



HARNESSING ENERGY AND
EMPOWERING
WOMEN ON WHEELS

Ms.
Wheelchair
A M E R I C A
2014

PAGEANT AND LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
JULY 15-21, 2013 HOUSTON, TEXAS

Ms. Wheelchair America 2013

Mariah Rose Hilbourne



"A thought, even a possibility, can transform us."

Friedrich Nietzsche

In August 2012, I began my year as Ms. Wheelchair America with a thought, a possibility, to transform communities across the United States. An ideal for cities to be "Inclined for Inclusion." A hope that architectural and attitudinal barriers could be broken down in order to transform society as a whole. From Texas, to Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Arkansas, South Dakota, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Oklahoma and Illinois, that possibility fueled my travels throughout the year.

I've enjoyed this once in a lifetime opportunity to share my message and mission. It was an honor to be an advocate and spokesperson for the more than 57 million people living with (dis)abilities throughout the United States. While I had the chance to share with newspapers, magazines, radio and television media, attend conferences, resource fairs and expos, my favorite part of the year was always connecting with the people at each event.

In Tennessee, I shared at Belmont University. I had the opportunity to meet 100's of occupational therapy students. These students were inquisitive, curious and encouraged me in my goals. By hearing the lived experiences of someone with a disability, they were better able to understand the world that their future patients live in. Their thoughts on disability were expanded and transformed. They could see firsthand the importance of Inclusion. The elementary schools in Arkansas, Hawaii and Texas were some of my favorites. I loved meeting the students and encouraging them to have a positive perspective on people with all abilities. By transforming the youth, society as a whole can truly be transformed.

In Arkansas, I took part in a sports and recreational group that is transforming the views of their community. The I Can! Dance group, is actively demonstrating that *all* things are possible. In the dance group children of all abilities perform and have their moment to shine. The recital is well attended by community members, including the First Lady of Arkansas.

I also got to take part in many fun activities throughout the year. This was especially true in South Dakota participating in my unforgettable week with Ski For Light! Along with more than 80 skiers, I got to fly downhill on a bi-ski, make snow angels and cruise on a snowmobile. The volunteers that I met were the best of the best. During my interview at Ms. Wheelchair America, I was asked if I had the chance to take away my disability would I. I immediately answered no to the question. The reason I answered no, is in part because of experiences like Ski For Light. The people at Ski For Light are the true example of friendship, encouragement and support. They motivate and inspire your spirit. I have met many amazing people like that throughout all my events this year. These connections and friendships have transformed my life.

The Ms. Wheelchair America participants have become like my sisters. Their encouragement has been a big support this year. I was able to reconnect with some of the Ms. Wheelchair America participants in almost every trip. In Columbus, OH we attended the National Presidential Forum on Disability Issues. In the nonpartisan forum, presidential candidate representatives presented their campaign's positions on matters relating to Americans with disabilities. We were encouraged to use our voices to transform society and fully pursue the American Dream alongside our able-bodied peers. The opening remarks were profoundly inspiring: *"Lead on. Lead on. Speak out loudly and proudly with one voice that nothing shall be done about us without us. As a community of Americans with disabilities our voices need to be heard when deciding the policies that affect everyone in this nation. We must exercise our full participation. If we don't step up to that next level of evolution we will always be subject to the ignorance that results in low expectations masked as compassion that robs us of our true viable future as fully participating members in this experience called America. It will be a better America because we are fully participating in it."*

My year that started as just a thought, became possible due to the efforts of many who have supported my dreams through their generosity, kindness and encouragement. You have a special place in my heart and I will forever be grateful.

Thank you,

Mariah Rose Hilbourne



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a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, strives to improve the lives of people with disabilities through its mission of advocacy and education.

Dear Friends and Supporters,

It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to the great state of Texas for the 2014 Ms. Wheelchair America Program. The Lone Star State has a deep-seated history anchored in strength, independence, and loyalty - all qualities of the titleholders who have traveled from across the country to participate in this week's events.

The entire Ms. Wheelchair Texas Foundation has worked tirelessly over the past 14 months to create a program that is strong in content, unyielding in fun, and rich in sisterhood. Texas is known to be "Pageant Country", but the Ms. Wheelchair America Program proudly paints a different picture. Honoring women for their accomplishments, advocacy, and example redefines the concept of a pageant. Instead of a stage filled with participants who are critiqued based on society's idea of physical perfection, our contestants impart a progressive notion that real beauty is not measured by the number of heads you turn, but by the number of hearts you touch.

The namesake of our host city and first governor of Texas, Sam Houston, said, "A leader is someone who helps improve the lives of other people or the system they live under." He has perfectly defined every participant in the Ms. Wheelchair America Program. The women currently serving as their state's titleholder and the countless other advocates from the organization's 42 year history, have answered the call to action bestowed upon them by the need for change. The lives of people with disabilities in our country today have been shaped and strengthened by the good works of a program that was built upon a foundation of civil rights and equal access.

After a week spent in Houston, the Energy Capitol of the World, everyone will know that you don't mess with Texas or the empowered women of Ms. Wheelchair America 2014!

Yours sincerely,

Angela Wrigglesworth



Hi Y'all,

On behalf of the Ms. Wheelchair America Inc. Board of Directors, I would like to welcome you to Ms. Wheelchair America 2014, here in beautiful Houston, Texas. Are you ready for an amazing week? Are you ready to learn and share? I hope so. You will be challenged and changed.

