



KEEP KEEPIN' ON Keynote speaker Jerry Jeffries urges pushing beyond a journeyman's license.

DROPPING GEMS FOR THE DCAA CLASS OF 2019

When Jerry Jeffries stood before the D.C. Apprenticeship Academy's Class of 2019 as keynote speaker, he emphasized the "dollars and cents" of the electrical industry — an electrician's earnings are among the highest in skilled trades. Simply put, he said, "Electricians can make bank!"

By Arnesa A. Howell

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MAKING STRIDES: JOBS COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS



While raising awareness of workforce challenges and potential barriers to employment, the JOBS Coalition and its members have combined their resources and industry expertise to achieve the following results:

- Built the Bellevue Resource Center, a program facility serving the hard-to-reach, hard-to-employ, and returning ex-offender populations. The Center was completed on September 30, 2003.
- Guided the creation of the Construction & Design Academy at Cardozo, providing District students access, training, and preparation for careers in the construction industry and trades after graduation. The Academy officially opened in September 2005. □



FANTASTIC FIVE The 2019 graduates of the D.C. Apprenticeship Academy stand tall.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED D.C. Apprenticeship Academy Class of 2019 Earns Industry Credentials, Career Jump-Starters

Glenn McCutchen knows an opportunity when he sees one. For eight years, he worked for a small, family-owned electrical contractor, taking on a series of construction projects including a scale job with contractually guaranteed wages at Walter Reed that paid two times what he'd been earning. But everything changed when a new project manager came on board and McCutchen had to make a choice.

By Arnesa A. Howell

"The project manager told me if I didn't go to school then they didn't have to give me the higher salary," he recalled, noting that the electrician title is elusive without specialty training. "That's the thing about the trade, unless you got a license, you don't really get paid."

That experience ultimately led him on a road of discovery to M.C. Dean, and in turn, the D.C. Apprenticeship Academy. Now after an intensive four years of apprenticeship training, he's earned his journeyman's license in the District. "I'm an electrician," he said.

On June 5, McCutchen became one of five graduates from the D.C. Apprenticeship Academy, a program offering apprenticeship training and technical education for registered apprentices in the construction

trades. He and his fellow classmates — all sponsored by the electrical engineering and technology services company M.C. Dean — successfully completed 2,000 hours of on-the-job training and a minimum 144 hours of related instruction each year to reach their goal of attaining industry-recognized credentials. Black, gold-trimmed stoles draped around their shoulders marked their accomplishment.

"This is a good program," said McCutchen without hesitation.

Beth Moore, director of Foundation programs for the D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation, couldn't agree more. She said the goal of apprenticeship is to retain graduates in the employ of the sponsoring

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Jeffries Keynote *Continued from page 1*

“The pay scale ranges from \$27 per hour to \$51 per hour for technicians with UL certification in motor control and journeyman’s licenses,” according to Jeffries, a supervisor who runs the motor control shop for Allied Power and Control, referencing the employees that work under his supervision.

Jeffries speaks from experience.

Rewind some 30 years, and he easily remembers his struggles to become an electrical apprentice. When starting out in the field straight out of high school, Jeffries made only \$18,000 a year. But hard work, discipline and an inner drive to succeed steadily increased his salary. Backed by special certification in product safety and testing, he is now a UL-certified motor control technician earning six-figures. This go-getter mentality is what Jeffries sought to instill in the latest graduates.

“Just don’t stop when you get a license,” Jeffries told the class, whose members can go on to gain journeyman licenses in the District. “You have to take some chances.”

A Stepping Stone

It’s been a four-year journey for those given the opportunity by their employers to enroll in the apprenticeship program. And Jeffries noted that those who stayed the course willingly made life-changing sacrifices — missing family dinners, working long hours and staying up for late-night homework sessions before waking early the next morning. “There were those who started this journey with you but are not standing beside you today,” he said. “You that are here today are here because you stuck it out.”

While praising the group for its accomplishments, Jeffries also urged each graduate to get ready to “enter a new race.” He encouraged them to continue educating themselves and to pursue specialty training that can open additional doorways of opportunity. “Become master electricians, business owners or whatever you dream of,” he said. “Make a plan to accomplish your goals and remember you can’t climb the ladder to success with your hands in your pockets.”

He also emphasized the importance of black men and men of color being “twice as diligent” to gain a foothold in this industry. Programs like the Apprenticeship Academy help in that endeavor, he noted.

Jeffries explained that while the money isn’t always there in the beginning, “if you’re good at what you do, you will get there.” In the meantime, he shared these parting tips for the graduates to live by: “Trust yourself. Don’t be afraid to fail. Ignore the haters. Work hard as hell,” and finally, “Always give back.” □



POMP & CIRCUMSTANCE

Graduate Glenn McCutchen’s graduation stole marks his place in the D.C. Apprenticeship Academy’s Class of 2019.

Mission Accomplished *Continued from page 1* company. “Successful apprentices have more options as they grow in their career,” she said.

