



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TWO EASTSIDE LADY GHOSTS BASKETBALL STANDOUTS COMMIT TO NEW JERSEY COLLEGES

Ron'Shanae Austin is heading to Caldwell, Jayleen Valera will play for Essex County CC

Photos attached: see end of release for IDs.

PATERSON – Surrounded by loved ones, teammates, and friends, two Eastside Lady Ghosts Basketball standouts signed letters of intent to play for New Jersey colleges at a special signing ceremony held at Eastside High School.

Ron'Shanae Austin, forward and captain of the two-time Passaic County Champion Lady Ghosts, committed to playing for Caldwell University. She will attend the NCAA Division II school on a full scholarship.

Jayleen Valera, who played forward on the 2022 Passaic County championship team, committed to playing for Essex County Community College, also on a full scholarship.

[CLICK HERE](#) to see a video of the signing ceremony.

“It feels great to be the first to go to college on my mom’s side [of the family] and keep going on my dad’s side,” said Austin after she signed her letter.

Ron Austin, Jr., her father, who played for Passaic County championship teams at Passaic County Technical Institute, said he was “ecstatic” over his daughter’s decision.

“We love the way that she grew up as a person,” he said, flanked by his mother, Patricia Austin, and wife, Sedrina Austin. “Academics and basketball came together, and we’re just so proud of her.”

Valera was equally happy about signing with Essex County.

“Where we come from, a lot of people don’t get the opportunities to get a scholarship and play basketball in college,” said Valera, who will be the first in her family to attend college on a scholarship. With her was her head coach at Essex County, Anthony Green, and her girlfriend, Julisa Foreman.

Both players praised Brandon Pilgrim as their head coach since their freshmen year.

“He’s really like a second father to all of us really,” said Austin. “He had us down from day one, and we just love him for it.”

Valera simply said, “He made me the player I am today. He helped me grow. He helped me mature. He taught me patience.”

Pilgrim was just as open when he talked about the specialness of the two student-athletes.

“They taught me patience as well. I can’t say anything but I’m proud of them. They put in a lot of hard work,” Pilgrim said. “It just shows that good things do come out of Paterson.”

Superintendent of Schools Eileen Shafer said the district was “incredibly proud” of the college-bound student-athletes.

“Their hard work, dedication, and commitment to excellence have earned them these well-deserved scholarships,” Shafer said. “We wish them the best of luck as they continue their academic and athletic careers at Caldwell University and Essex County Community College. They will always be Lady Ghosts, and we look forward to following their success.”

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Also present at the signing ceremony were Assistant Superintendent David Cozart, Eastside Athletic Supervisor T.J. Hill, Eastside Principal of Instruction Andre McCollum, Eastside Principal of Operations Edgard Nieves, International High School Vice Principal Paul VanderWende, and Eastside Lady Ghosts Assistant Coaches Asia Rollins and Desirelle Salas.

Photo 1: (front row, from left) Jayleen Valera, Brandon Pilgrim, Ron'Shanae Austin; (back row, from left) Julisa Foreman, Anthony Green, Asia Rollins, Desirelle Salas, T.J. Hill, Patricia Austin, Ron Austin, Jr., and Sedrina Austin. *Photo by Dan Juan*

Photo 2: (front row, from left) Jayleen Valera, Brandon Pilgrim, Ron'Shanae Austin; (back row, from left) Julisa Foreman, Edgard Nieves, David Cozart, Paul VanderWende, Eileen Shafer, Andre McCollum, Patricia Austin, Ron Austin, Jr., and Sedrina Austin. *Photo by Dan Juan*

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