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“The African American Individual I Know Who I Most Admire”

There is an African American woman who is special to me and who I am proud of having the privilege of knowing well and who I most admire. She is 47 years young. She is about 5 ft. 1 in. in height but to me seems more like 4 ft. 11 in. She was raised up in a strict, discipline and respectable family background and Catholic upbringing. She has seven brothers and two sisters. She is the youngest girl and the second to last child. She is well educated with a Baccalaureate degree in Chemistry and Biochemistry. She is a mother, a teacher and a cancer victim. This lady is married and has one son. The qualities I admire about this African American individual are the love she portrays to her family and others, an advocate for justice and her courage. This outstanding woman is my mother. Her name is Allison Carolyn Haylock Crawford.

My mother is a loving and caring person. She does the routine motherly chores such as cleaning the house, washing the dishes and the clothes and preparing the food. Her love is extended to relatives, friends, and the neighbors. She is always helping the children in the neighborhood and family members with their schoolwork especially in mathematics and chemistry. Many times she is tired when she comes in from work but she never turn them away. She gets upset when she sees any of them out of school. She always stresses the importance of education and determination in whatever you do. I always hear her telling them, “You see the color of your skin, black people have to work harder to compete out there, so stay in school and get a good education.” As for me, she is strict with me too and on my case all the time. Her favorite saying is, “loving you doesn’t mean spoiling you.” She passes on family values such as love, honesty and respect for oneself and

others. She is always there for me. She checks my homework and helps me in my schoolwork. She is very supportive and attends parent conferences, games or concerts that I am participating in. Late in the night and early morning is her time correcting scripts and laboratory reports. Sometimes I wonder if she gets any sleep.

My mother is a teacher for twenty-five years. Her students love and respect her. I always wonder how this small stature lady controls these big students. She told me she would tell them, “don’t let my size fool you, I know all the tricks in the book”, in a firm voice. My mom cares for her students and encourages them to focus on their education. From my observation she is a motherly figure than a teacher to them. There is another quality of her whereby she has a passion for standing up for what she believes in. Presently, Mrs. Crawford, as she is called, is an Associate Lecturer at the University of Belize. She was a member of the Steering Committee that got the union, the University of Belize Faculty and Staff Association, started in 2002. She was voted a member of the Executive Council of the Association and Chairperson of the Grievance Committee. Mrs. Crawford is also the faculty representative to the University Board of Trustees. She is always bombarded with faculty and staff dissatisfactions with administration. Sometimes they seek her out at home. My mom believes in fairness and justice. Her colleagues admire her because she fights for their basic rights and she is not afraid to speak out, whether it is the President of the University or the Minister of Education. She is forceful in her deliverance. These positions that she holds take up a lot of her time going to meetings and meetings but she is committed and dedicated and does it with her whole heart. I recalled an incident in the news on television when teachers were planning a demonstration against political corruption and abuse of social security funds and some branches of the teachers union decided not to participate. The other teachers’ spirit was dampened. Then I saw my mother on the television, her hands moving up and down and she was saying, “we do not have to be teachers to fight for our rights, as citizens of this country we have a

right to demonstrate and be heard so I call on all citizens to come out.” The demonstration had massive turn out.

Six months ago my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. I was scared. To me the word cancer means death. Does this mean that I might lose my mom? I could not concentrate on my schoolwork and my grades drop. My mom said to me, “son do not worry, everything will be all right. I will beat this disease.” My mom took on this battle with cancer like a challenge to her. I believe at first she was scared too but being the strong and determined woman that I know her to be she never showed it. Presently she is undergoing chemotherapy, which has a lot of side effects. She never complains. Whenever I come home from school she is there for me asking about school and homework as usual. Whenever I ask how she is feeling she replies, “I am fine, just a little tired.” Some days I see the dullness in her eyes or I do not get that big smile and that is how I would know that she is not feeling well. Only the loss of her hair makes you realize that she is sick. I admire her attitude and courage. I do not see her as a sick person anymore. She now gives me strength to focus on my schoolwork again. My grades have improved and I feel confident that my mother will be a cancer survivor.

I am proud that this African American woman is my mother. I admire her a great deal because she is a loving and caring person, helpful, liberated, strong and courageous and a promoter of education. Her students and colleagues admire and respect her. I feel special to have this small and powerful lady with a big heart for my mother. Precious things come in small packages.