



DECEMBER 2023

THE COURIER

FOREST SERVICE JOB CORPS CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CENTERS
Creating the Next Generation of Conservation Stewards



Nizigiyimana "Fred" Ferandinand was selected by Don Green, CEO of The Napoleon Hill Foundation, to read the proclamation at the annual Napoleon Hill Day event at The University of Virginia's College at Wise on Monday, October 23, 2023. Fred was seated on stage at The Convocation Center with Green seated on the far left. **CLICK PLAY BUTTON TO WATCH VIDEO.**

A STORY OF SUCCESS AND PERSEVERANCE

By Rachel Carter, Counselor, Flatwoods Job Corps CCC

Flatwoods Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center graduate Nizigiyimana "Fred" Ferandinand was born in Tanzania, East Africa. He immigrated to the United States in 2007 to escape an approaching war. Ferandinand wanted but was unable to join the military because his green card had expired. Then he discovered he could learn a trade at Job Corps. He applied and arrived at Flatwoods on March 28, 2022.

Ferandinand not only completed the electrical trade he quickly became a leader on campus. He was a member of the Lonesome Pine Fire Crew and completed nine deployments across the country. He also completed S-271 Helicopter Crew training and served two terms as vice-president of the Student Government Association. He attended Camp Horizon, which provides education on leadership, retention, and ways to improve the Job Corps program, in the fall of 2022.

The following spring, Fred became involved with The Napoleon Hill Foundation when he signed up to take the Napoleon Hill "Keys to Success" course, offered through The

University of Virginia's College at Wise, in conjunction with Napoleon Hill Foundation (NHF). The NHF is a nonprofit educational institution dedicated to educating and inspiring people with the works of Napoleon Hill, best known for his book "Think and Grow Rich," written in 1937 and still a bestseller.

Of the eight students who signed up for the course, only Ferandinand completed the course work. After he encouraged his peers to take advantage of the "Key to Success" course, 29 additional Flatwoods students registered for the fall session of the course.

"I REMEMBER MY REASONS FOR BEING AT FLATWOODS AND THESE REASONS GOT ME THROUGH THE PROGRAM AND MOTIVATED ME TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL THE OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED TO ME."

-FRED FERANDINAND

When asked what kept him inspired and motivated to accomplish the things he has, Ferandinand shared that it was his curiosity and the fact that he wanted to try everything. "I remember my reasons for being at Flatwoods and these reasons got me through the program and motivated me to take advantage of all opportunities presented to me." Ferandinand emphasized that he gives 100% effort even if what is being asked of him does not fall exactly in alignment with his plans.

Ferandinand was accepted into The University of Virginia's College at Wise Reserve Officers Training Program (ROTC) program. He is currently at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri, participating in Basic and Advanced Individual Training. Once he completes his ROTC training in March, Ferandinand will begin his studies at The University of Virginia's College at Wise in the summer. Ferandinand's story is one of determination, vision, dedication, going the extra mile, alertness to opportunity, positive mental attitude, teamwork, learning from adversity and defeat, and staying true to his "reasons."

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Curlew Job Corps:** [Curlew Job Corps student starts life over, grasps for the stars.](#)
- **Job Corps Mobile Kitchen:** [Job Corps Mobile Kitchen knocks it out of the park once more.](#)
- **PPS:** [Nexus project helps improve procurement mission performance.](#)



EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND SERVICE

(front row) Jay Schaefer, Director of the Forest County Humane Society, along with a shelter dog, accepts a holiday wreath from (l-r back row) Blackwell Job Corps student Dalton Campbell, Carpentry Instructor Doug Demeny, students Nicholas Smith, Dillion Jacobsen, and Tahkaeskacekaw "KB" Dodge. USDA photo by Kathy McLaughlin.

BLACKWELL JOB CORPS SPREADS HOLIDAY CHEER

Blackwell Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center distributed holiday door wreaths to over 50 businesses, community organizations and union partners in December 2023 to show appreciation for the support the center receives from local citizens and also to recognize fellow organizations that "give back" to surrounding communities. Recipients included elderly meal sites, nursing homes, town halls, veteran's organizations, and police departments.

Blackwell students, involved in every step of the wreath distribution process, gathered the boughs used to make the wreaths from local forests, designed the arrangements, and accompanied staff on all of the deliveries. Nearly half of Blackwell's student body and staff participated in the gathering of the boughs, creation of the wreaths, and the distribution process.

“CARPENTRY INSTRUCTOR DAN SHUMAKER HAS HELPED FOSTER THIS PROJECT TO NOT ONLY HELP BLACKWELL GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, SHOW STUDENTS WHAT POSITIVITY AND ACTS OF KINDNESS CAN PROVIDE IN THEIR OWN LIVES.”
-KATHY McLAUGHLIN

This was the third year for Blackwell's holiday wreath program and citizens throughout the surrounding communities are always delighted with the deliveries. Recipients of the wreaths enjoy the opportunity to meet and converse with Blackwell students, finding out where they are from and what they are studying.

The Blackwell Job Corps holiday wreath distribution project was the brainchild of Carpentry Instructor Dan Shumaker.

The mission of the Forest Service Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers is to train eligible youth ages 16 to 24 with educational, social, and vocational skills while assisting in the conservation of the Nation's public natural resources.

MEET GWEN GAITHER HARPERS FERRY JOB CORPS CCC

Duties at Harpers Ferry Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center keep Gwendolyn "Gwen" Gaither, who holds dual positions as Deputy Center Director and Liaison Specialist, on the run--she would not have it any other way. "The best thing about my job is the flexibility to do my job. I don't have to come into the office and repeat the same task at a certain time," she shared. Gaither arrived at Harpers Ferry as the Deputy Center Director on January 1, 2012. As a Potomac Job Corps employee, she began applying for positions at Harpers Ferry in 2009 and her persistence paid off.



With a nine year old son back in 1995, Gaither stated the Job Corps program helped her grow as a parent. "I knew absolutely nothing about raising a teenager. Working at Job Corps taught me a lot about teens,

parenting and how to navigate some of the life complexities that many teens have," shared Gaither. "For me it was definitely a win, win."

Gaither put the lessons she learned to use helping redirect Harpers Ferry Job Corps students who veered from the straight and narrow—Julian Roth, are your ears burning? "Julian was misbehaving and doing some things that almost caused him to be terminated from the program," Gaither shared. Then serving as Acting Center Director, Gaither intervened, helping Roth learn to modify his behavior, graduate and continue his career in fire dispatch. Roth has now returned to Harpers Ferry as one of its advanced dispatch instructors. "I like to inspire, encourage and motivate both Harpers Ferry staff and students," emphasized Gaither



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More exciting news can be found on our [Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers!](#) website!

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