

Ms. Wheelchair America 2016

44th National Pageant



**Empowering Women of Achievement
through Leadership, Advocacy & Education**

July 27 – August 2, 2015

Des Moines, Iowa



TERRY E. BRANSTAD
GOVERNOR

July 2015

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

KIM REYNOLDS
LT. GOVERNOR

Dear friends:

On behalf of the state of Iowa, it is our pleasure to welcome you to the 2015 Ms. Wheelchair America Pageant in Des Moines, Iowa, our capital city. Des Moines, Iowa's largest city, offers world-class facilities, hotel accommodations and countless activities, making it an ideal setting for this event.

The Ms. Wheelchair America Pageant program has strived to empower women while advocating for the millions of Americans living with disabilities. We commend everyone in attendance for their efforts and are pleased to be a part of this program. This pageant presents a great opportunity for participants, families, and friends to come together with peers from across the nation to celebrate and recognize the achievements of these individuals in order to promote public awareness. We hope that all attending will take full advantage of the opportunities offered through the Ms. Wheelchair America organization and return home to their communities with memories that they will cherish for many years.

We would like to thank you for your participation in the 2015 Ms. Wheelchair America Pageant. We sincerely hope that you enjoy your time in Des Moines and take advantage of all of the great cultural opportunities available in our beautiful state, of which we are so proud and very pleased to share with you.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Terry E. Branstad".

Terry E. Branstad
Governor of Iowa

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kim Reynolds".

Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor of Iowa

July 2015

Welcome to Des Moines!

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the "Ms. Wheelchair America Pageant", held in Des Moines, Iowa July 2015.

Des Moines offers a delightful blend of urban settings and rural landscapes that are coupled with corporate culture and country living. The metro area is a popular and fast growing economic center offering the best in schools, entertainment, and jobs.

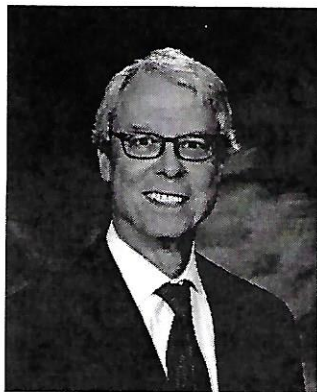
During your stay in the Des Moines Metro Area we invite you to explore one of America's great capital cities. I hope you will take the time to enjoy some of the cultural and social amenities our community has to offer including the Central Library, Principal Riverwalk, State Historical Museum, East Village, Des Moines Art Center, Gray's Lake, and many other attractions.

It is my sincere desire that you will return as an organization or individually to visit what I believe is one of the finest cities in Iowa. Best wishes for an enjoyable and successful event!

Sincerely,



T.M. Franklin Cownie, Mayor
City of Des Moines





Welcome State Titleholders,

On behalf of the Ms. Wheelchair America Inc. Board of Directors, I would like to welcome you to Ms. Wheelchair America 2016, here in beautiful Des Moines, Iowa. 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 44th 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 to Judy Hoit, Dreams, Inc. and the amazing volunteers that have worked to make this week happen! Follow their example and "Leave a Legacy" to be proud of.

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)

FORMER MS. WHEELCHAIR AMERICA TITLEHOLDERS

Year	Title Holder	Home State
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 Mensi	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'Conner	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
2014	Jennifer Adams	Washington
2015	Samantha Schroth	Wisconsin

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.

PURPOSE & 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 serves to further the mission of Ms. Wheelchair America.

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 share with each other and develop friendships. They become stronger advocates throughout the week because of the variety of the interesting workshops that strengthen them. They develop skills that heighten awareness on issues within the community, and open a dialogue between the women about their thoughts, ideas, values and experiences.

The Ms. Wheelchair America 501(c)3 non-profit is staffed and coordinated totally by volunteers from many different community 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 the people with disabilities. The Ms. Wheelchair America Program is actively seeking sponsors and volunteers and would appreciate any support that is offered.

STATE COORDINATORS 2015-16

Alabama	Xaveria Powell Anderson
Arkansas	Pamela Garner
California	Jennifer Kumiyama
Colorado	Zara Kruska Vargus
Florida	Shari Wilson
Illinois	Kim Brown
Indiana	Connie Todd
Iowa	Judy Hoit
Kansas	Carrie Greenwood
Kentucky	Pat O'Byrant
Louisiana	Anita Gray
Maryland	Robert Watson
Massachusetts	Rosa Angelica Colon
Michigan	Shelly Loose
Minnesota	Anne Neumann
Mississippi	Kebra Moore
New York	Shameka Andrews
North Carolina	Brandee Ponder
Ohio	Jessica Kelbley
Oklahoma	Jesa Lopez
Pennsylvania	Megan Abrams
South Dakota	Vicki Kerkvliet
Tennessee	Samantha Moreno McGrath
Texas	Angela Wrigglesworth
Utah	Katie Johnson
Virginia	Pam Cobler
Wisconsin	Carol Banks

Independent Delegate Liaison Jewell Massey

Current Board:

Shelly Loose— President
 Jennifer Kumiyama- Vice President
 Stephanie Deible- Executive Director
 Carrie Greenwood— Treasurer
 Megan Abrams— Secretary
 Mary Zendejas- Member-at-Large
 Joey Murello- Social Media Director

Judging Criteria:

The Ms. Wheelchair America judging is based upon:

A. Accomplishments

1. Personal Achievements and Accomplishments 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 and 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.*



Autumn Grant is a lifelong resident of Massachusetts. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from Providence College with a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities and also holds a Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration from Boston College. Autumn has worked in the field of Higher Education since 2000, in areas including disability support services, academic affairs and academic advising. Ms. Grant currently serves as the Associate Director of Academic and Student Affairs in the College of Professional Studies at Northeastern University in Boston Massachusetts.

Ms. Grant was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy at the age of ten and began using a wheelchair shortly after graduating college. In 2006, Autumn was crowned Ms. Wheelchair Massachusetts and later that year was crowned Ms. Wheelchair America 2007. She travelled the country promoting her platform of "Independence through Education". Autumn also served as the State Coordinator of the Ms. Wheelchair Massachusetts Foundation from 2007 – 2012 and completed two terms on the Ms. Wheelchair America Board of Directors as member at large and secretary.

