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Everyone Has Stories

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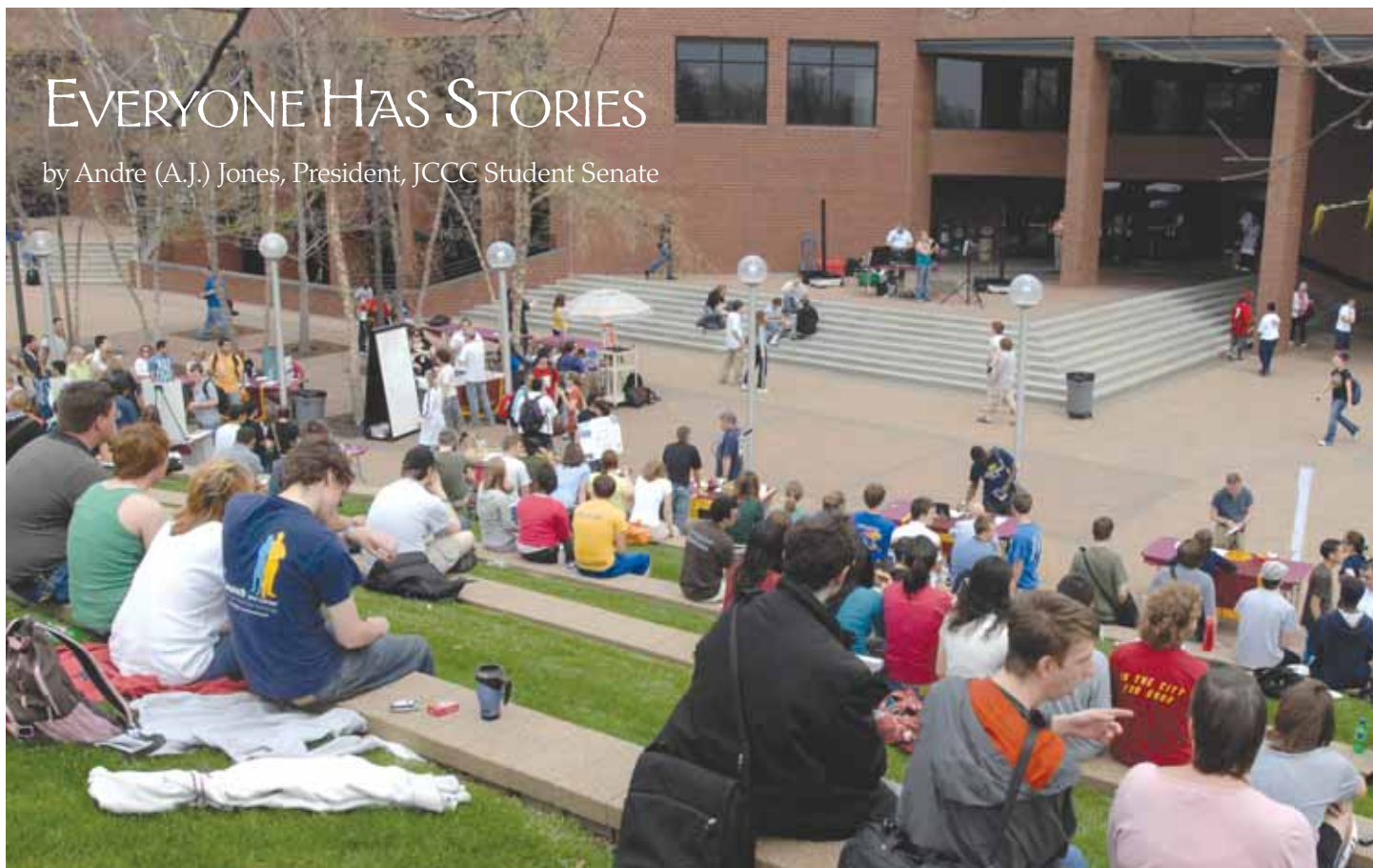
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EVERYONE HAS STORIES

by Andre (A.J.) Jones, President, JCCC Student Senate



As a good friend once told me, everyone has stories. Some are good, and some are bad. My story fits somewhere in the middle. I consider myself the poster child of diversity. I am a nontraditional, older, Black, gay student. I was pretty worried about returning to college after my battle with kidney

failure and having a stroke and being paralyzed. After returning home after four months of physical therapy in the hospital, I decided to return to school and finish my degree after a 20-year break. I was a little worried returning to school because I had been out for so long. I wanted to get a fresh start and JCCC was my first choice. Once I got here, I discovered that Johnson County Community College is one of the most diverse institutions I have attended.

When I first started at JCCC, I noticed right away that here was a very diverse group of students. Most students here were very friendly as were most of my instructors. I wanted to be more involved in school, so I decided to check into some of the clubs on campus. One club I wanted to check out was the gay organization here on campus. The other was the Black organization. One of the first things the GLBTSU wanted to do was to change the name to Queers and Allies, so we had to go to the Student Senate to present our

request. Another member of Queers and Allies and I went to the Senate meeting. We presented our request for a name change and they asked us why we wanted to do that. During this session, I saw how this group of students was making policies that affected all students on campus. So I decided to become a senator.

I got really involved right away. I sat on a few committees and got involved in some other groups on campus. I had only been there for a half semester when it was announced that the vice president of the Senate had to resign for the spring semester. I took over his position and became the Student Senate Vice President for the spring 2008 semester. I learned that there was a lot of responsibility that went along with the Senate seat. But, there were many advantages, too. I met some very important people on campus and I found that many of the teachers were just as diverse as the students. The very next semester, my second semester here, I was elected Student Senate President.

It's great that this school would accept a gay, Black, older student to be its student body president. Johnson County Community College, to me, is one of the most diverse colleges a person could attend. I recommend this school to anyone who is planning to go to college for the first time or planning to return to school. It's true. Here at JCCC learning comes first.