A Decade of Diligence

In celebrating the Class of 2019, the D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation honored the hard work of the graduates at its 10th annual graduation ceremony, held at IDEA Public Charter School in Northeast. There, family and friends turned out in support alongside program instructors and staff. “I’m

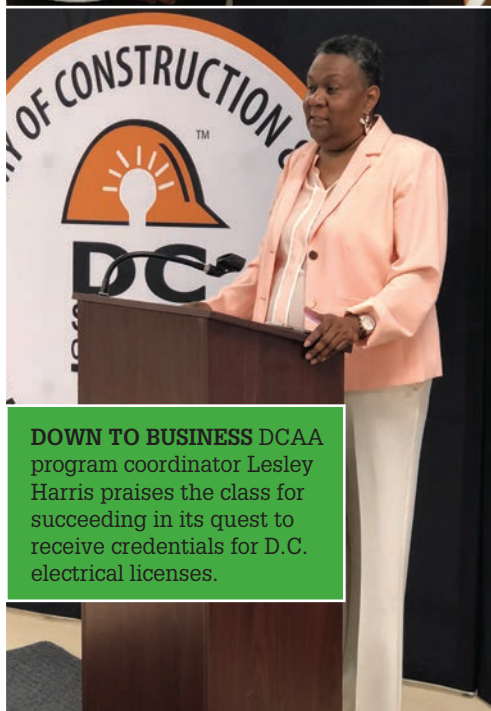


proud each year to release my graduates to the electrical community with increased experienced

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STAND BY ME Surrounded by family, Josias Funes Magano (with certificates in hand) proudly displays the acknowledgments of his hard work and dedication.



DOWN TO BUSINESS DCAA program coordinator Lesley Harris praises the class for succeeding in its quest to receive credentials for D.C. electrical licenses.

Mission Accomplished *Continued from page 2* knowledge for their companies and increased income for them and their families,” said Lesley Harris, program coordinator for the D.C. Apprenticeship Academy, in opening remarks.

The ceremony showcased each graduate’s efforts — from the worksite to the classroom. While all earned industry credentials making them immediately eligible for the D.C. journeyman electrician license, some received special recognition for in-class achievements. McCutchen and Josias Funes Magano received certificates for highest GPA, with Magano also garnering accolades for perfect attendance.

“I was very excited, honored and proud of

myself,” said Magano in hindsight. “I didn’t know that I had the highest GPA or perfect attendance. I was very proud because my wife and kids were at graduation and I set the example and explained to them that you can do and succeed at anything that you set your mind to.”

Indeed for many, family is a guiding star to their accomplishment. “Apprenticeship is very important for individuals to advance their careers while still being able to earn incomes to support their families,” said Harris. “Our program is different from college or other educational programs because of that advantage.”

Respect the Trade

The story behind each man’s journey to the training program is unique, to which D.C.-reared McCutchen can readily attest. He discovered the D.C. Apprenticeship Academy after multiple stints in construction. At the time, he didn’t have a D.C. electrical license, which made job advancement difficult. Eventually, work slowed and he found himself at an employment office near Minnesota Avenue and Benning Road in Northeast. It would be the place where he’d first learn about the employer-sponsored program.

After being hired by M.C. Dean, McCutchen grabbed the opportunity to enroll in the weekly

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JOBS Coalition Pathways

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The *JOBS Coalition Pathways* is the exclusive property of the JOBS Coalition, 702 Otis Place, NW, Washington, D.C. 20010; 301-262-0560. *JOBS Coalition Pathways* is dedicated to disseminating information that will help strengthen the city’s apprenticeship training and job placement programs, broadening the scope to reach the young, the underserved, the unemployed and the returning ex-offender. *JOBS Coalition Pathways* is published by the JOBS Coalition.

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apprenticeship class while juggling a full-time job that took him across the city to work on street and traffic lights — sometimes at unexpected hours. “I might go out anytime day or night to make sure the pole is secure,” he shared. Plus, he had to make time to study.

He persevered amid challenges like learning the nuances of working with electricity (his responsibilities included calculating the voltage necessary in an environment with fluctuating temperatures). And he credited Academy instructors for helping pull him through, calling them the most rewarding part of the program. Now, McCutchen is eyeing the next goal: to become a general contractor and pursue real estate development.

Meanwhile, former apprentice Antonio Dudley worked for an engineer technician company and

was unemployed for three years before being hired and sponsored into the program. Graduate Magano, however, learned of the program after starting with M.C. Dean. He described the experience as “remarkable” and has gained a newfound respect for the trade. “When I worked with my uncles, I didn’t know why they were so big on safety until I was in the apprenticeship program and at work,” Magano explained, noting each instructor’s emphasis on safety. “It is very important that you follow all safety rules first and foremost, so no one gets injured.”

And the most challenging part of the program? Traveling between work and class, according to Magano. Still, it was well worth it. “I enjoyed class,” he said, “and the Apprenticeship Academy helped me grow in a lot of areas, like how to work with people and how to master my electrical license.” □

JOBS COALITION PROMISES

- Provide opportunities for District residents to secure gainful employment.
- Remove barriers that prevent meaningful employment.
- Provide educational and training opportunities for all District residents interested in pursuing careers in various industries and trades.
- Work toward the creation of a comprehensive, fair, and more open system of training and hiring the underserved, unemployed and returning ex-offenders.
- Ensure that the training and educational skills being taught are relevant to the job market of today and tomorrow.
- Engage elected and appointed officials to support legislation and maintain appropriate oversight to ensure gainful employment for District residents, including the underserved, unemployed and returning ex-offenders.

JOBS COALITION MISSION STATEMENT

We will work together to develop a long-term strategy that creates an environment where aspiring District residents will have unprecedented opportunity to succeed. We strive to create a fair and open system, supported by government, industry, employers and the education and faith-based communities, which seeks to properly train today’s apprentices while making an unparalleled commitment to educating students and others not yet in the workforce.



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