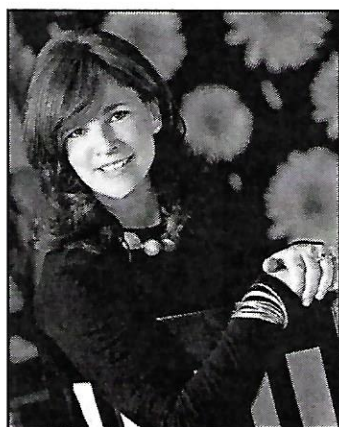
Autumn is passionate about advocacy for people with disabilities. For the last several years, Ms. Grant has travelled regularly to Capitol Hill promoting access to complex rehabilitation technology for people with disabilities. In addition, she also serves as an ambassador for the Abilities Expo.



Barbara Roose Cramer lives in Lakewood, Colorado. She and her husband Bill have been married 51 years, have three sons, and seven grandchildren. She is a retired book keeper with the public school systems, a two-time Paralympic gold medalist, a quilter, a gardener, and has written and published three books, including her latest book *Child of Dreams*, and her life story.

Mrs. Roose was crowned Ms. Wheelchair Colorado 1991 and later that year was named Ms. Wheelchair America 1992 2nd runner up and Ms. Congeniality. Ms. Roose also served as the Colorado state coordinator for 15 years, and the Ms. Wheelchair America National Director for six years. During her time as the national director, she hosted the Ms. Wheelchair America national event in Denver three times before her retirement.

Mrs. Roose and her husband manage the Wilderness on Wheels, an outdoor disability center, in Grant, Colorado and enjoy spending the winter in Phoenix, Arizona.

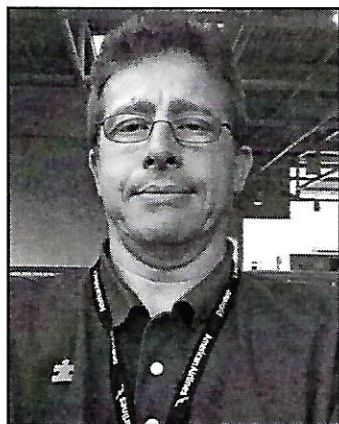


Denise Brennan-Nelson is an award winning children's author and the co-host of a radio talk show. She has inspired hundreds of individuals to "find out what you love to do and get someone to pay you for doing it."

Denise wrote her first children's book, *Buzzy the Bumblebee*, after discovering that aeronautically, bumblebees should not be able to fly. She felt it was a wonderful way to inspire people to "bee-lieve" in themselves and their dreams. Denise also focuses on the power of imagination in promoting richer, fuller lives for both kids and adults. Her story *Willow*, was chosen for

Oprah's Book Club Kids' Reading List in 2010.

Denise resides in Howell, Michigan with her husband, Bob and their daughters, Rebecca and Rachel. Visit Denise's website at: www.denisebrennannelson.com.



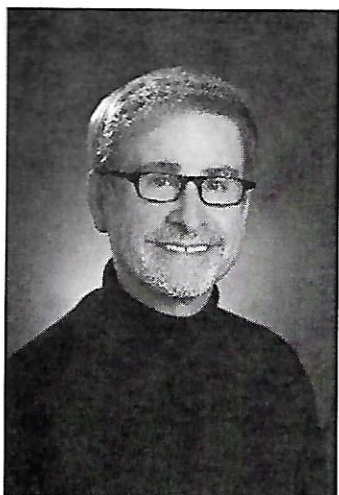
Bruce Sickler has been with American Airlines for 15 years and serves as the National President for the Abilities Employee Business Resource Group (AEBRG). Mr. Sickler also represents the AEBRG on the Diversity Advisory Council at American Airlines. The Diversity Advisory Council has 20 different groups that provide the corporation with employee input for achieving business success through diversity and Inclusion.

Mr. Sickler and AEBRG are currently spearheading the "Its Cool to Fly American" program, which provides children with autism and their families a unique opportunity to experience the various stages of air travel without taking flight. The goal is to eliminate the "What If" factor and simulate a seamless memorable travel experience for the families. In addition to offering a unique experience for families, the program provides education and awareness for our employees.

Mr. Sickler has also served as President of the Employee Advisory Council (EAC) of American Airlines, where he represented the concerns of the able-bodied employees and individuals with disabilities at the DFW Reservation Center.

His educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from Dickinson State University in Dickinson, North Dakota. He also has a travel degree from McConnell Travel School in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

He currently lives in Arlington, Texas with his wife Angela and two sons Ta'Darius and Travuntay. In his spare time, Mr. Sickler enjoys reading, traveling, public speaking, and spending time with his four grandchildren.



David Weinandy is a Professor of Communication at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he was twice awarded The Outstanding Faculty Member by both the student body and the Aquinas College Alumni Association. As well, Mr. Weinandy has been acknowledged with Aquinas College's Distinguished Service Award. He also received the Outstanding Alumni Service Award from his alma mater, Bowling Green State University. Dr. Weinandy has earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Work, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and Counseling, a Master of Arts degree in College Student Personnel, and a Ph.D. in Interpersonal Communication.

Dr. Weinandy has conducted hundreds of seminars and workshops throughout the Midwest on such topics as public presentation, positive interpersonal communication, motivation, and customer service. Additionally, Mr. Weinandy serves as a personal communication coach for local and national, high-profile individuals.

In the pageant world, He has served on both the Miss Michigan and Miss Michigan Outstanding Teen Board of Directors, where he was the Vice President and Judges Chair. As part of the Michigan Prep Team, David worked with Miss Michigan 2007 Kirsten Hagland, who went on to become Miss America 2008. Having judged numerous state Miss and Teen pageants, Mr. Weinandy was on the judge's panel that selected Miss Virginia 2009, Caressa Cameron, who went on to become Miss America 2010. He was also the Judges Chairperson when Miss America 2014, Nina Davuluri was named Miss Michigan Outstanding Teen. Mr. Weinandy has also conducted training workshops and served as a judge for the Ms. Wheelchair Michigan Program.

Perhaps most importantly, Weinandy has been a leader in his community as a volunteer and board member for numerous organizations including Community Circle Theatre, the Bowling Green State University Alumni Association, and Spectrum Health.

A Farewell from Ms. Wheelchair America 2015



365 days. 52 weeks. 12 months. 1 year.

