

JUSTIN PERRY



Years at Piedmont

- 1992 until 1996

Awards and Recognitions relating to Piedmont

- Student Body President, Beta Club President
- Southern Conference Player of the Year (Basketball)
- 2 time Southern Conference Basketball Champions, Baseball and Basketball Team Captains
- Future Problem Solvers International Team Champion

Other special awards and recognitions you have received outside of Piedmont:

- Charlotte Observer's Seven to Watch, UNC School of Social Work Distinguished Alumni
- Playing For Others Night of Gratitude honoree
- Southern Living Magazine's Top 50 Southerners of the Year, all in 2016 and Charlotte's Association of Fundraising Professionals'
- National Philanthropy Day Champion of Diversity in 2022

Tell us about where you are currently demonstrating your Piedmont Excellence

- I run my own mental health practice where we are inclusive and serve diverse populations. We also do training, workshops, and problem solving with organizations and school systems in the diversity, equity, and inclusion space. Furthermore, I co-founded a group called OneMECK that has had a focus on addressing resegregation of schools through advocating at a school and CMS level, while also working to address housing segregation and lack of affordability, through the city, county, and private levels, involving philanthropy and faith communities. Lastly, I do this while prioritizing my marriage, children, and faith.

What does it mean to you to be a Piedmont Pirate?

- Being a Piedmont Pirate means being committed to making my community a better place. It means advocating with and for those who are often overlooked and stepped over. It means using critical thinking and thinking about life beyond yourself. It means demonstrating leadership and compassion, but also being willing to fight for what is right, even when challenging.

What do you say about Piedmont when someone asks?

- I say that the open program was one of the greatest experiences of my life, as it shaped my thinking. I mention how middle school was some of the best times of my life. I talk about how Piedmont was a place where all kids could excel, regardless of racial, economic, or neighborhood background. I also discuss how our group projects gave opportunities for us all to learn from each other and stretch our understanding of the world.

What is your fondest memory of Piedmont?

- That is really hard because there were so many. I had so many great teachers (who I can still name), but one of my fondest memories was having class with David Butler (who we got Butler HS named after my sophomore year in HS after he died saving his family).
- I had him for Geometry in 9th grade and he told us “I’ll laugh with you and I’ll flunk you.” He was incredibly humorous, but also tough. I remember when we took the end of grade test in geometry that we had the highest scores in the state and even some students who struggled to get C’s on Mr. Butler’s exams scored 90 on the end of grade exam.

How do you feel about receiving this honor?

- How do you feel about receiving this honor? I’m incredibly humbled by receiving this honor as there are so many great Pirates out there, including ones I’m friends with and one to whom I’m married.
- I am incredibly proud of this, because Piedmont was core to my development into the person that I am today.

What encouraging words would you like to leave with future Piedmont Pirates?

- You stand on the shoulders of giants. This school has had a long history of turning out well balanced, ambitious, but compassionate people. At Piedmont, I embraced the concept of cooperative competition where we worked together and brought the best out of each other. Don’t fall trap to myths of scarcity that only one or two of you can succeed. There is enough space for you all to excel, especially if you commit to bringing out the best in each other.

Many of my best friends went to Piedmont. Treat each other well. It will be worth it in the long run.