

My name is Jessica Lea Crotts and I am currently 18 years old. My wonderful parents are James and Wanda Crotts of Sophia, NC. As I refer to my parents as “wonderful”, this is a phrase that I would not have used during various phases of my life. Many times throughout my elementary school years, I wanted to play outside or watch television but was met by the objection that I must first finish my homework, which simply made me filled with aggravation. What could be more important than the freedom to climb trees and hike on the rocks, right? However, I was an obedient child and would follow instructions whether or not I agreed with them. As a matter of fact, I wanted to be so respectful to authority figures that the one time in my elementary years that I had to “turn my card” in the second grade was such a devastating event to me that I dared not ever repeat that behavior. Good behavior coupled with always completing my homework led to my becoming the equivalent of a “Junior Marshall” in the fourth grade and participated as such in the ceremony of Fifth Grade Graduation. This accolade helped me realize that maybe putting an importance on the homework idea wasn’t such a bad thing after all and made me put an extra effort into that process. By the time it was my turn to graduate fifth grade, I was chosen as the recipient of the 2003 Civitan’s Scholastic Award that was awarded to one boy and one girl in the fifth grade.

I would have started this paper by writing about my earlier years, but since I don’t remember a lot about those years other than Library Story-time sessions and playing in play areas at fast food restaurants, I decided to start the story about my life with my most vivid memories of beginning New Market Elementary School in Sophia, NC. However, upon further reflection, I have decided to add a little about my parents who are honest, hard-working Christians that have had a positive impact on my life. They instilled in me the morals and values of which I still deem important today and adds further to the description of “wonderful parents” that I mentioned in the first paragraph. I felt it was important to also mention how my dad sacrificed in order to have my mother stay with me as a child and not send me to a daycare. He took upon himself the role of adding to his full time employment a second job so my needs would be placed as number one in his life. My mother supplemented that income by working at the High Point International Furniture Market twice a year and later by substitute teaching at the schools I attended. Watching how they have handled their obligations and responsibilities throughout the years, I think has made me want to emulate those actions.

Now, moving into middle school and being a part of the Gifted Education Program was a bit overwhelming at times and made me once again weigh whether or not the hiking, biking, and television-watching wasn’t a better path to choose than the grind of the three R’s of “reading, riting and rithmetic”. To add to my grueling and disciplined routine of putting academics first, another obstacle had entered my life in the name of middle school dances. My dad definitely was not impressed with my new diversion. However, both my parents wanted there to be more to my character than a creature of education, so a compromise was met and my mother volunteered at the dances in order to oversee what took place at these events. The actions of my peers at this stage in their lives came close to causing me to lose this privilege many times. The only saving grace was that I wasn’t punished for someone else’s bad choices. Also during these years, I had more interest in the school sports program as I had finally reached the age that I could play sports for more than the recreational teams that I had played for in the past. My love for school spirit grew, and at the same time, I was still receiving recognition on Award’s Day for obtaining straight A’s during each grading period. The dedication I still had for working hard in my academics was partially due to the threat my parents held over me. I knew the moment that I was not working to my full capacity was the moment that sports and dances went out the proverbial window. Love of sports and the privilege of attending school dances were somewhat the driving force behind my success of those years but it really did pay off in the end as I earned the Academic Award for the girl athlete in my eighth grade year presented during the Athletic Banquet. What a way to end my three years of middle school!

Entering high school was filled with much excitement, and I felt fairly equipped both socially and academically to handle whatever came my way. Somewhere along the way, I had learned that discipline and hard work must be combined with a positive attitude. I worked hard, had a few beaus along the way, none of which proved to be very serious much to the happiness of my family. Also, I

wanted to be a part of every club and organization that existed but learned quickly that I would have to be selective because of scheduling conflicts and the desire to take sports to the next level. Volunteering was a vital part of my Randleman High School experience and one that I enjoyed very much. I tried to volunteer in ways that both helped my community and my fellow humans. Playing three sports during my four years of high school taught me skills such as teamwork, leadership, and sportsmanship to name a few and helped me to carry those attributes into my everyday life. One of the most useful lessons learned during these athletic seasons that sometimes bled into the next season was how best to manage my time. Along with all the sports, clubs, volunteer work, and homework, I had to somehow fit into that time frame my Senior Project.

I have no complaints about my senior year and how it turned out for me. I managed to earn All Conference and All County in volleyball, and be team co-captains for both basketball and softball. I didn't set any record-breaking statistics, but I learned a lot from the experiences and felt very honored that my volleyball team was one game shy of playing for the state championship, which isn't too shabby. In addition, I was chosen as the girl Athlete of the Year for my school and awarded the Sportsmanship Award from the county. Also, in the academic area, I held a 4.5 GPA the whole four years, was Secretary for Beta Club and for my 2010 senior class, was named Who's Who Among American High School Students of which I still have no idea what the criteria for selection was. I was chosen by my teachers as one of only a handful of students who were selected to become a student advisor to the Superintendent of Randolph County Schools. There were many other honorary times during my high school career that I will not mention here, but I do want to mention one such honor that I am very proud to announce. I was chosen by my peers to be Homecoming Queen 2009-2010 school year. This is such an honor to me because it proves that I am much more than a student of the books. I love people and have always tried to treat them with the utmost respect and dignity that I feel every human deserves. At an early age, my parents taught me that whether or not I could accomplish anything else, I could always treat people right. Everyone has that ability no matter what their IQ is or their social standing. Whether a person is at the top rung of the ladder of success or at the very bottom, they are people with feelings and should be treated as such. The character of a person is the only thing to be considered and not their societal elevation. Hopefully, my character defines me as being one who deserves the treatment of respect and dignity.

I have just embarked into a new adventure. Last week was my first week as a student at High Point University. It is a challenge that I feel ready for and a new excitement now fills the air. I am waiting to see what God has in store for me at this juncture of life. Even though it is only now that I mention God in this writing, He definitely has been there all along and has first place. I am anxiously awaiting what He has in store for me and wondering what the next chapter will be should I once again find myself writing about my life sometime in the future. The anticipation is exhilarating!