No matter what way you slice it, this past year has been filled with so much more than I could have ever imagined. More travel, more advocacy, more opportunities, more memories, more laughter, and more life.

I'll forever remember the night I was crowned Ms. Wheelchair America 2015 in Long Beach, California. I was filled with excitement and shock, having only been injured for a mere year when I received the coveted title. I was so proud and yet so nervous, wanting to advocate and educate to make a real difference while also proving to others and really to

myself that I deserved this amazing opportunity. But first things first, I had just won Ms. Wheelchair America in California, so naturally, I went to Disneyland!

I hit the ground running (well rolling) when I returned to my home state of Wisconsin in planning out my year of travel adventures and advocacy relating to my platform. I based the important choice of my platform topic on my experiences, albeit short, of life with a disability. After my injury, I quickly realized the countless misconceptions that inherently accompany an individual with a disability. It shocked me the rapid shift of perceptions by many people who knew me in my walking form to their view of me in my wheeling form. I knew all that I and other individuals like me were capable of but realized not everyone had this knowledge. Therefore, my platform of "Learn. Teach. Repeat." sought to encourage others to open their minds and learn about the wonderful differences of persons with disabilities and more importantly, their abilities. Of course, what good is knowledge if it isn't shared, so my platform aimed to motivate those who learned these new things to teach them to others and continue repeating this awesome cycle over and over again.

During my year, I was thrilled to speak and/or make appearances at over 50 different events. I traveled to 11 different states and 34 different cities. I drove over 4,000 miles and flew approximately 13,000 miles. I spoke to countless different groups including 4-H clubs, Boy's and Girl's Brigades, church groups, rotary clubs, homeschool groups, and schools ranging from elementary all the way to college universities. I visited rehabilitation hospitals and participated in parades. Every event and each group of individuals was special and unique in it's own right and I could spend hours reminiscing about all of them. But instead I want to share a few of my favorite memories of my year with you.

Early in the year I rolled the runway at the second annual "This is How We Roll" fashion show in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. The fashion show featured over 30 models, all who were wheelchair users, and proceeds benefitted the Bryon Riesch Paralysis Foundation. It was a great time and I met some amazing people, including this little cutie who basically stole the show.

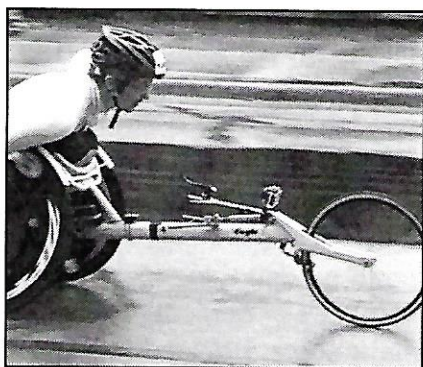


FAREWELL!

Winter came and I was more than happy to use my title to escape the cold and ice of Wisconsin and headed off to Little Rock, Arkansas to be apart of an I CAN! Dance "Dancing with the Stars" recital. I was thrilled to be "a star," dancing with some amazing kids with different disabilities to an Under the Sea medley. I visited the beautifully decorated state capital as well as made an appearance at a motorcycle rally to benefit Toys-For-Tots.



You know, you can't always escape the snow, so I embraced it when I headed out to Deadwood, South Dakota for a weeklong event known as "Ski for Light." Ski for Light allows individuals with mobility and/or visual impairments to give downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, and even snowmobiling a try. I had never downhill skied in my life, but now I can say I have! I'm pretty thankful for bunny hills and the fact snow is a reasonably soft cushion to fall on (that is if you aren't going too fast...).



Thankfully spring wasn't too far around the corner and I don't think there is a better way to celebrate this beautiful season than attending the Tulip Festival in Holland, Michigan. I loved getting to be apart of one of the festive and high-energy parades. While in Michigan, I was also able to visit Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital as well as run in my very first race post-injury. It was a very wet 25k (15.5mile) race in Grand Rapids, Michigan but I absolutely loved it (and didn't even get a flat tire --- my biggest racing fear)!

I am so blessed and so thankful for all the opportunities and experiences my year as Ms. Wheelchair America 2015 provided. I loved getting the chance to open eyes and change attitudes regarding individuals who may be "different" from the so-called standard of normal. Every question I had the chance to answer and each person who was now challenged to think twice about their personal perception of an individual with a disability made all of my time, effort, and hard-work worth every single second.

I will forever be grateful to the Ms. Wheelchair America Organization and to the countless individuals who have shown their continued support of me during my reign. It has been quite the ride and I look forward to watching my successor take this incredible title to even greater heights.

It has truly been an honor to be your Ms. Wheelchair America 2015.

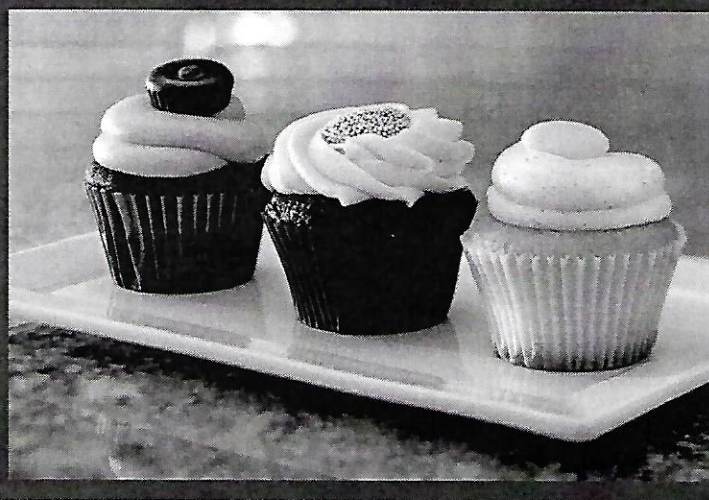
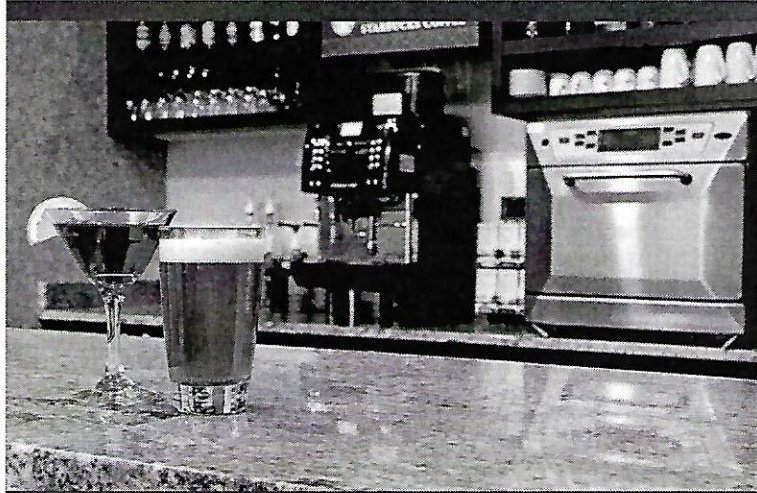
Signing off,