Dr. Philip K. Wood saw challenge. He had devoted his career to rehabilitation, helping people use their talents, capabilities, and determination to be productive members of society. In 1972, he established Ms. Wheelchair America as a forum for change, a simple way for promoting the achievements and accomplishments of women who utilized wheelchairs for mobility. This year, as we crown the 42nd Ms. Wheelchair America it is important we take a moment to thank Dr. Wood for his commitment.

This organization has challenged and changed countless people, including you. I want to congratulate you for all you have achieved to get here. You truly represent what Ms. Wheelchair America is all about. You will have the opportunity to show your talents, capabilities, determination and share your platform.

Behind the scenes of this amazing organization are the state coordinators. They keep this program running at the state level, without their time and commitment, you would not be here. I would like to thank them for their hard work and dedication, as well as, challenge them to continue the work started by Dr. Wood.

A very special thank you goes out to Angela Wrigglesworth, The Ms. Wheelchair Texas Foundation and the amazing volunteers that have worked tirelessly to prove everything is bigger (and better) in Texas! All the planning will help them share the Lone Star State and prove why you "Don't Mess with Texas". Hold on tight, we are in for a wild ride!

Finally, thanks to all of you for being here and helping us recognize and celebrate an amazing group of women!

Shelly Loose

President, Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc.

P.O. Box 86 – Byron Center, Michigan 49315
1-877-MSWHEEL (679-4335)

Emcee

Rachel McNeill



Rachel McNeill came back home when she joined Local 2 in September 2001.

Her career has taken her on the road to stations in New Orleans, Raleigh, N.C. and Midland, Texas. Her education is pure Texan: Rachel graduated from Cypress Creek High school in northwest Houston, and she has a Broadcast Journalism degree from the University of Texas at Austin.

Some of the "big" stories Rachel has covered recently for Local 2 include the Newtown School Shootings, the West Plant Explosion and the 2013 Presidential Inauguration.

When she is not working at Local 2, Rachel is proud to host the "Big Taste of Houston" benefiting Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Houston, www.bbbstx.org. Rachel is also an Advisory Board member with Dress for Success Houston, which helps provide interview suits, confidence boosts and career development to more than 3,000 women annually. Another group close to Rachel's heart is the Zina Garrison Academy, www.zinagarrison.org. The non-profit organization provides mentoring, educational opportunities and, of course, tennis skills to children in Houston.

You can see Rachel on KPRC Local 2 News at 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Contestants



MS. WHEELCHAIR ALABAMA

PAULA MONTGOMERY RODNEY

Paula lives in Huntsville, Alabama and works at Yendor Advocacy Group. She obtained a Bachelors of Science from Spelman College. Paula enjoys traveling, Broadway productions, and singing. She has multiple sclerosis onset from February 5, 2005. Paula describes herself as compassionate, active, and driven.



MS. WHEELCHAIR CALIFORNIA

MARGARITA ELIZONDO

Margarita lives in San Diego, California and is the Director of Public Relations at Access Medical. She studied Administration in Disability Services at Grossmont Community College. Margarita enjoys dancing, painting, and writing. She has a spinal cord injury at c/6-7 level. Margarita describes herself as spiritual, loving, and passionate.



MS. WHEELCHAIR COLORADO

MARY COLECCHI

Mary resides in Denver, Colorado and is a disability advocate that aspires to own an Independent Life Skills Trainer Company. She is obtaining a bachelor's degree in health care management from Regis University. Mary enjoys photography, gardening, live music, and being outdoors in her beautiful state. She is a hemiplegic with an acquired brain injury due to a stroke in 2008. Mary describes herself as aspiring, motivational and reliable.



MS. WHEELCHAIR DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

LAKENDRA NELSON-PETERSON

Lakendra lives in Washington D.C. and works for Bread for the City. She obtained a diploma in medical assistance from Everest College. Lakendra enjoys writing, spending time with family and traveling. She has had type III Osteogenesis Imperfecta since birth. Lakendra describes herself as confident, energetic, and kind-hearted.



MS. WHEELCHAIR FLORIDA

LISA JACKSON

Lisa lives in Pensacola, Florida. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from the University of West Florida. Lisa enjoys singing, directing the youth and fellowship choirs at church, and spending time with family and friends. She is a double amputee and legally blind since 1995. Lisa describes herself as dedicated, outgoing and funny.



MS. WHEELCHAIR ILLINOIS

DANIELLE AUSTIN

Danielle lives in Carol Stream, Illinois and works at the Community Consolidated School District 93 and Glenbard School District 87. She received a Rehabilitation Services BS and University Studies BS from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Danielle enjoys reading, watching sports, and working out. She has cerebral palsy onset from birth. Danielle describes herself as ambitious, honest, and trustworthy.

Contestants



MS. WHEELCHAIR INDIANA
BRANDY MCCORD

Brandy lives in Greenwood, Indiana and works at Corizon, a medical and mental health provider for the Indiana Department of Correction. She also volunteers at Easter Seals Crossroads with Special Needs Children. She received a Bachelor's in Social and Behavioral Sciences with a Minor in Criminal Justice from Indiana University Bloomington. Brandy enjoys spending time with her family and friends, participating in 5K races, singing karaoke and dancing. She was diagnosed with Systemic Lupus in 2002 and End Stage Renal Failure in 2003. Brandy describes herself as outgoing, joyful, and unstoppable.



MS. WHEELCHAIR IOWA
TASHA DEGROOTE

Tasha lives in New Hartford, Iowa and works for the Waterloo Community School District as a Para-Educator. She obtained an Associate in Science degree in Human Services and Disability Studies from Iowa Lakes Community College in Estherville, Iowa. Tasha enjoys participating in adapted basketball, track & field and tennis, spending time with family and friends, taking care of her miniature pinscher-Speedy, and mentoring young athletes with disabilities. She was born with Spina Bifida. Tasha describes herself as outgoing, determined, and dedicated.



