

Kent Wyatt “Young Alumnus” Service Award – Sayward Fortner

The Delta State University National Alumni Association recently announced the annual Alumni Service Awards recipients. Each year, the Alumni Association presents four service awards: the Hugh Ellis Walker Alumni Service Award, the Kent Wyatt Young Alumnus Service Award, the Gladys Castle Friend of Delta State Awards and the Legacy Award.

The Kent Wyatt Young Alumnus Service Award is given each year to an alumnus who is 36 years or younger and has given outstanding service and contributions to Delta State University. This year’s recipient is Sayward Ely Fortner.

Fortner graduated from Delta State in 2004 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. She went on to study law at the University of Mississippi where she received the William M. Champion Scholarship and obtained her Juris Doctorate graduating Magna Cum Laude. She and her husband returned to Cleveland in 2007 and she began private practice in the area of litigation defense with the firm of Griffith and Griffith. In 2009, she was hired by the United States District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi as a law clerk to United States Magistrate Judge David A. Sanders. She went on to clerk for United States Magistrate Judge Jane M. Virden until September of 2013, when she decided to take some time away from work to raise her three children Holt (7), Harper Ann (4), and Jane Cannon (2). She serves as secretary on the board of directors for the non-profit organization Delta Arts Alliance. She has served on the Delta State University National Alumni Board since 2008. She joined the board as the Young Alumnus representative and currently serves on the executive board as treasurer. She and her husband Jonathan (2003) live in Cleveland with their three children where they are members of Covenant Presbyterian Church.