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# LEARNING BY DOING

ALABAMA YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT

## ALYIG media program is more than just a newspaper

By Meagan Holloway-Ragland  
2017 Media Director



MEAGAN HOLLOWAY-RAGLAND

Hello! My name is Meagan Holloway-Ragland and I'm honored to serve as media director for 69th Alabama YMCA Youth in Government.

I am a senior at LAMP High School in Montgomery, and I've been involved since I was a freshman. I love this program, what it teaches us, and everything it stands for.

This year as director, my goal is to reach everyone in the conference through as many platforms as possible, taking the media program farther than just the traditional printed editions. This conference brings us together from every corner of the state, and that is an amazing feat.

I want everyone to be able to enjoy their time here, and be able to look back all the memories and relationships that have been made; whether it be weeks after the conference, or years. It is in this way that I hope to make this the best Youth Legislature thus far, for you all as well as myself. Happy legislating!

**Find Gov. Ford Cleveland's platform and special order legislation at [alyig.org/blog](http://alyig.org/blog)**

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Friday, February 24, 2017



# Tomorrow TODAY

Building Tomorrow's Leaders TODAY

## The 'more you invest' in YIG, the 'more you gain,' governor says

By Ford Cleveland  
2017 Youth Governor

Hello everyone. I'd like to welcome each of you to the 69th Alabama Youth Legislature Conference.

This weekend will be filled with opportunities for all of you. From hearing important political figures in Alabama speak, to being able to debate in the Alabama State House, and even participating in elections of our own, this conference allows everyone to participate and learn about all forms of government.

This conference offers so many amazing opportunities that unfortunately cannot be experienced in just one weekend; therefore, I encourage those of you who are fortunate enough to have a few more years in this program to try something new over the next year



Ford Cleveland of Montgomery takes the oath of office after winning the governor's race in 2016.

and maybe participate in something that you have never done before. Whether that be applying for Governor's Cabinet, running for Supreme Court, or being a lobbyist, you truly cannot go wrong with any of these choices.

The more each of you invest in this conference, the more each of you will

gain from this conference. I hope that you enjoy your weekend as much as I will, and I cannot wait to see what this conference has in store for all of you.

Ford Cleveland is a 17-year-old senior at The Montgomery Academy. He is the son of Chip and Susannah Cleveland.

# Q & A with 2018 gubernatorial candidates

The TomorrowTODAY staff asked each candidate the same three questions. Read their responses below:



CLAUDIA HUBBARD

**What characteristics are most important for a Youth in Government leader? How do you embody those characteristics?**

**Claudia Hubbard:** A YIG leader should be passionate and selfless. My passion for Youth in Government drives my determination to improve and advance the program. I love YIG and the people involved in it. I don't do anything for selfish gain when it comes to the program. I strive to do what's best for the conference and delegates as a whole.

**Olivia Pride:** A YIG leader should listen to the concerns of the people they serve. They must talk things out, even when they disagree. By listening to the opinions of others, you learn what you might not know. Lastly, they must be a friend to all. That's why I hug everyone I meet. You never know the type of day someone has had. I truly care for people, and that is the type of heart a youth governor should have.

**Jezzia Smith:** The ability to create other leaders, flexibility, experience, dedication and passion. I have helped initiate two delegations – one in Cherokee County and one in Mobile. I started as vice president of the Cherokee County delegation. Next, I served as District 1 chairperson. When I moved to Mobile, my new school – Baker High School – did not have YIG, so my goal was to start a program. This year, along with being District 4 chair, I have made great leaps for the new delegation. Baker may even participate in Judicial later this year!



OLIVIA PRIDE

**How should money for Alabama public schools be distributed?**

**Olivia Pride:** A lot of us are blessed to attend private schools or nationally ranked public schools; however, that is not the case for all. Birmingham City Schools, one of the biggest school districts in Alabama, contains 13 failing schools. This problem is simply because of funding. The average annual income in Birmingham is \$32,000. In Hoover, it is \$76,469, and Spain Park High School, a school within Hoover City Schools, is sixth in the state for education. Its success is directly tied to the affluence of this Birmingham suburb. Because of failing schools, money for public education is a tricky topic, but money is the answer. A failing system won't improve without sufficient funds.

**Jezzia Smith:** Some public schools choose to withdraw from school systems. Examples include Saraland and Satsuma high schools in Mobile and Mountain Brook and Vestavia Hills high schools in Birmingham. These schools use money from the surrounding area through private/public funding or donations instead of the money that comes from the school system. Students within struggling publicly funded schools are at a disadvantage. As a state, we should take each public facility and regulate their funds by pooling all their resources and then divvying the capital by a ratio to the number of students within each school.

**Claudia Hubbard:** The state needs to look into redistributing funds on a per student basis. More affluent areas in Alabama are able to raise local taxes to improve their own education systems, so it would be in Alabama's best interest to evaluate the number of students per school who live in poverty and distribute more funds to schools with higher numbers of impoverished pupils. This way, schools located in impoverished areas will have a better chance at keeping up with schools in affluent areas. Schools in Alabama would receive more fair and equitable funding overall.

**What is your personal mantra and why?**

**Jezzia Smith:** Often, we judge our day based on if we are happy. "Open happiness" says YOU can make the day better – even if it is with something as simple as a smile. Participate in the activities that make you, you; and find the happiness within, because only YOU can "open happiness."

**Olivia Pride:** "Always do your best, so you can't blame yourself for anything." There is no worse feeling than knowing you could have done better. Vowing to put your all into everything you do gives you satisfaction, so you can move on to what the future holds. It saves you from the "what ifs" of life.

**Claudia Hubbard:** "Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. In all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as you can." Even on my worst days, I try my best to share love and encouragement to the people around me.



JEZZIA SMITH

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