MS. WHEELCHAIR KANSAS
ANGEL SHAVER

Angel lives in WaKeeney, Kansas and is primarily a domestic engineer or co-manager of her household. She works as a secretary at Wakeeney Church of God, is a piano teacher, and a bookkeeper. She obtained Bachelor's Degrees in Behavioral Science and Bible/Theology from Mid-America Bible College and a Master's Degree in Family Therapy from Friends University. Angel enjoys spending time with family and friends, reading, and keeping up with her blogs. She has a traumatic brain injury and nerve damage which she sustained during a motor vehicle accident in 2004. Angel describes herself as family focused, a scholar, and determined.



MS. WHEELCHAIR KENTUCKY
HEATHER MARKHAM

Heather lives in Louisville, Kentucky and works as a Rehabilitation Technologist for the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. She earned a Bachelor's from Texas A&M University, a Master's from Midwestern State University, and a second Master's from the University of Pittsburgh. Heather enjoys photographing whatever catches her eye, traveling at every opportunity, and surfing with Life Rolls On. She was born with Limb Girdle Muscular Dystrophy, but asymptomatic until 1990, and it was eventually diagnosed in 2002. Heather describes herself as creative, compassionate, and adventurous.



MS. WHEELCHAIR LOUISIANA
ANITA GRAY

Anita lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and is a Senior Technical Support Advisor at Kelly Services. She studied Philosophy from Louisiana State University. Anita enjoys reading, genealogy, cooking, attending events to support others in the community who live with a disability, and spending time with her niece. She has been a paraplegic (T4/5 SCI) since December 17, 1999. Anita describes herself as friendly, resourceful, and pragmatic.



MS. WHEELCHAIR MARYLAND
PATRINA FRANKLIN

Patrina lives in Churchton, Maryland and works at Omni House. She obtained an Associate degree from Anne Arundel Community College. Patrina enjoys shopping, scrapbooking, and spending time with family and friends. She has a spinal cord injury. Patrina describes herself as energetic, courageous, and dependable.

Contestants



MS. WHEELCHAIR MASSACHUSETTS

NICOLE TARZIA

Nicole lives in Pembroke, Massachusetts and works at Grandma Em's Diaper Cakes and More, and ACN International. She earned a Master of Social Work in Clinical Therapy from Simmons College. Nicole enjoys traveling, mono-skiing, teaching religious education, and spending time with her family. She is quadriplegic onset from cerebral palsy since birth. Nicole describes herself as approachable, fun-loving, and determined.



MS. WHEELCHAIR MICHIGAN

LINH HUYNH

Linh lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan and works as the Social Media Director for Nail Works while volunteering with the Child Life Department at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital and Metro Health Hospital. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Grand Valley State University. Linh enjoys baking, spending time with her family/sorority sisters, painting and volunteering with children. She was born with Spinal Muscular Atrophy. Linh describes herself as funny, wholehearted, and compassionate.



MS. WHEELCHAIR MINNESOTA

CRISSA KNOTT

Crissa lives in Winona, Minnesota and has volunteered at the Kenyon Sunset Home and Paws and Claws. She received a B.A. in Psychology from Winona State University. Crissa enjoys fishing, reading, watching movies, and spending time with family and friends. She was born with Cerebral Palsy. Crissa describes herself as intelligent, friendly, and empathetic.



MS. WHEELCHAIR MISSISSIPPI

KEBRA MOORE

Kebra lives in Meridian, Mississippi, and she is a Gospel/Inspirational singer. She received her B.A. in Music Education with a concentration in voice from Claflin University in Orangeburg, S.C. Kebra enjoys singing, reading, and involved in her "Beautiful Campaign", while traveling with the "Ability Expo". She has a T-12 incomplete fracture. Kebra describes herself as passionate, caring, and ambitious.



MS. WHEELCHAIR NEVADA

ASHLEY VARNDELL

Ashley lives in Las Vegas, Nevada and works at Home Depot as a Specialty Sales Lead Generator, and volunteers with the Clark County School District. She obtained a Culinary Certificate from Chantilly Academy Culinary School in 1999, a Department of Criminal Justice Certification in 2002, a Virginia Real Estate License in 2004 and became a Virginia Certified Tax Professional in 2009. Ashley enjoys cooking, home remodeling projects, wheelchair basketball and being an Aunt to her identical twin nieces, Sydney and Natalie. She has had an undiagnosed progressive disability since the age of 10. Ashley describes herself as confident, positive, and driven.



MS. WHEELCHAIR NEW JERSEY

MAGGIE REDDEN

Margaret "Maggie" Redden lives in Jersey City, New Jersey and works as the community outreach coordinator for Paralympic Sports Club NJ. She received her bachelor's degree in Communications from Pennsylvania State University in 2007. Maggie enjoys singing as a member of the Cantigas Women's Choir, going out on the track in her racing chair to stay physically fit and healthy, and taking yoga and zumba classes. She contracted Polio as a baby in India. Maggie describes herself as eclectic, philanthropic, and athletic.

Contestants



MS. WHEELCHAIR NORTH CAROLINA

MORGAN NORRIS

Morgan lives in Asheville, North Carolina where she earned her Dental Hygiene license at Asheville/Buncombe Tech and looks forward to resuming her career in the pediatric area of her field. Morgan was injured at level T12 in February of 2012 in a car accident. She describes herself as smart, compassionate, and motivated.