*Samantha
Schroth*

Samantha Schroth



welcome to a different place



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Ms. Wheelchair Alabama - Alexandra Yount

Alexandra lives in Auburn, Alabama and works in the Office of Accessibility at Auburn University. She obtained a Bachelors in Human Resource Management from Auburn University. Alexandra enjoys photography, painting, spending time with family, fiancé, and chocolate lab, Chloe. She acquired a C4/5 spinal cord injury in 2013. Alexandra describes herself as independent, courageous and caring.



Ms. Wheelchair Alaska - Jennifer Jackson

Jennifer lives in Ketchikan, Alaska and works sharing her native culture with tourists and loves volunteering with the Children's Ministry at her church. She is educating herself about disability rights as Ms. Wheelchair Alaska 2015. Jennifer enjoys swimming, movies and hanging out with friends. She has cerebral palsy. Jennifer describes herself as fun, out-going and motivated.



Ms. Wheelchair Arkansas - Karen Rivera

Karen lives in Jacksonville, Arkansas and works at Rivera's Landscaping. She received her Certified Nursing Assistant from Crossett Arkansas Community College. Karen enjoys fishing, music and traveling. She sustained a spinal cord injury due to domestic violence. Karen describes herself as alive, confident and remarkable.



Ms. Wheelchair California - Dr. Alette Coble-Temple

Alette lives in Walnut Creek, California and is a Professor at John F. Kennedy University and works for the California State Board of Parole. She obtained her Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from John F. Kennedy University. Alette enjoys traveling the world, going to the theater with her family, and staying healthy by swimming and downhill skiing. She has Cerebral Palsy. Alette describes herself as tenacious, adventurous and respected.



Ms. Wheelchair Colorado - Tiffaine L. Casados

Tiffaine lives in Aurora, Colorado and is a student at Peak Aviation. She is studying to become a pilot in a CTLS light sports plane that is modified with hand controls. Tiffaine loves to cook, she is starting an online pre-order healthy meals catering business called Carter Mason Jars. Tiffaine speaking with victims and helping them become survivors. She is an L-1 incomplete paraplegic. Tiffaine describes herself as independent, strong minded, and passionate.



Ms. Wheelchair Florida - Sara Gaver

Sara lives in Jacksonville, Florida and works at the University of Florida's Disability Resource Center. She currently studies Health Administration and Community Leadership as an honor student at the University of North Florida. Sara enjoys painting, volunteering and advocating for those in and out of the disability community. She was born with Arthrogryposis. Sara describes herself as outgoing, determined and kind-hearted.



Ms. Wheelchair Georgia - Leslie Peoples

Leslie lives in East Point, Georgia and works as a Clinical Rehabilitation Counselor. She is receiving her Master's Degree from Thomas University. Leslie enjoys healing injured hearts through the counseling process, writing life coaching books, and being a ROLL model to all the beautifully differently abled girls. She survived a head on collision and sustained an L3 spinal cord injury. Leslie describes herself as faith driven, fearless and fabulous.



Ms. Wheelchair Iowa - Katie Helmers

Katie lives in Dakota City, Iowa and works at Walgreens. She is a certified pharmacy tech with her Associates in Liberal Arts from Iowa Lakes Community College. Katie enjoys spending time with family, playing with Gabi, her dog, and painting on canvas. She has a complete T3 spinal cord injury. Katie describes herself as outgoing, sassy and friendly.



Ms. Wheelchair Kansas - Carrie Sunday

Carrie lives in Overbrook, Kansas and works at Innovia Films, Inc. a cellophane manufacturer. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Mass Media from Washburn University. Carrie enjoys reading, photography, blogging and spending time with her infant daughter and family. She sustained a spinal cord injury at the age of 17. Carrie describes herself as motivated, caring and personable.



Ms. Wheelchair Kentucky - Casey Schaeffer

Casey lives in Summersville, Kentucky and spends time volunteering at local schools and her church. She studied nursing at Campbellsville University. Casey enjoys being outside, swimming and gardening. She sustain a T12 complete spinal cord injury due to a car accident in 2008. She describes herself as outgoing, bubbly and caring.



Ms. Wheelchair Louisiana - Jamie Duplechine

Jamie lives in Lafayette, Louisiana and volunteers at Bridge Ministries of Acadiana. She studies Christian Ministry at In Christ International Bible College. Jamie enjoys reading, traveling and spending time with children. She sustained a C4/5 spinal cord injury in a motor vehicle accident. Jamie describes herself as loyal, vibrant and joyful.



Ms. Wheelchair Maryland - Kimberly Jordan-Gaskins

Kimberly lives in Silver Springs, Maryland and works for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. She studied Vocal Music Performance at the Duke Ellington School of the Performing Arts and Kent State University. Kimberly enjoys singing, attending her children's events and visiting with girlfriends. She was paralyzed due to an automobile accident in 1993.

Kimberly describes herself as happy, outgoing and pleasant.



Ms. Wheelchair Michigan - Kristen Milefchik

Kristen lives in Clarkston, Michigan and is a professional volunteer with various organizations involving advocacy for people with disabilities. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work from Oakland University. Kristen enjoys spending time with her daughter, reading and writing a blog "Taking a Stand Sitting". She has Spinal Muscular Atrophy since birth. Kristen describes herself as unbreakable, passionate and genuine.



Ms. Wheelchair Minnesota - Angelique Lele

Angelique lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota and works at the University of Minnesota as an administrative assistant. She also works teaching yoga and an ashtanga vinyasas flow based practice. She received a Bachelors in Science of Business Administration and Marketing from Drexel University. Angelique enjoys acting, integrative dance and being active in the sunshine.

