

Shaakirah Medford

Scholarship Essay

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“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.” John Quincy Adams’ definition of a leader is what I go by everyday. It helps me to realize what the true purpose of being a leader is. Leaders are there to courageously take the first step in order to provide others with a correct path to follow; a path that equals the achieving of dreams; a path that provides the world with knowledge that was once unknown; a path that provides the world with it’s future. Leaders provide the future; leaders provide opportunity.

My name is Shaakirah Medford. I am 18 years old, I attend the High School for Law Enforcement and Public Safety and I am on my way to beginning my college career. I have grown up in Queens, New York all my life with my mother and my grandmother completely by my side. School was never anything to play with in our Trinidadian household and being the oldest, my mother and grandmother were going to make sure that I was a good example for my brother and sister. They pushed me to do better, be better and achieve more, by dreaming bigger.

Since I was younger I have wanted so many things for myself. When I was about seven years old I was in love with tennis so my goal was to become the youngest, professional tennis player. About two years later I wanted to be a model. I would follow in my aunt’s footsteps and be more famous than Tyra Banks. Although I will always love being pampered and wearing a lot of fancy clothing, modeling is not what I chose at age 11. Some how being a top athlete or a famous model didn’t compare to the satisfaction

that I gain each time that I prove my case before a jury. Thanks to my cousin introducing law into my life, my goal changed; it is now to become an international labor attorney.

As the years have passed, I have worked tremendously hard to not follow in the foot steps of failure, disappointment and quitting. Coming from a low income neighborhood, a family where there are few male role models worth taking after, and an age group where drugs, alcohol and sex are “cool” I refuse to fit into conformity. In the Spring of 2008 I was a graduate of the Development School for Youth. This program provides youth with a positive atmosphere that betters who we are from the inside out. I am a member of my school’s National Honor Society; I am a member of the National Society of High School Scholars; I have recently been awarded 13 awards from my high school in categories such as academic excellence, leadership, community service, activity participation and the President’s Educational Excellence Award by President Mr. Barack Obama. These awards are great, however the best recognition that I have received as of this moment, is the Young Leaders for Change Award from the All Stars Project. This is an award that lets me completely know that I am doing the right thing. It makes me feel so accomplished inside that I am being recognized, by leaders, for doing the best that I can in order to help others; however, there is always more that I can do.

For my dream I lead a path that brings me to becoming an international labor attorney. It means a lot to me that in my future I provide advocacy for the people who do not provide it for themselves. I plan to double major in English and International Studies. Studying English will better my writing skills for law school and international studies would help to provide me with a worldwide view for my career. Like President Obama, I want the ladder that I use to climb to success, to stay standing for others to make their own success.

This scholarship is the steps to my ladder. By earning this money, I earn my steps to college, my steps to becoming an advocate and my steps to leading the way on a path that betters the world, one “follower” at a time. Two thousand dollars may not seem like a lot compared to the cost of one year of college, however two thousand dollars allows me to keep on climbing my ladder to success. It allows me to keep being a good role model for my siblings and it allows me to do what I want to do the most: create a better world, no matter how impossible it may seem – because impossible things, happen everyday.