak when I didn't have anyone telling me what to study."

Joel has fond memories of Park School. "The whole environment was nice," he says. "Jamie Oblatz, Libby Bailey, all of us started at Park when we were in third grade, so we literally grew up there with one another. The campus was a great environment. It promoted an appreciation of the outdoors and nature."

Part of Chris' job involves world travel. He's been to Europe, the Middle East and several countries in Asia, including a trip with Vice President Mike Pence to the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea. He's also been on trips to Buffalo with Pence and twice with former President Barack Obama.

Among Chris' most memorable teachers at Park were Steve Dombrowski, Eric Korvne, Karen Miller, Heather Roberts, and his basketball coach, Mike Dugan.

"Obviously basketball was my big thing when I was there," Chris said, "but also the friendships that I formed. One of my classmates who I was close with got married in March; it was so great to see some of my classmates there. It's those friendships that really stay with me."

Joel also mentions Mr. Dombrowski as a big influence, along with Mrs. Miller, who was his fifth grade teacher. "Mrs. Miller might tell you differently about my pursuit of knowledge back then," he jokes. "She might have had her doubts."

Joel appreciates Park's academic approach. "I went to Park a couple of years ago and spoke to some students," he said. "I told them, Park School is to teach you how to think and when you leave your responsibility is to go figure out what you want to think."

"I think that was true for me. I got the raw tools, I got the exposure, I learned how to actually go about doing these things and then I allowed life to present things to me that I ultimately found interest in and I developed those."

SPENCER PATTERSON CLASS OF 1978

>> YEARS AT PARK: 1967 - 1978

>> COLLEGE: BS Engineering, Purdue University

>> CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Second Lieutenant - U.S. Air Force;
Director of Strategic Programs - KMEA

>> Member of The Park School Board of Visitors



When Spencer Patterson was a sophomore at Park School, he wasn't sure of his career goals. His health teacher, Earl Friedman, told him about a program called MITES – Minority Introduction to Engineering.

"Back in the '70s, and to this day, minorities and women were underrepresented in engineering," Patterson said. "Mr. Friedman approached me and said Lehigh University is having a MITE program. I had never heard of engineering, and I said, sure, I'll try it."

The paperwork asked applicants to specify which type of engineering they were most interested in. His teacher suggested Patterson choose civil engineering. "I went to Lehigh for two weeks and had a blast, plus I learned a lot."

Four decades later, Patterson works in San Antonio, Texas, as Director of Strategic Programs for KMEA, an environmental engineering company.

Patterson joined KMEA in April 2017. He worked for other similar companies in the past, after earning an engineering degree from Purdue University and then serving in the U.S. Air Force for 23 years. He retired as a second lieutenant in 2005, settling in San Antonio with his wife, Joy, and their three sons.

Some families organize their lives to shorten their daily commutes. In Spencer's case, it was the attraction of a longer commute that brought him to Park School as a youngster. Spencer grew up in West Seneca, NY. His parents worked as elementary school teachers in the City of Buffalo.

When he started first grade, "there was no bus service because the public

school was so close, so I would have had to walk to school, and then I'd get home at 3:00 or 3:30 and nobody would be at home. I don't know how my parents found Park, but Park had a little school bus that would pick up all the kids in the Southtowns ... And, because of the amount of time, by the time I got home, it was closer to 4 o'clock. I was a latch-key kid, but somebody was driving me right to my driveway, and then I was getting home a little bit later."

Spencer and his family liked what they found at Park, and he became a "lifer." Many of his teachers and coaches left a lasting impression.

"In the earlier years, Patty Cohen Gelman (Park Class of 1966) was my sixth grade homeroom teacher. She first came to Park right out of college and was great. And Raoul Hailpern, for math, he was fantastic. A wonderful man and a great teacher."

Once he arrived at Purdue, Spencer realized that Park School "definitely had me well prepared for college, especially in math. I was able to do really well in calculus. I struggled in sciences, always did, but the math pretty much pulled me through."

He also participated in drama and musical productions all through Middle and Upper School at Park, including playing the lead male role, Coach Hugo Longacre, in the show "Our Miss Brooks."

Sports were also a big part of Spencer's high school experience. He played four years of basketball and four years of football at Park.