MS. WHEELCHAIR OHIO

JESSICA KELBLEY

Jessica lives in Fostoria, Ohio and works at Wright Patterson Air Force Base. She is studying Organizational Leadership from Wright State University. Jessica enjoys shopping, bowling, event planning, and Relay for Life. She has Spinal Muscular Atrophy which limits her ability to gain muscle. Jessica describes herself as outgoing, hard working, and smart.



MS. WHEELCHAIR OKLAHOMA

KELSEY BALLHORN

Kelsey lives in El Reno, Oklahoma and works at the Bank of Union. She received her diploma from El Reno High School. Kelsey enjoys spending time with family and friends, going to the lake, cooking, and doing things within the community. She has been paraplegic since November of 2006. Kelsey describes herself as honest, compassionate, and family oriented.



MS. WHEELCHAIR PENNSYLVANIA

KATIE SMITH

Katie lives in Stahlstown, Pennsylvania and is a substitute elementary and special education teacher at Mount Pleasant Area School District, Ligonier Valley School District and Valley School of Ligonier. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology from Seton Hill University. Katie enjoys engaging in adaptive sports including quadriplegic rugby, skiing, horseback riding, and handcycling, any outlet for artistic creativity, and volunteering in the community. She became a quadriplegic in 2007 after a spinal cord injury. Katie describes herself as genuine, compassionate and determined.



MS. WHEELCHAIR TENNESSEE

BLISS WELCH

Bliss lives in Harrison, Tennessee and works at Island Cove Marina & Resort. She obtained a Bachelor's in Organizational Management from Covenant College and is currently working towards her Master's of Accountancy at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Bliss enjoys spending time with her family and friends, documenting life through pictures, educating children about individuals with disabilities, and meeting new people from all walks of life. Bliss was diagnosed with Limb Girdle Muscular Dystrophy 2B at the age of 19. Bliss describes herself as compassionate, decisive, and resourceful.



MS. WHEELCHAIR TEXAS

HALEY CORNELIUS

Haley lives in Tomball, Texas and volunteers at Houston Elementary Schools and Children's Hospital and Fort Hood Hospital. She obtained a Bachelors of Liberal Arts from Nebraska Wesleyan University and Texas State University. Haley enjoys golf, swimming, shopping, and Texans and Husker football. She is a traumatic paraplegic that was injured on July 4, 2001 in a boating accident. Haley describes herself as stubborn, intelligent, and a firecracker.

Contestants



MS. WHEELCHAIR UTAH
ARIANNE NAKASONE

Arianne lives in Roy, Utah and attends the Canyon View Life Program and volunteers as an Assistant LDS Activity Days Leader. Ari enjoys traveling, collecting cookbooks, visiting Diners, Drive-ins and Dives, and using her communication device to read to young children. She has Spastic Quadriplegia Cerebral Palsy. Ari describes herself as happy, adventurous, and kind.



MS. WHEELCHAIR VIRGINIA
BRITTANY YATES

Brittany lives in Bassett, Virginia and works at Friday Night Friends. She has an EMT certification and Child CPR training from the PERT Program at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center. Brittany enjoys advocating, mentoring, outdoor activities, and traveling to and visiting concerts and amusement parks, as well as spending time with loved ones. She has Spina Bifida, a neural tube defect in which her spine did not close prior to birth. Brittany describes herself as independent, reliable, and confident.



MS. WHEELCHAIR WASHINGTON
JENNIFER LYNN ADAMS

Jennifer lives in Tacoma, Washington and is self employed as a Motivational Speaker. She studied psychology at Pacific Lutheran University. Jennifer enjoys singing, oil painting, skateboarding, and public speaking. She was born with partial limbs. Jennifer describes herself as joyful, musical, and giving.



MS. WHEELCHAIR WISCONSIN
AMBER LEE GILBERG

Amber lives in Eau Claire, Wisconsin and runs her independently owned business, Beautifully Different, where she is a freelance graphic/website designer and portrait artist. She is also an AVON sales representative. She obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in graphic and multimedia design combined with business marketing from the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Amber enjoys bowling in her local bowling league, training her service dog, spending time with friends and family, and is an avid Apple fan. She was born with Athetoid Cerebral Palsy. Amber describes herself as creative, intelligent, and compassionate.

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2013, Thank you!

Judges



KRISTEN MCCOSH, HEAD JUDGE

Kristen McCosh, currently serves as the Disability Commissioner for the City of Boston, Massachusetts – a post she was appointed to in 2010 by Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino. In this capacity, Kristen oversees ADA Title II compliance for the City, works toward reducing discrimination, and promotes inclusion in all aspects of life for people with disabilities.

Kristen graduated magna cum laude from the University of Massachusetts in Boston with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Political Science. She earned her Master of Arts degree in Disability Studies at the City University of New York in Manhattan.

Kristen has been involved in the disability field for over twenty-five years, in both her professional career and as a member of the disability community, having sustained a spinal cord injury while in high school. Her previous work includes Public Health research, non-profit program management, community organizing, and healthcare access. Additionally, she has worked and volunteered as an advocate, writer, speaker, and peer mentor.

Kristen served as Ms. Wheelchair Massachusetts 2007 and Ms. Wheelchair America 2008. These advocacy roles gave her the opportunity to speak about issues of importance to people with disabilities, including Independent Living, employment, empowerment, inclusion, and civil rights.

Kristen can be reached at kristen.mccosh@cityofboston.gov, or www.cityofboston.gov/disability.



AJ BROCKMAN

AJ Brockman is an award-winning artist that has a passion for art, design, and all things that are awesome. He has a progressive neuromuscular disease, Spinal Muscular Atrophy, and has utilized a wheelchair since age two. He views himself as being “differently abled” rather than “disabled” and lives life to the fullest every day.