She was injured from a fall while training on her trapeze and suffered an L2 fracture. Angelique describes herself as generous, open and vibrant.



Ms. Wheelchair Mississippi - Lauren Compere

Lauren lives in Madison, Mississippi and interns at Mississippi College Disability Services Center. She studies Psychology at Mississippi College. Lauren enjoys painting, swimming and four-wheeler riding. She was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy at the age of one. Lauren describes herself as fun-loving, adventurous and tenacious.



Ms. Wheelchair New York - Andrea Dalzell

Andrea lives in Brooklyn, New York and works at Wheels of Progress and volunteers with the Wheeling Forward and Backbones organizations. She is studying Neuroscience and Medical Technology at Cuny University of the College of Staten Island. Andrea enjoys reading a good book, waterskiing, skydiving and helping others. She fell ill at the age of 5 with Transverse Myelitis. Andrea describes herself as resilient, genuine and articulate.



Ms. Wheelchair North Carolina - Shannon Chisholm

Shannon lives in Fletcher, North Carolina and works at Carolina Spine and Mountain Neurosurgery Center. She obtained her Associates of Science from South College. Shannon enjoys spending time with her family, pets, Lilly and Charlie, weightlifting and kayaking. She is a T10 incomplete paraplegic from a road bike accident. Shannon describes herself as determined, compassionate and outgoing.



Ms. Wheelchair Ohio - Jasmine Spradley

Jasmine lives in Piqua, Ohio and is enjoying her time volunteering as Ms. Wheelchair Ohio. She earned a Bachelor of the Arts in Psychology from Wright State University. Jasmine enjoys listening to music, hanging out with friends and traveling to new places. She was born with Osteogenesis Imperfecta, a genetic bone disorder. She describes her as thoughtful, happy and successful.



Ms. Wheelchair Oklahoma - Tahirih Johnson

Tahirih lives in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and works at NeuroResources. She obtained a Juris Doctorate from the John Marshall Law School. Tahirih enjoys working out, reading and Wii Sports. She suffered a spinal cord injury in a roller derby accident. Tahirih describes herself as empathic, enthusiastic and spiritual.



Ms. Wheelchair South Dakota - Dixie Lemme

Dixie lives in Sioux Falls, South Dakota and volunteer at the Veterans Administration Hospital and Lifescape. She has three children and enjoys spending time with her grandchildren and great grandchildren, doing artwork and spending time with friends. She has had Multiple Sclerosis since 2002. Dixie described as caring, creative and humorous.



Ms. Wheelchair Tennessee - Jenny Morton

Jenny lives in Columbia, Tennessee and volunteers at Maury Regional Hospital, Highland Park Elementary and the District Federal Program Advisory Committee. She received a certificate from Partners in Policymaking in Nashville. Jenny enjoys spending time with family, volunteering and meeting new people. She was born with Spina Bifida. Jenny describes herself as helpful, loving and kind.



Ms. Wheelchair Texas - Shelly Gray

Shelly lives in Austin, Texas and works at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission as a lawyer. She holds a Bachelor of the Arts, Juris Doctorate and Masters of Social Work from Wesleyan University and Washington University. Shelly enjoys spending time with her son, listening to music and public speaking. She has been living with Multiple Sclerosis since 1999. Shelly describes herself as strong, resilient and funny.



Ms. Wheelchair Utah - Jennifer Crouse

Jennifer lives in Eden, Utah and works at Northern Utah Rehabilitation Hospital. She obtained a Bachelors in Social Work and a Masters of Business Administration from Colorado State University and the University of Phoenix. Jennifer enjoys playing with her son, fishing and camping. She has a T5 Spinal cord injury from a car accident. Jennifer describes herself as caring, fun and loving.



Ms. Wheelchair Virginia - Angela West

Angela lives in Chesapeake, Virginia and works at Virginia Commonwealth University as an Asian Cultural Broker. She holds a Masters of Rehabilitation Counseling from Virginia Commonwealth University. Angela enjoys teaching youth, writing for her blog and spending time with friends. She was born with Cerebral Palsy. Angela describes herself as adventurous, fun-loving and loyal.

**Ms. Wheelchair Washington - Julie Broadwell**

Julie lives in Sequim, Washington and works at Alaska Airlines. She studied Transportation Business at Highline Community College. Julie enjoys traveling, swimming and volunteering. She was born without upper and lower limbs. Julie describes herself as spunky, gregarious and successful.



Goodwill Industries of the Southern Rivers supports Alexandra Yount, Ms. Wheelchair Alabama 2015, in her journey to become Ms. Wheelchair America 2016.

ALEXANDRA Yount

————— *Ms. Wheelchair Alabama / America* —————

2015

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*In loving recognition of the two most important
women in my life:*

*My mother, Karen Hanson Coble, and
My daughter, Kathryn Temple*



*Thank you Mom for teaching me how to be an advocate, to
achieve my dreams, and to always believe in myself.
Thank you Kathryn for being the light of my life and
making each day an amazing adventure.*

ms wheel chair
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GO Mom! You will always be
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♥ Kathryn
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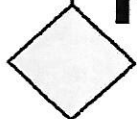
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Congratulations Lauren

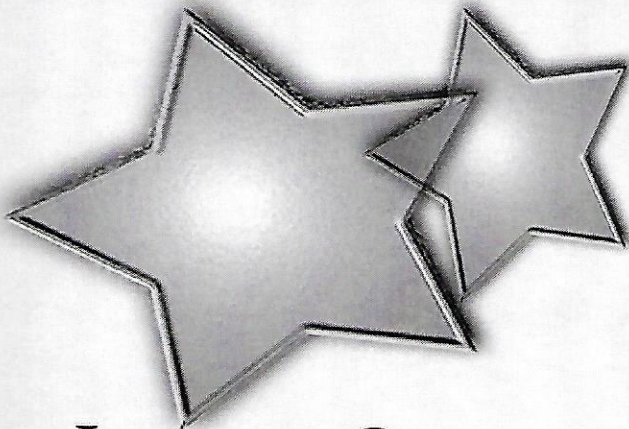
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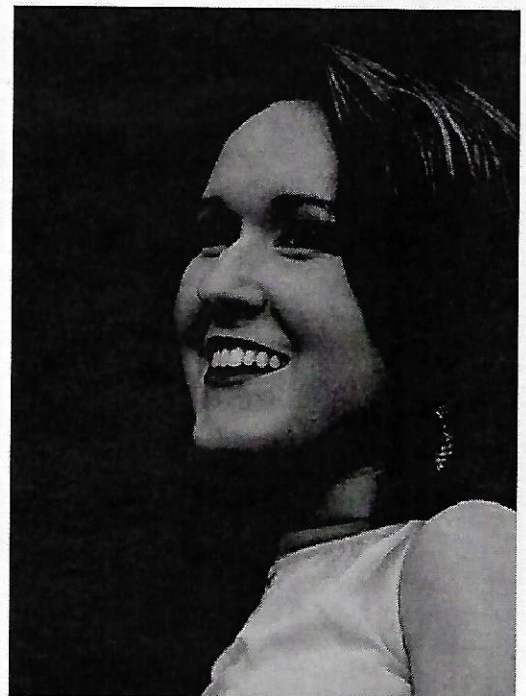
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Lauren Compere

