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“The African American I Most Admire”

I love the dark skin, the gray hair, the deep wrinkles that show the impacts that life has had on her, her dark eyes that show the pain and the struggles that she has saw over the years. The wisdom that came with the many lessons that god put in her way. The grace and pose that she carries and that truthfulness that she shows through the way she smiles at you. I love the way she talks about life and the struggles that it can bring. She only speaks the truth and never tries to hurt me. I also adore the way she smiles. It has a way of making me feel warm and safe inside. The person that I love and truly admire most is Terry Ann Wilson.

My grandmother is like an eagle soaring through the sky. She’s that backbone and support I need when I’m down with family problems or boyfriend problems. Her favorite thing to say to me when I’m down is “Baby, keep your head up. What don’t kill you will only make you stronger.” That always seems to put a smile on my face. She doesn’t let anyone stand in her way of happiness, freedom, and life. I remember when we were on a family outing at the Black Business Expo and a man came towards us and said we could not come in the expo because we haven’t paid the right fare. My grandmother didn’t scream, cuss, or holler. She calmly walked away and asked the ticket teller to please give us the right passes so we could continue on our outing. The ticket teller calmly did as she was asked to do. The man at the door still acted like a donkey and would not let us in the expo. I could see the anger all over my grandmother’s face. She then turned around and walked away, got in touch with one of the people running the show, and told him what the man at the door had been doing to us. It was a big scene when everyone found out that the man didn’t

work there. He was just posing as a guard. She stood her ground. That's what makes her strong. She didn't make a fool out of herself. She did it with class and respect, and that's what I love about her.

My grandmother's leadership is also another one of her traits that I love. She's the leader of our entire family. In most families, the leader is a man, but she has all the traits that a man carries when he is a leader – drive, courage, authority, and wisdom. She takes on that role so good that she will give me the last of her last. Once it was pouring raining and I had to catch the bus all the home and all I had was a little jacket. So my grandmother gave me her jacket, which was the only one she had to go to work in the morning in the cold weather. But she didn't care. All she cared about was me being warm and not havening to worry about getting wet. All she ever asks from us is to be happy with the little things we have. She doesn't want us to grow up and be an ungrateful people. I think she would be filled with pure disgust if she found out that anyone in her family was ungrateful to her or anyone else who gives us things. She tries everything in her power to keep us happy. She always has a piece of something waiting on us at her house whether it is candy, toys, clothes, or food. She always sends us home with bags and bags of food, I can't even recall a time that I left her house empty handed. Her leadership power is up there with the great Harriet Tubman. They are both fighters, lovers, and givers – they are alike in so many ways. All they want to do is help people. They both lead the way for people to be happy, free and worthy.

My grandmother is at this stage in her life where she is very keen on getting back into her roots. She has even started to grow dreads. She also started to beautify her house in all kinds of African artifacts. She is always trying to find ways to get the family involved in the African things, so one day she took me to an African market place that they hold every year in Exposition Park. They had all kinds of African food, vases, clothing, etc. The one thing that caught my eye was a picture painted by a man who was

on the verge of dying. It was a family of ten people walking hand in hand in high spirits. Each person in the painting kind of reminded me of every person in my family, but the person that stood out the most was the old woman standing in the front with a big beautiful gown with the rest of the people looking up at her walking and smiling. When my grandmother saw that painting she was so overjoyed that her eyes were filled with tears ready to fall. For most people it was just a painting, but for me and my grandmother it was our life captured in a painting. From that day on I vowed that I would try harder to like the same kind of African things that my grandmother does, and to also try to understand the troubles and barriers that my grandmother had to overcome to be the woman she is today. That painting did something to me. I don't know if it was the tears in her eyes or the time and the love that the guy put into the painting. All I know is that it gave a new and improved look at life, and the love for my grandmother grew a little bit stronger that day.

Through all the pain and the troubles that my grandmother endured throughout her life, she turned out to be more than just an excellent woman. She turned out to be my role model. She's everything that I would ever want to be. She's a leader, strong, faithful, truthful, loving, and wholesome. I also love that she is ambitious, confident, wise, thoughtful, and most of all she's happy. I admire her for so many things as well, but most of all I admire her dark skin which shows how far her roots go in her, the dark eyes that show the grief, pain, and sorrow that she has endured, her wrinkled face that shows the years of hard ache and troubles, but most of all I love her gray hair because every strand is her way of showing us that she loves and cares for us. Terry Wilson is her name and she is who I admire.