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**Salutatorian** Metro Bus Operator Raven Sanders was graduated with honors from USC.



PHOTO BY FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

**Operator Raven Sanders, USC Grad, Aims for Medical Career**

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(June 27, 2003) Raven Sanders has always been head of the class. Her achievements show it. At age 21, she recently graduated with honors from USC as salutatorian and received a full scholarship to medical school – all while working as a bus operator at Venice Division 6.

In high school, she received the Who's Who Among Young Black American Scholars Award, a full-ride scholarship funded by Coca-Cola.

At USC, she became the first minority student to be named salutatorian – the student with second highest grade point average – in 16 years. She graduated college with honors and was the recipient of the Westinghouse Award, a full scholarship to medical school.

With her undergraduate degree in biology behind her, Sanders, who is newly assigned to Central City Division 1, can fulfill her childhood curiosity about how things work in a unique way – as a medical examiner.

In her field of study, Sanders has done research on body decomposition in Michigan, and has worked as an intern for USC Medical Center, investigating 45 murder scenes over a three-day period.

**Balancing school and work**

"I have always worked since I was 16, but I kept a balance between school and work," she says.

Becoming a bus operator encouraged Sanders to push herself to get a bachelor's degree.

"I got a class C license, something I thought I couldn't do, but accomplishing it showed me that I can obtain anything I put my mind to," Sanders says. "It showed me I can be good and successful at what I do, and it showed me that I can make similar achievements in my educational pursuits."

As a bus operator, Sanders encourages fellow employees to get a college degree.

"I told bus operators that getting a degree is easy," Sanders says. "The hardest part is starting. If it gets hard, keep looking at the end result."

Taking her own advice, Sanders plans to stay in school to get her master's degree, making her way to becoming a doctor and eventually practicing as an independent medical examiner.

### **Teaching forensic science**

For now, Sanders continues to work as a bus operator and teach forensic science at USC while working her way through school.

"It is very impressive that she was able to maintain a part-time job while attending college," says Michael Funnye, who was her manager while she was at Division 6.

Sander's family supports her educational and career goals. She grew up in Tyler, Texas. Her mother is 19th of 22 children, and her father is 11th of 13 children.

Unfortunately, Sanders only had 10 tickets to her graduation, but she is thankful for all the people that helped her make it through college.

"I thank the Lord for keeping me safe and focused, everyone at Division 6 for their support and excitement, and my family for their encouragement," she says.

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