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Lauren Compere

We love you and are extremely proud of you!



“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11

Your Grandparents - Tommy and Alice Cottrell , Art and Doris Compere



*Lauren,
Congratulations
& Best Wishes*

*Love,
The Dean Family*


GOOD LUCK LAUREN!

Best Wishes from The Mississippi College Family!



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*"I hope you never lose your
sense of wonder,
You get your fill to eat but
always keep that hunger,
May you never take one single
breath for granted,
God forbid love ever leave
you empty handed,
I hope you still feel small
when you stand beside the ocean,
Whenever one door closes
I hope one more opens,
Promise me that you'll give
faith a fighting chance,
And when you get the choice
to sit it out or dance.*

*I hope you dance....I hope you
dance."*

"I Hope You Dance"

- Lee Ann Womack

We are having the time of our life watching you dance!

Never Stop Dancing - Mom, Dad, and Will

Good Luck
LAUREN
C O M P E R E

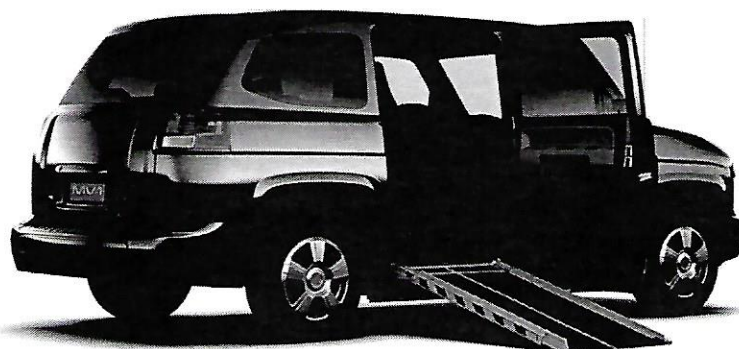
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Dr. Robert Record
Dr. David Peterzell
Joseph Kennedy
Joe Dintino and Lamberto Domingo
Friends and Family of Brenda Shebanek
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Claudia Schildroth
Kristen Gandek
Ed Coble
Kim Anderson
Ronda King - doTerra Essential Oils

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Sharon O'Connor
April Blowers
Bonnie Etheridge
Lori Schomer
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Shannon McCormick
Carolyn Martin
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Derek Wilson
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AWARDS

Ms. Wheelchair America 2016

The title of Ms. Wheelchair America 2016 is chosen by the judging panel. The contestant that earns the highest total score during the judging sessions will become Ms. Wheelchair America 2016.

Lifetime Achievement

The Lifetime Achievement Award is chosen by the judges to the contestant they believe have made the largest contribution and significant impact for people with disabilities.

Nicki Ard Achievement

The Nicki Ard Achievement Award recipient is chosen by the judges and awarded to the woman who exemplifies the philosophy of Nicki Ard, which is to "always exhibit a positive attitude and be willing to serve others." The delegate will have made an outstanding contribution to the disability community through her talents, her efforts and example.

Outstanding Speech

The Outstanding Speech Award is chosen by those in attendance on Speech Night. Each individual attending receives one vote to cast for the contestant they feel delivered the most memorable speech of the evening.

People's Choice

The People's Choice Award is present to the person that gets the largest number of votes, which cost \$1.00 per vote. The funds raised will be used for the MWA 2016 travel fund. People's Choice votes can be purchased anytime during the week.

Congeniality Award

The Congeniality Award is chosen by the contestants. Each contestant casts one vote for the contestant they feel was the kindest, friendliest, most helpful and caring during the week.

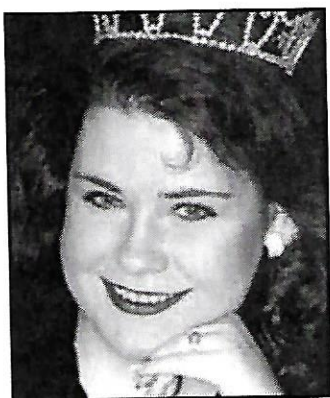
Business Award

The Business Award is chosen by the various businesses that present workshops, attend events, or interact with the contestants. They will give this award to the contestant they feel was able to communicate on a variety of topics.

Chae'Monaleasza Harris Award

This year there will be a special award presented in memory of Ms. Wheelchair Mississippi 2014.

MORE ON THE NICKI ARD AWARD



Nicki Ard was Ms. Wheelchair America 2001 and passed away in 2002, about a month after crowning her successor. Nicki was born with a debilitating disease called Spinal Muscular Atrophy which resulted in her using a wheelchair. She also developed Scoliosis, as a result, she lost full function in her left lung. Although she was given a predicted life span of 13 years, she faced and conquered her physical challenges for almost 30 years. She began singing at the age of 6, established "the Music Ministry of Nicki Ard" in 1986, and released two albums "From Nicki, With Love" and "Walk With Me". Nicki was also enjoyed writing poetry.

