



Music, Gratitude and Giving Continue for CB Grad

When **Monroe Shackelford '99** came to CB in 1995, he challenged himself with honors and advanced placement courses. He also jumped into numerous student activities including theatre, the Black Student Union (BSU), forming the BSU choir, and even serving as student body president in his senior year.

"Monroe was such a unifying presence in the early days of co-ed," says Kenny Kirrene '78, director of admissions. "He really brought us together as a school and we were blessed to have him here."

After graduation, Shackelford attended U.C. Berkeley where he avidly pursued his love of singing as a music major and was thrilled to be invited to join the school's gospel choir. To say that his life was turning out right would be an understatement. But that changed in an instant when his mother was diagnosed with breast cancer.

"My mom was the type of mom who would do anything for me," remembers Shackelford. "As a single mother, she sacrificed so much to send me to Christian Brothers. She did without a car until my senior year. She didn't get her hair done so that she could save the money for tuition. She just really always wanted the best for me and was the type of mom who was there for me 110 percent."

After her death, Shackelford decided to leave Berkeley and pursue his dreams of a recording career. He moved to Atlanta, known as the "Motown" of the South, and got some valuable firsthand experience in the music industry. Working at a bank that specialized in banking for the entertainers, Shackelford learned important lessons in financial management and the pitfalls that sometimes affect recording artists.

He recorded with a number of artists and even recorded some original music with the The Corna Boyz – well known R & B producers.

Through his time in Atlanta, Shackelford maintained strong ties with Sacramento, his CB classmates, and his beloved grandmother. A bit older, and certainly wiser, Shackelford decided to return home.

"I decided that it was time to create the opportunities for myself and that I need to make music on my own terms," explains Shackelford. Since returning to Sacramento this past September, he has been busy returning to college where he is pursuing a degree in musical performance and voice at C.S.U. Sacramento, performing in various venues throughout town under the stage name Aaron Devon, launching A.Devon Entertainment and MADHouse Management to bring quality entertainers to Sacramento's live music scene.

He also continues a tradition honed in his years at CB, a tradition of sharing his time and talents to help make a difference. As the assistant music director at Antioch Progressive Church, Shackelford serves as the youth choir director, working with the 12-22 year olds.

On his mother's birthday, Dec. 15, Shackelford performed to a sold-out house at the Guild Theatre. He donated the evening's proceeds to the Imani Breast Cancer Support Group, an organization that helped his mother tremendously throughout her illness.

"It's interesting," says Schackelford. "I'm doing more with my music now that I'm in Sacramento, than I was able to do in Atlanta. I'm recording an album that will be out this year, I'm performing and I'm working with a choir. Everything is working out like it's meant to be. And, my grandmother really wanted me to return to college. She really needs to see me on that stage picking up that piece of paper."

For more information on Shackelford, to listen to his music, or to check performance dates, please visit his website at www.aarondevon.com.