"In football we played both ways (offense and defense). I played mostly fullback and linebacker. Mick Fleming,

our football coach, was another really good guy...We played 11-man football and we needed to have 20 kids (on the roster). We always had maybe a strong 18, then we'd have to talk somebody from the soccer team into joining us."

There were benefits to playing for a smaller school, he says. "If I had gone to somewhere like a Williamsville South, maybe I would have been a good enough athlete to make the team, but I saw guys (at other schools) that had my skill and they ended up watching a lot of football. At Park I got to play. It kind of builds confidence."

Spencer travels back to Buffalo several times a year to visit his mom, along with his old school. He is a member of Park's Board of Visitors and was also one of the organizers for his class's 40th reunion in June 2018.

"A lot of my best friends in life are from Park – people like Bob Goods, Jim Pacciotti, Paul Shine, Eric Maki, Bill Heussler, we're still close. Bob and Jimmy were in my wedding. I come to town in the summertime and we'll go out and play golf.

"I've lived a lot of places," he says, "but if you look at any of my social media, my love for Buffalo is obvious. A big part of that were the memories and friendships forged at Park during those formative years."



TYONNA ACOFF CLASS OF 2018

>> **YEARS AT PARK:** 2009-2018, Cheek Scholar

>> **COLLEGE:** Current student at Canisius College, majoring in Psychology, minoring in English

When Tyonna Acoff was a fourth grader at Park School, she shied away from participating in class, afraid of saying the wrong thing.

She daydreamed about someday being an Upper School senior and delivering a commencement speech in front of the whole school. Eight years later, she lived her dream.

"This lack of confidence is something I was never able to overcome at my previous school, but being at Park brought something new out of me. It helped me to develop and grow into who I am today," she said.

Acoff, president of Park's Class of 2018, gave a speech on graduation day in the tent on the Quad. She reminded her classmates of their freshman bonding trip, which started off with some students keeping their distance from one another, until a strenuous hike brought them together.

Over the course of four years in high school, she said in her speech, "We realized that even though we sometimes hated having to come to school and we sometimes couldn't stand each other, that we have grown with and because of one another and because of this place."

Acoff this spring completed her freshman year at Canisius College, where she plans to major in psychology with a minor in English. She says some of her English courses repeated things she learned at Park.

"I was really well prepared for this year, kind of over prepared sometimes, especially for the entry-level courses," she said. "I'm hoping

that next semester it gets a little more challenging."

Not many high school graduates report feeling "over prepared" for higher education, but that shows the self-confidence that's built up in Acoff, recipient of the M. Adolphus Cheek, Jr. & Jeannette Bailey Cheek Memorial Scholarship at Park.

"Park shows you all of the options you have available to you and then helps you to make them a reality. It develops every kind of person - from shy to outgoing, athlete to musician - into the kind of people who will succeed in whatever they do," she noted.

Acoff still keeps in touch with Charles Hartney, a Park English teacher, and Matt Johnson, her former Park adviser.

"I brought with me to college the paper that Mr. Hartney gave us in seventh grade on how to construct a paper, all the different parts. I keep it in my dorm with me. Everything he taught me has really stuck with me. And Mr. Johnson taught me history but as my advisor he and I had more of a personal level of connection."

Acoff's older sister, Tyia, graduated from Park in 2011. In addition to academics, Tyonna played several sports in high school, including basketball and tennis.

Their mom, Jamie Acoff, credits Park with helping Tyonna develop into a well-rounded, mature young adult.

"Tyonna has learned a unique way of thinking and is able to apply that thinking to her life circumstances," Jamie Acoff said. "Park helped to

foster and develop talents within Tyonna that she didn't know existed."

She also recognized the unique opportunities she and her classmates were given through their Park education remarking in her speech, "Park has always allowed us the freedom and given us the encouragement to speak our minds. I believe it is this skill that has allowed us to develop as a class and develop into ourselves. Park is a forgiving place. We have been allowed to grow, to make mistakes, and to learn from all of our experiences... I hope you all value and cherish the time you've had at Park. Our small but strong-willed class has always distinguished itself because we have spoken our minds and accomplished any and everything we wanted."

Tyonna does not yet know where her psychology degree and liberal arts education will take her. She knows she wants to do something meaningful, not just profitable.

"I just want to have an impact in other people's lives. However that might be ... It would be nice to have an office, but I think I would much rather just interact with people and just kind of be there for them."

