Reaping Struggles

Mathena Washington’s Reflective Essay

**Journey Through WT**

Ambition in ones self creates high outcomes to achieve success. I can be so ambitious at times I tend to overthink situations. Overthinking can be a problem for others but I do not see it that way. I see it as being the most prepared for any situation. Even being prepared to the best of my ability, I fell short once, just once. Freshman year was so thrilling, my first year of college attending West Texas A&M University, so many new people, cultures, adventures and learning opportunities. Initially beginning in the agricultural department, welcomed with open arms and lots of high praise going into the start of my first of four and a half years at West Texas A&M. I began my education with the title of Equine Business and Management but quickly learned that the eight am classes were not going to work for me and that the horse industry would just have to wait. After a rough first year I took the summer and regained my strength and returned to school the following semester. Following the decision to return to West Texas A&M University, my sophomore year was the year I decided to change my major to Broadcast Journalism under the Media Communications department. In this reflective essay I will inform you of the courses and course work I have taken in the Media Communications department that have created the ambitious woman I am today.

Holes to Hills

When you are at your lowest point in life you pray and hope that someone or something could pull you out into the light. My attempt of suicide my freshman year had nothing to do with school or the challenges I was facing in class. At that time in my life I would define as the rockiest first few stepping stones in my life. I am not afraid of death, I was afraid of life at the time, clueless to what my trade would be and why I should exist. Once I stuck my head into the communications department and started enjoying creating and learning new things, my life at that point was turning around. I was a West Texas A&M University student athlete, enjoying playing volleyball until I was redshirted my freshman year. That sport was no longer my happiness. During that sophomore year, I enrolled in a beginner level horsemanship class on campus as an elective and that is where I found happiness. In the trade that I initially decided would have to wait. Once those classes ended and I felt as if there was nothing else for me. Junior year is when my communications classes began to intrigue me, I can remember perfectly, I was taking Media Management with professor Randy Ray. I had to learn how to create a media organization and create a business plan, I was only one of three in our group and all of the other groups had four members. I would have to say I had to pull my teams weight especially towards presentation time. Once my group presented I had never felt more accomplished. Professor Randy Ray asked me into his office and praised me on how well I lead the group and completed everything he had asked for even being short a group member. It was from then that I felt like I could figure out my calling at West Texas A&M University.

**Ambitious Learning**

When junior year was coming to an end, I had turned things around for myself completely. Hard work and dedication will only get you so far. In my book you have to have ambition towards anything you put your mind to. Anything I put my mind to from this point forward I have done the best I can of all of the tools that were provide for me at West Texas A&M. I was blessed with the opportunity to work with the West Texas A&M University Athletic Media Department as a photographer, statistician and later on in school a sideline reporter for the schools’ division two athletics. That became my happy place, in the sports media industry. I quickly indulged in my Sports Broadcasting practicum, Media Writing, and Video Production classes. I have not perfected any skill yet, but I have gained leadership skills, mass media production skills that I was not only able to apply to my job but to the activities and hobbies I find myself passionate about. Without the courses that I have taken I could have learned the same things, but I would not be as prepared as I am today.

**Class of Gratitude**

I have to give all of my gratitude to the professors and administration of the Mass Communications department. If it was not for my professor, Randy Ray and Dr. Michael McFarland in my last semester of the Sports Broadcasting practicum class, I do not think I would have found my calling. The class was the smallest I had been in with just three other students. The Sports Broadcasting Practicum class structure was designed for more than three students, Dr. Michael McFarland gave us the ability to give our input on what we should do for the semester. I spoke up and throughly suggested that the class focus on sideline reporting for the spring sports. That decision peaked not only the athletes interest but also the athletic department and Buffalo Club members. That class taught me to be more responsible, to lead with professionalism and always have organization. That semester I perfected the craft of being a Multi-Media Journalist or known as an MMJ. There were times when I had a team or camera crew but none of them could make it to the games that we had scheduled and pre planned for. All on my own as an MMJ, I had to make sure I had all of the camera and audio equipment and make it to the game on time, which in my book means when the teams arrive or as they are warming up. On occasion I would be working the athletic game, then running over at halftime to set up all of the gear I brought testing the audio and camera gear in preparation for an interview with the coaches and players that we wanted to highlight for the game. Once my day was over at the athletic event I would return to one of the many on campus editing labs to export the interview I had just recorded, clip and edit the footage to my liking and then post it to our social media page. That whole experience began in my classes; Video Production and Sports Broadcast Practicum. Those professors and classes I will be forever grateful for.

**A Plan for the Future**

December 12th, 2020 is my official graduation date. Do I know exactly where I will end up? No, but I do have a plan and a back up plan in order to continue to showcase my skills and all that I have learned at West Texas A&M University. I did not receive the internship I was in good position to obtain this summer because of the global pandemic we are facing. I have been informed that that internship position would be held open for me once the business is ready to return with interns, which I am grateful for but I cannot put all of my eggs into one basket with that opportunity. I would like to apply to the Sports Management Graduate program at Florida State University and earn my masters so that I have the ability to become a sports agent. My backup plan is to either return to Colorado and find a full time job working for an athletic company in some way or to stay in Texas and also pursue the Sports broadcasting career. I know I can get to wherever I want to be with my ambitious mind and abilities learned and developed at West Texas A&M University.