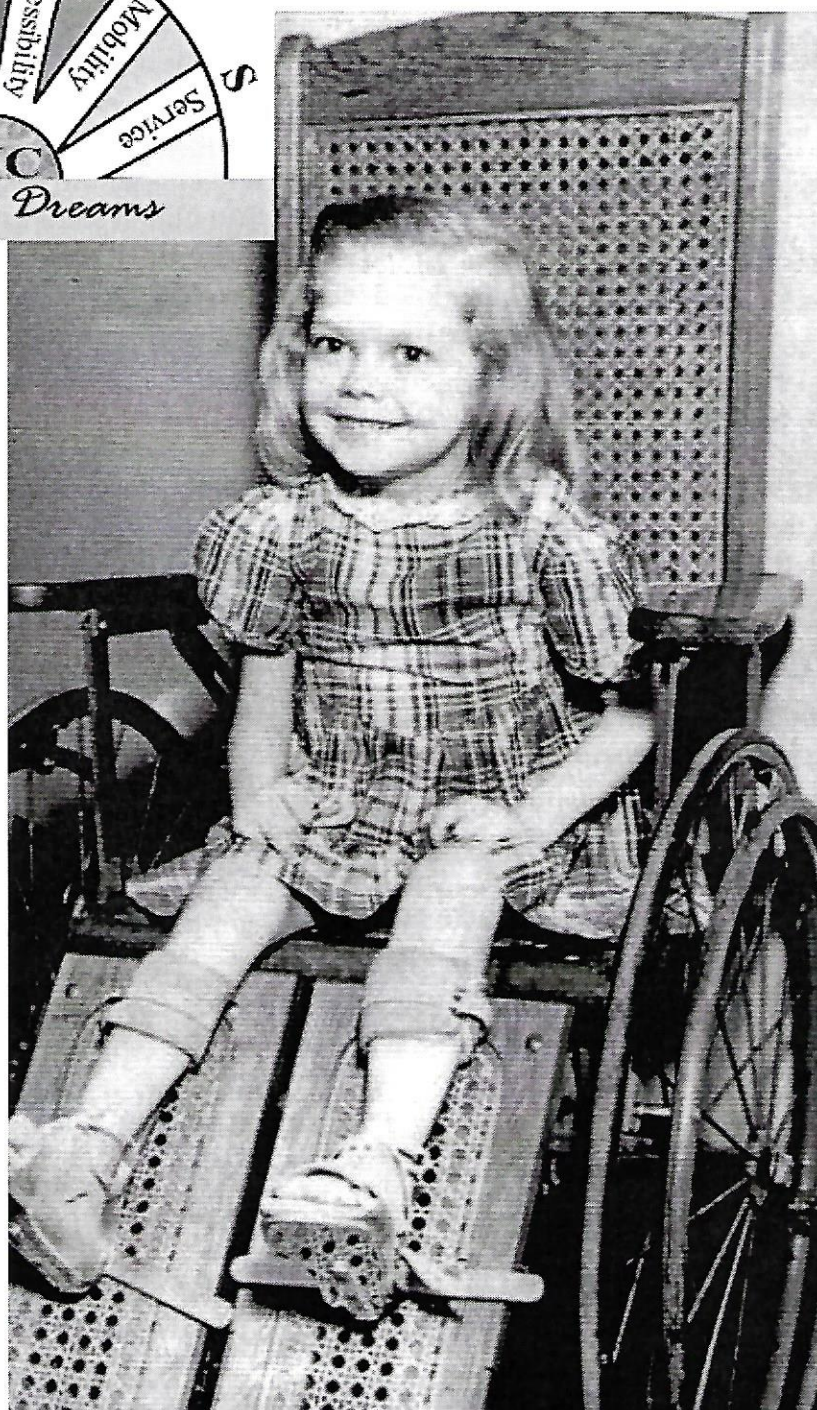
My Thoughts

I've seen times in my life when I was given only five seconds to say the right words,
only to have them come out wrong or not at all.
Times when I've loved with every part of me and then lost that which I loved so much.
Times when I knew the odds were against me, but thought,
"Who created the odds anyway?"
Times when my heart was so full of grief that tears meant nothing.
Times when "my" life wasn't mine alone.
These are the times that nothing can change.
They will remain forever a part of me, but I cannot bring them back and
make them over to be times of joy.
Sadness and grief are inevitable.
So, I must take those memories and hold them close,
for I have also seen times of happiness that
some only dream of.
This life God gave me is MY life and it is good.
~nicki

A quote from Nicki that the contestants will appreciate:

"The night I won was one of the most humbling experiences because every girl there deserved it. I mean it was amazing just being among a group of women who all had the same goal in mind: to overcome the barriers that we face every day."





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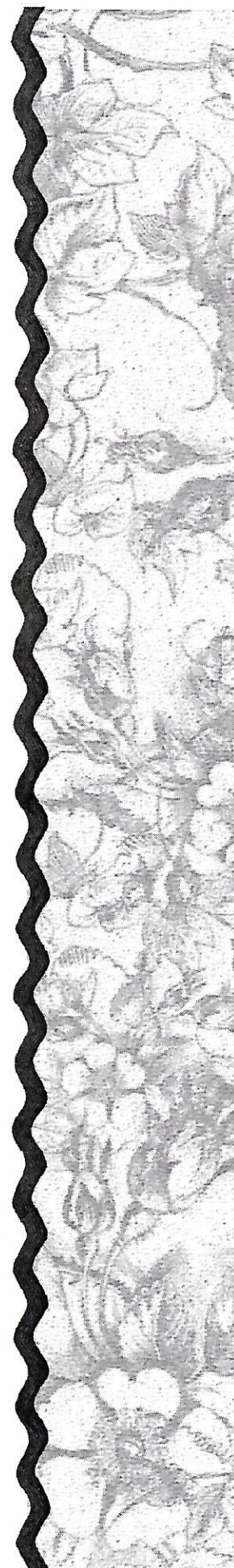