As a South Florida native, a lot of AJ’s work reflects the ocean, landscapes, and a beachside lifestyle. However, his work runs the gamut and is not limited to a specific genre.

What AJ would like most of all is for others to enjoy his work, inspire creativity and prove that anything is possible if you put your mind to it and have the drive to do so.



RAFFERTY LAREDO

Rafferty Laredo, MA, OTR, ATP graduated from Baylor University with a BA in Psychology in 1997. He then earned his BS in Occupational Therapy from The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio in 1999. In 2005 he received a MA in Occupational Therapy with a specialty focus in Assistive Technology from Texas Woman's University.

Rafferty is presently the Executive Director with the National Spinal Cord Injury Association Houston, after over 11 years at The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research (TIRR) in Houston, TX. In this role with NSCIA Houston, he actively serves the disability community through resource networking, education, outreach, and advocacy. Rafferty continues his clinical practice as a consultant in neurorehabilitation for Houston’s County District, Harris Health System. Rafferty serves as adjunct faculty for Texas Woman's University, The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, and Lone Star College for both the occupational therapy and physical therapy programs.

Rafferty has been an expert reviewer for several SCI Clinical Practice Guidelines and has co-authored the SCI chapter in the OT text, *Ways of Living*. Rafferty is a staff member with SCI Seminars, Inc., and provides ongoing continuing education across the U.S. on advanced care in rehabilitation.

In 2011, he was awarded the Academy of Spinal Cord Injury Professionals’ Therapy Leadership Council (TLC) Excellence Award for his leadership in the field. He presently serves on the TLC Board of Directors. Rafferty is honored and grateful to be a part of this year’s MWA celebrations.

Judges



JEWELL MASSEY

Jewell Massey retired from teaching in 1996 due to post polio syndrome and recently returned to Knoxville, Tennessee after teaching high school biology in Florida and elementary gifted in Georgia. Currently, she is remodeling a 1930's bungalow and reinventing herself as a raised bed gardener.

Shortly before polio vaccine was discovered, Jewell was diagnosed with the acute paralytic polio and could only move the fingers on her left hand. At 13, a counselor at Camp Easter Seal had suggested college and changed the course of Jewell's life. Graduations followed from Lincoln Memorial University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biology, Mercer University with a Masters degree in Biology, the University of Georgia with an Ed.S. in behavior disorders, and Macon College with an Associate degree in criminal justice.

Jewell served as Ms. Wheelchair Georgia in 1988 and Ms. Wheelchair America 1989. She has been an advocate for many years in various capacities: peer supporter at Shepherd Spinal Center in Atlanta, First International Conference on the Church and Disability, Project Smile, Camp Phoenix for children with burns, child abuse, National Association for Mental Illness, Council of Exceptional Children, Diabetes Association, American Heart Association, American Arthritis Association, MDA volunteer for several years, committee for fundraiser for AIDS Center, Para Olympic torch bearer, polio poster child, Shriner's poster child, mito-chondrial diseases, Cerebral Palsy, and Alzheimer's. She was Pilot Club's Georgia Professional Woman of the Year, Gifted Teacher of the Year in Macon, served on the Georgia Governor's Council on Employment of Persons with Disabilities, Executive Director of Macon Mayor's Council on Employment of People with Disabilities, Macon Council's Citizen of the Year, 1990 Census Committee, and others.

She would tell you that there have been many "encouragers" along the way and folks who believed in her before she was strong enough to believe in herself. Somehow, there were always bridges from one phase to the next level of adventure. There were honors and achievements and titles, but the biggest honor of all was the one allowing her to accompany her Mother as a 24/7 caregiver on her Alzheimer's Journey.



LLOYD J. UPDIKE

Lloyd Updike is an Area Sales Manager for Braun Ability the world's largest manufacture of adaptive equipment for our disabled community. Lloyd is responsible for the Braun dealer network in the country of Canada and is the liaison for his company between Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. as well as Toyota Canada Inc.

Lloyd has been serving the disabled community for over 15 years providing service and products to the Braun Ability dealer distribution network. He works closely with various State and Federal agencies as well as Rehab and Care faculties. He resides in Lincoln, Nebraska and travels extensively throughout Canada and the U.S.

Lloyd can be reached at lloyd.updike@braunlift.com

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Judging Criteria

The Ms. Wheelchair America judging is based upon criteria established by the national committee of the Ms. Wheelchair America Program. The following excerpts were taken from the official guidelines:

A. Accomplishments

1. Personal Achievements and Accomplishments since Disability in the following areas:
 - a. Academic
 - b. Vocational
 - c. Personal
2. Adjustment to Disability

B. Community Skills

1. Ability to deal with media, peers, civic groups, etc.
2. Public Relation Skills
3. Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
4. Self-confidence—Motivation—Initiative—Creativity

C. Self Perception—Projection

1. Poise and Demeanor
2. Appropriate Attire and Personal Presentation

Ms. Wheelchair America Creed

As Ms. Wheelchair America, I promise to do my best
To promote public awareness of people with disabilities,
To use my time and efforts to this purpose,
To strive to achieve the best that is within me,
To offer my hand in friendship to everyone I meet,
To be cheerful, honest and loving,
To give hope to the less fortunate,
To set an example by my attitude, and
To do all this with grace, warmth and dignity.