CHIP JOHNSTON CLASS OF 1962

>> **YEARS AT PARK:** 1952 - 1962

>> **COLLEGE:** St. Anselm College, AA Criminal Justice; New Hampshire College, BS Business Studies

>> **CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:** U.S. Coast Guard; State Trooper - New Hampshire State Police; Adjunct Faculty - University of North Florida; Founder - The Crash Lab

>> Member of The Park School Board of Vistors and 1912 Legacy Society



Chip Johnston is an athletic, vigorous man who enjoyed a career in law enforcement and as a small business owner. And he says he owes his career, in part, to Mrs. Betty Gray's typing class at The Park School.

Johnston, who graduated in 1962, was summoned to military service in 1964, joining the Coast Guard. He was stationed in Boston waiting for his assignment to a Coast Guard cutter when he became aware of a job posting to be Coast Guard representative to the U.S. Public Health Service, at a hospital in Boston. He was one of several candidates for the job.

"So a group of us were interviewed," he said, "and then it came down to a typing test. Thanks to Mrs. Gray, I knew how to type, which got me the job."

Johnston extended his hitch with the Coast Guard and worked at the hospital for five years. During that time, he visited the New Hampshire State Police, and joined the force in December 1969. He served as a state trooper for 20 years, retiring in 1989. In 1982, Johnston was one of three men whom the State Police sent to Florida to receive specialized training in traffic accident reconstruction.

"It was a new science that was being introduced to law enforcement. So the three of us became the first reconstruction law enforcement officers in the state of New Hampshire.

"During the time between 1982 and '89, not only was I a reconstructionist for the state of New Hampshire, I became an adjunct faculty member for the University of North Florida, the same school where I had the training. I retired at the end of 1989 and basically the next day I started a company called The Crash Lab Inc."

The Crash Lab worked with lawyers in civil and criminal cases, as well as state attorneys general, analyzing and reconstructing motor vehicle accidents. In June 2015, Johnston sold The Crash Lab and retired.

He and his wife, Cindy (Park Class of 1963), live in Venice, FL, on the state's West Coast. His affiliation with Park School started in third grade. He and his older brother, Douglas (Class of 1957), took a school bus to Park from West Seneca. One of Chip Johnston's most vivid memories is of his fifth grade teacher, Mary Cummins.

"Mary Cummins was the one who would take you down to the pond, she would talk to you about botany, she would talk to you about the birds. She was an extremely compassionate kind of teacher who made you want to do well for her."

Chip met Cindy while they were students at Park. "She was my girlfriend in high school. Then we took a hiatus of about 30 years, then got back together. In January 2018, we celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary." The Johnstons both remain active alumni, and serve on Park's Board of Visitors.

Chip is also a leader for the Class of 1962. When the class held its 50-year reunion in 2012, Johnston made an effort to contact men and women who had been classmates as far back as middle school at Park, inviting them to a very inclusive reunion.

"Our reunion group, instead of being the Class of '62, we called it the Clan of '62. And the day of the graduation I paid for a bagpiper who met us down at the Rich Gym. The bagpiper led us up to the Dining Hall, as a clan. That night that we had our reunion dinner

we had more than 50 people there. And our graduating class was only 42."

Sports were a big part of Johnston's time as a Park student, particularly soccer. He remembers Herb Mols, the school's legendary athletics director.

"He really cared about all of us," Johnston says of Mols. "You may not have realized it at the time, but he had his locker right in there with us, we interacted with him. He wasn't a chummy guy, but he was really there to watch and you knew if you did well he felt good for you. And he did a hell of a lot for Park School."

Johnston remains forever grateful to his school, and to Mrs. Gray's typing class. "Mrs. Gray's class led me to my career with the State Police," which gave him the expertise to found The Crash Lab.

"After 25 years I sold the business," he said, "which allowed me to retire, and that has allowed me to provide time and financial support to Park School, completing the circle."

As for why he's chosen to join the school's 1912 Legacy Society by making Park a beneficiary of his estate plans, Chip says this, "Park School, with their patience and style of learning pointed me in a direction to succeed, even though I had no idea of that while I was there. I've included Park School in my Estate planning with the intention of making it possible for others to come to the School and be able to share in the school's wonderful and very meaningful educational experience and guidance."