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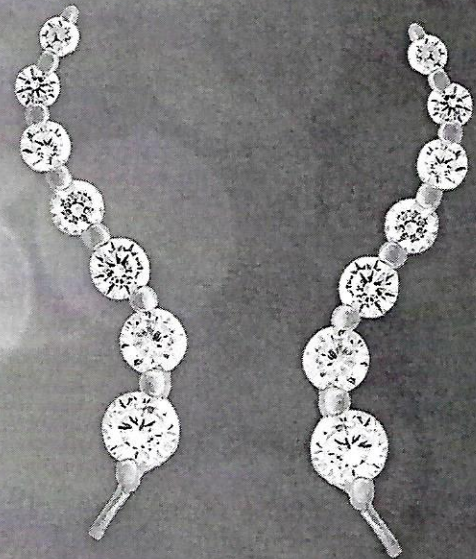
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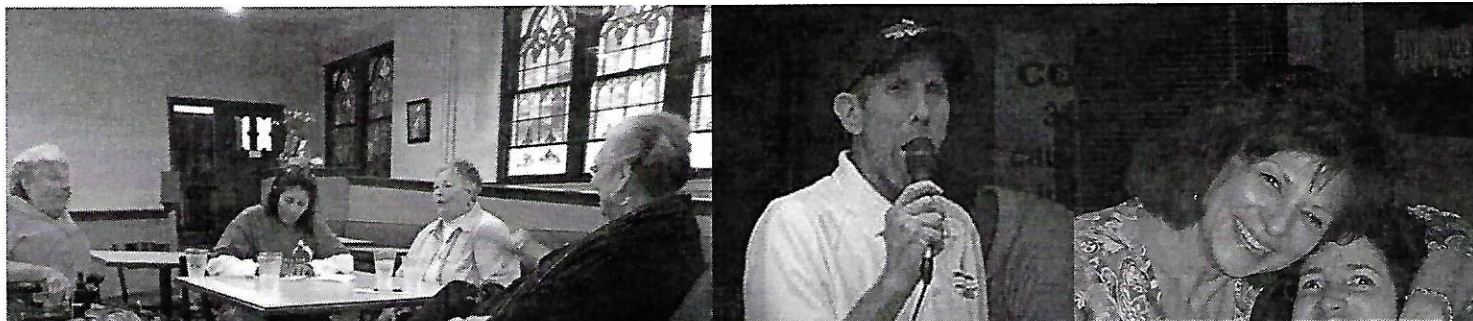
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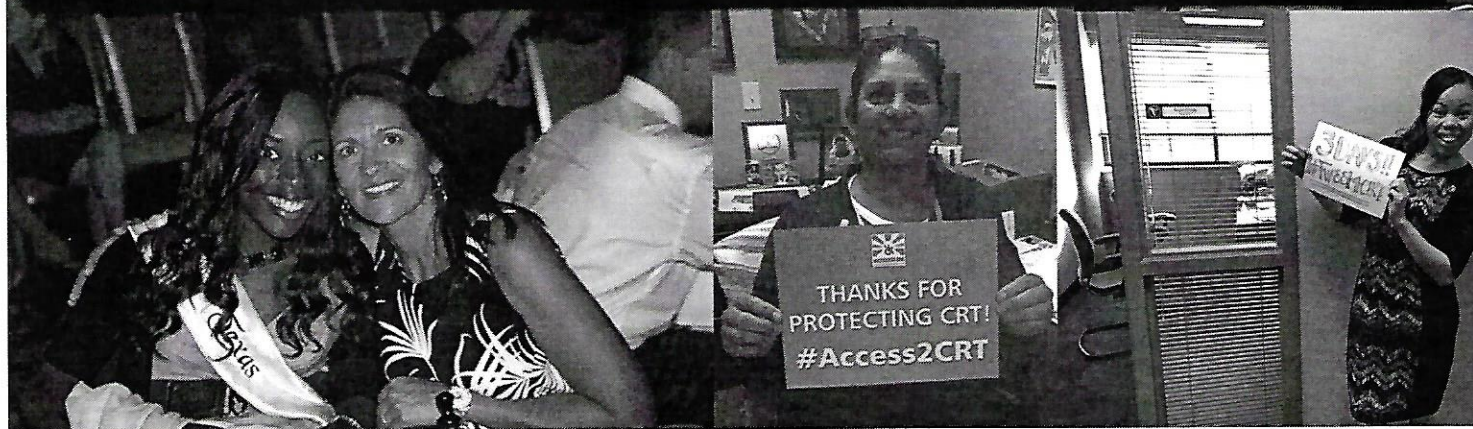
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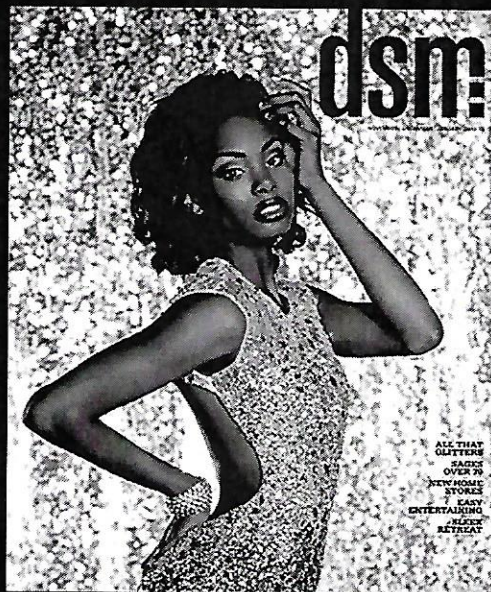


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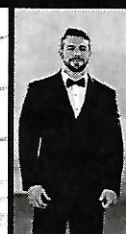
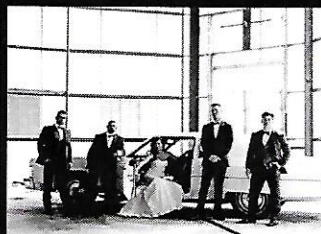
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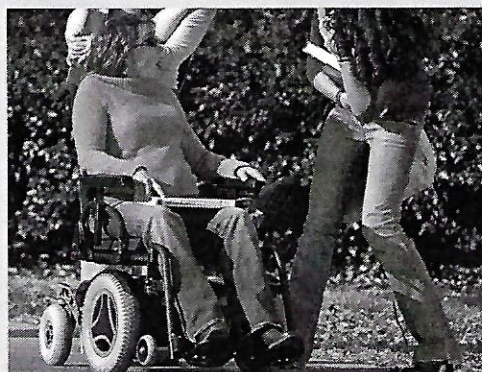
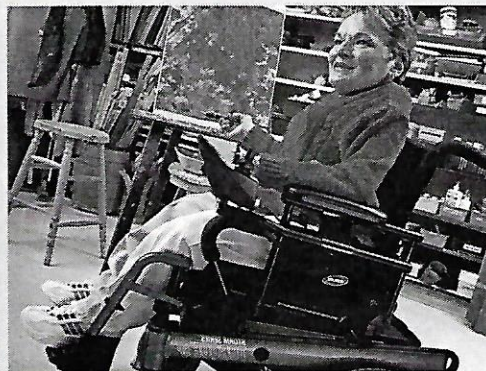


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