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2013 Football & Cheer Games will be held at:

- Strake Jesuit College Preparatory (game is set for Saturday, September 28 at approximately 10:30 am)
- Episcopal High School (TBA - usually on a Thursday around 6 pm)
- St. Thomas High School (TBA - usually on a Thursday around 7 pm)
- Southwest Football League (TBA - on a Sunday at 2 pm)
- Rice University (TBA - on a Sunday at 2 pm)

2014 Basketball & Cheer Games will be held at:

- Episcopal High School with co-host St. Agnes Academy (TBA on a January Saturday around 10:30 am)
- St. Thomas High School with co-host Strake Jesuit (Saturday, January 11 at 11:00 am)

These alternate back and forth between the schools listed above

2014 Baseball Games will be held at West U LL on:

- Saturday, March 1 at 11:00 am Opening Day & Carnival
- Games on Sundays from the end of March through mid May at 2:00 pm weekly. Prior to game 1, we will have team/individual photos and wonderful lunch for all starting at 11:00 am and after the last game, we will host a BBQ & Season End Celebration both in the West U Elementary Multi-purpose room

**To request a registration form for Challenger Football, Basketball & Cheer,
Contact Joni Hruska Fichter at cptemps@aol.com or 713-621-8880 asap and a form this will be
emailed to you to complete and return with the \$25 registration fee for all football & basketball
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**To register for Challenger Baseball, go to www.westull.org starting November 1 and click on
Challenger on the left side and register on line for spring 2014. The cost is \$20 for all games.**

Other questions about any Challenger Sports, contact Joni at cptemps@aol.com!



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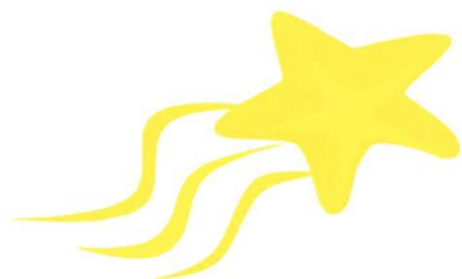


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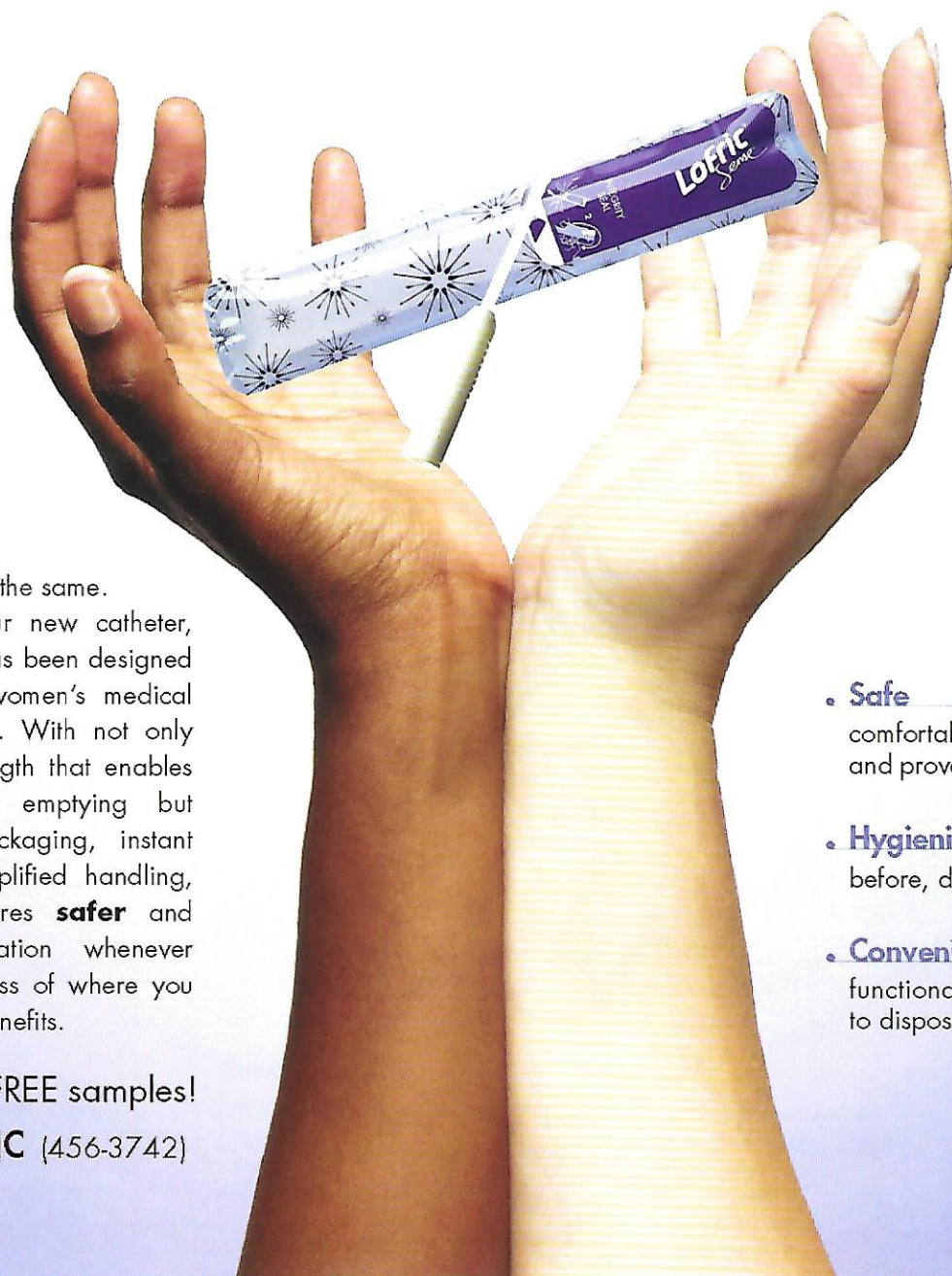




