relations rep for a pro sports team, then I took some elective credits in the broadcast journalism school working with Temple Update and I never left,” the native of Cherry Hill, N.J., said. “The networking opportunities and the people at Temple are tremendous. Some of the best people I ever met were during my Temple days.”

Thanks to the work of his agent, and Holder’s connections in the communications industry, Holder caught word of the Back9Network’s formation earlier this year. He interviewed for a position and “I guess I fit the mold, because they basically hired me on the spot.”

Holder isn’t sure in which direction Back9 will next go, but he’s thankful his professional route took him through STHM and Temple.

“That was such a great experience for me,” Holder said. “I couldn’t be more thankful for everyone I met while I was there.”

–Christopher A. Vito

STHM alumna Jamila Lee meets First Lady, earns recognition for perseverance

Attaining a college degree was satisfying. Earning recognition for her perseverance was equally fulfilling. Sharing a stage with the First Lady Michelle Obama was, well, unexpected.

STHM alumna Jamila Lee, BS ’14, was honored last summer at the 2014 District of Columbia College Access Program (D.C. CAP) Annual Graduation Celebration.

Founded 15 years ago, D.C. CAP assists in the college-enrollment process for public- and charter-school students in the nation’s capital. One such student was Lee, a native of Washington, D.C. The organization distinguished Lee with its Most Perseverance Award.

The award came with one caveat: its recipient – in this case, Lee – had only a few-days’ notice to prepare a speech to be delivered to guests of D.C. CAP’s reception. First Lady Obama served as a speaker at the nearly 700-guest event.

“First Lady Obama’s theme was to never stop struggling,” Lee said, “because, as she put it, it’s been scientifically proven that if you struggle to get through something, it’s a sign of growth and it’s important for success.”

Lee changed her major twice at Temple before deciding on STHM and a career path in hospitality management. Visits to academic advisers weren’t Lee’s only impediments toward graduating, however. Lee became pregnant in her junior year and, with now-fiancé Julius Hutchins, welcomed their son, Jacob. To her credit, Lee’s pregnancy forced her to miss only one semester of studies, en route to graduating in May 2014.

Overcoming challenges significantly influenced the direction Lee followed in delivering her speech at the D.C. CAP reception. Lee credits STHM with putting her in a position to succeed. She landed her first full-time job, post-graduation, at a Starwood Hotel property with which she interned – the Westin Georgetown, in Washington, D.C., where she serves as a marketing coordinator.

“At Starwood, they promote within the company,” she said, “so I’ll go wherever my career will take me.”

And by all estimations, Lee is on her way up.

–Christopher A. Vito

Alumna leaves her mark at A.C. Food and Wine Festival

With her hands in the planning — and her toes in the sand — Eliza Stasi, BS ‘08, ensured that the Atlantic City Food and Wine Festival would go off without a hitch.

The School of Tourism and Hospitality Management alumna serves as the Regional Entertainment Manager of Caesars Entertainment,