

# Alumni Profile

The U Prep Schools mission, **we prepare students for success in life**, continues to resonate with our alumni throughout their college and professional careers.



**Parris Ritter**

**University Prep  
Academy 2009  
Graduate**

**Grand Valley State  
University 2013  
Graduate**

**B.A  
Advertising and PR**

**M.A  
School Counseling**

**What grades and years did you attend U Prep? What district did you attend?**

I enrolled in UPA Middle School in the Fall of 2003 entering the 6th grade. I later graduated from UPA High School in 2009. Fun Fact: I was promoted to the 8th grade in 2003, the advisor I was assigned to, Mrs. Jones, is an active teacher at UPA 17 years later. It's fun working with my teacher as a co-worker and colleague now.

**Why did your parents choose U Prep?**

Overall my parents really appreciated the post-graduation focus, small classroom sizes and the real-world work experience by learning through internships. It gave my sisters who were also enrolled and I an early glimpse into the real-world and allowed us to think about life beyond high school.

**What fond memories do you have of your experience at U Prep?**

I have so many fond memories, especially in high school. Every summer I would participate in the GVSU camp, which ultimately helped my decision in enrolling at GVSU. I was captain of the cheer team and we were fearless. We were new but weren't afraid to try anything, including difficult stunts and basket tosses. I was also a member of the mock trial team which was extremely fun. Dual enrollment was a great experience, Grammy's, Pick Me Ups, interning at the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice, Howard University's band and cheer team visiting our school...I could honestly go on and on.

**What did you love best about your time at U Prep?**

I loved that U Prep really was a family. It didn't matter which building you were in or even your advisory (although we took both very seriously) at the end of the day, we were a family and that still reigns true today.



### ***How did U Prep prepare you for success in life?***

One word - Exhibitions. This was such a huge part of the U Prep experience; having to present everything we learned that quarter to our parents, staff, community partners and classmates. This experience required for students to answer questions on the spot, after words receiving feedback. It was the most nerve-wracking thing ever! This experience helped prepare me for achieving success in life. Now I am never nervous when I have to do a presentation, speak in public, go into interviews or have to capture a crowd's attention. U Prep also helped me to understand that I won't be where I am forever, but what I do today will either get me one step closer to my goal or knock me three steps back but ultimately - the choice is mine and no one else's.

### ***What are you doing now?***

Currently I am the College and Career Counselor at UPA Middle School. I started out in the mortgage industry as a Social Media Director after obtaining my degree in Advertising and Public Relations. During that time, I was consistently volunteering in schools and after school programs working with seniors specifically to map out their post-secondary plans. Through this volunteer experience I felt there was an extreme void in schools to help students make solid college and career plans so I eventually decided, I need to be doing this full time. In 2017 I went back to school to get my Masters in School Counseling and now here I feel like I am back at home.

### ***What are your plans for the future?***

I want to continue helping students develop their post-secondary plans while helping schools and organizations produce resources and programs that will aid in keeping in contact with their alumni. I also want to help adults who are searching for jobs or looking for a career change as well as those having to be re-acclimated to society with their interviewing skills, resume writing, discovering their interests and ultimately landing their dream job or turning their passion and interests into profits.