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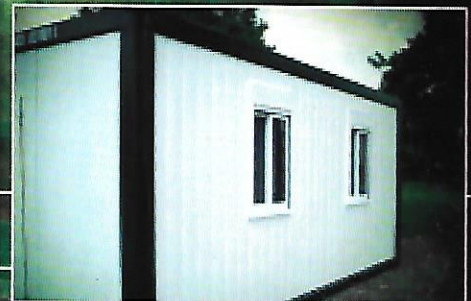
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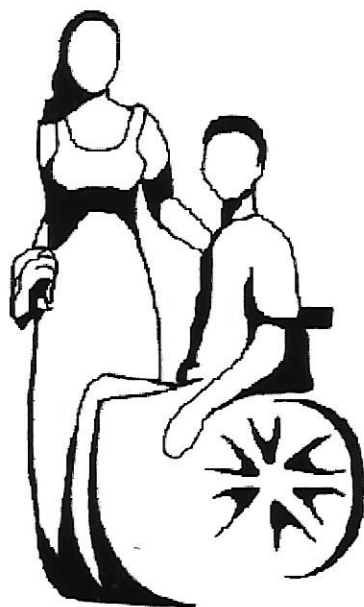
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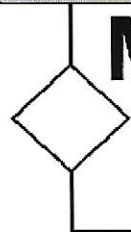
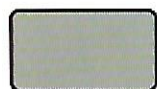
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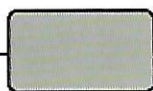
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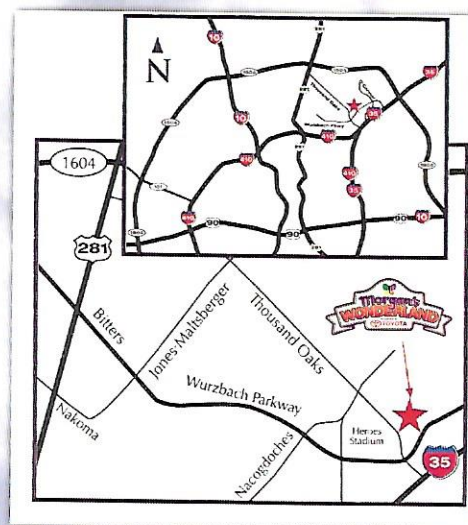




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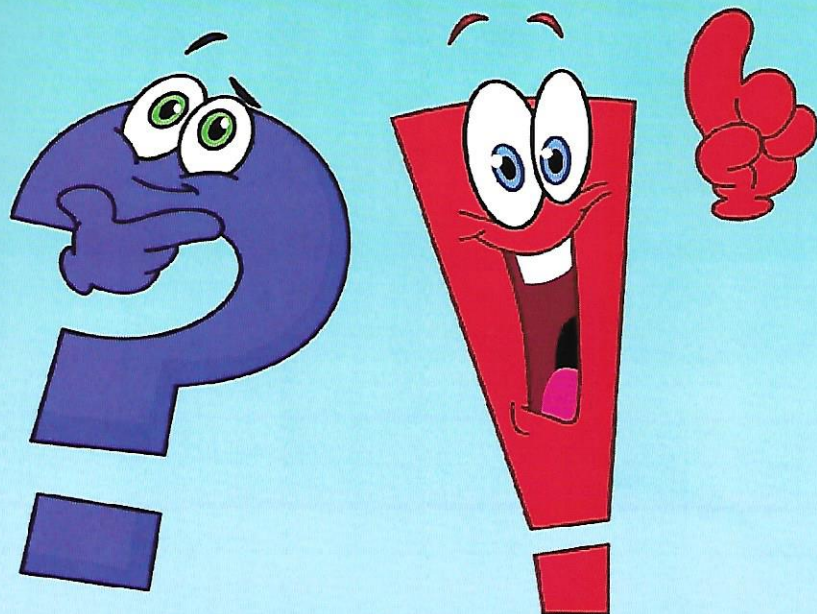
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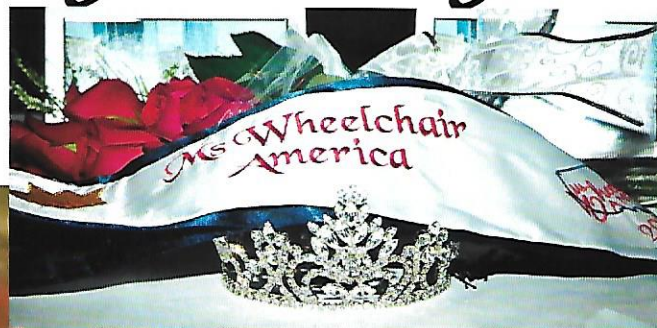
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Welcome and Good Luck

2014 MS. WHEELCHAIR AMERICA CONTESTANTS

A Special Salute

HALEY CORNELIUS

2014 MS. WHEELCHAIR TEXAS



2014

TEEN AMBASSADOR BOARD

Katelin Ames, Second Baptist School

Kayla Cecil, Memorial High School

Louisa Lummis, The St. John's School

Kendall Plank, Episcopal High School

Ward Sheffield, The Kinkaid School

Samantha Bazbaz, Clements High School

Sophie Gaylor, The Kinkaid School

Maggie Lummis, The St. John's School

Brindley Mize, The Kinkaid School

Timmy Streller, Second Baptist School

Seagren Wilson, The Kinkaid School

Elizabeth Carl, The Kinkaid School

Collin Likover, The Kinkaid School

Robert Perlick, Episcopal High School

Madison Reid, Memorial High School

Jessie Ustick, Memorial High School

Teen Ambassador Board Mission

To engage youth in philanthropy and begin a path to nonprofit leadership by building awareness amongst teens of the challenges of persons with disabilities

Schwartz Roller & Zwilling

is a national law firm primarily engaged in the representation of individuals with disabilities in an effort to enforce their civil rights under the American's with Disabilities Act, Rehabilitation Act, Fair Housing Amendments Act, Architectural Barriers Act, Air Carrier Access Act and various civil rights laws against discrimination on the basis of disability.

We also consult for businesses and municipalities who wish to draft a work plan to remove barriers and engage in voluntary ADA compliance.

Please contact us regarding issues affecting your civil rights in any state to determine whether we can be of assistance.

No representation is made that the quality of the legal services to be performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers.

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Good Luck! Ari!
We're So Proud
Of You!
Love, Your Family



Purpose and Goals

Each year the Ms. Wheelchair America Program holds a competition to select the most accomplished, articulate spokeswoman for people with disabilities. The titleholder must be able to communicate and educate the public, business community, and lawmakers regarding the dignity, productiveness and basic value of people with disabilities. Ms. Wheelchair America continues to eliminate the architectural and attitudinal barriers that prevent people with disabilities from assuming their rightful place in society.

Ms. Wheelchair America has numerous duties. During her reign, she has the opportunity to travel, visit advocacy groups, make public appearances, and conduct interviews. Ms. Wheelchair America promotes her chosen platform in a variety of settings. She serves as a positive role model for the next generation of Americans with disabilities inspiring them to leave their own legacy. Her commitment and personal example serve to further the mission of Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc.

The pageant is made up of a multitude of activities. This allows the judging panel time with the state titleholders, while enabling the competitors an opportunity to share with each other and develop friendships. The titleholders become stronger advocates throughout the week because of the variety of interesting workshops that strengthen them. These workshops develop skills that heighten awareness on issues within the community and open a dialogue between the women and their thoughts, ideas, values, and experiences.

The Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that is staffed and coordinated totally by volunteers from many different organizations, businesses, private citizens, and previous titleholders. It is through the monetary and in-kind support of the many sponsors that the national titleholder is able to fulfill her duties throughout the year and travel across the country with her message of empowerment for people with disabilities. The Ms. Wheelchair America Program is actively seeking sponsors and volunteers and would appreciate any support that is offered.

Ms. Wheelchair America

PAST TITLEHOLDERS



2009



2010



2011



2012



2013

1973	PATRICIA NEVINS	MICHIGAN
1974	JANIE ROBINSON	TEXAS
1975	KATHY SMITH-TILEY	ALABAMA
1976	DIXIE LEE ETHERIDGE	MISSISSIPPI
1977	BEVERLY CHAPMAN	FLORIDA
1978	MARGIE SLOAN	GEORGIA
1979	MARGE CHMIELEWSKI	MICHIGAN
1980	NANCY PUDVIN	GEORGIA
1981	VIVIAN THOMPSON	MASSACHUSETTS
1982	MARIAN SCHOOLING-VESSELL	MARYLAND
1983	BARBARA CROZIER	ALABAMA
1984	GAYNELL COLBURN	MARYLAND
1985	LORI COTTAM	UTAH
1986	DONNA CLINE	NEVADA
1987	SANDRA HONBAIER	NORTH CAROLINA
1988	PEGGY SIMPSON	ALABAMA
1989	JEWELL MASSEY	GEORGIA
1990	KATHY GARCIA-FARNSWORTH	UTAH
1991	MERCEDES RODRIQUES-FOWLER	FLORIDA
1992	DEANNA GREEN-VANHOOK	TEXAS
1993	KIM MENSİ	ALABAMA
1994	DAWN BLODGETT	CALIFORNIA
1995	WENDY PETZOLD	WISCONSIN
1996	AMY BAKER-LEY	TEXAS
1997	ELAINE STEFANOWICZ	WASHINGTON
1998	TERRI CECIL	KENTUCKY
1999	CHRISTINA GILMORE	WISCONSIN
2000	TRACY CHARLTON-O'CONNOR	SOUTH DAKOTA
2001	NICKI ARD	SOUTH CAROLINA
2002	CANDY MARSH	COLORADO
2003	CATHERINE GUGALA	WISCONSIN
2004	CINDA HUGHES	OKLAHOMA
2005	JULIETTE RIZZO	MARYLAND
2006	KRISTEN CONNOR	RHODE ISLAND
2007	AUTUMN GRANT	MASSACHUSETTS
2008	KRISTEN MCCOSH	MASSACHUSETTS
2009	MICHELLE COLVARD	TEXAS
2010	ERIKA BOGEN	NORTH CAROLINA
2011	ALEXANDRA MCARTHUR	NORTH CAROLINA
2012	JOSIE BADGER	PENNSYLVANIA
2013	MARIAH KILBOURNE	TEXAS



History

In 1972 Dr. Philip K. Wood of Columbus, Ohio, had devoted his career to treating and rehabilitating persons with functional impairments. During his practice, he became aware of the talents, capabilities, determination and courage of persons with disabilities. As a result, he established Ms. Wheelchair America as a forum for promoting the achievements and accomplishments of women who utilize wheelchairs for mobility, as well as the needs of all persons with mobility challenges.

The mission of Ms. Wheelchair America is to provide an opportunity for women of achievement to successfully educate about and advocate for the more than 54 million Americans living with disabilities. The Ms. Wheelchair America Program is in no way a traditional beauty contest.

Ms. Wheelchair America

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Ms. Wheelchair America

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Ms.
Wheelchair
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2014

HARNESSING ENERGY AND
EMPOWERING
WOMEN ON WHEELS

