

June 28, 2016

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Governor Haley,

Let me start out by saying thank you for all you do for our beautiful state. I truly appreciate all that you do, and I realize that you face difficult decisions every day.

Now, let me tell you a little about me and why I am writing. I am a mother and a grandmother, and I pray every day that I have set a good example for my children and my grandchildren. My first husband died in a helicopter crash in 1987, our son was only 4 when his daddy died. When he died, I was working on my education degree, because I have such a strong passion for educating our children in today's world. I graduated, and then went on to get my Masters. While working on my Masters, I met my second husband. He had previously been married also, so he had a daughter, I had my son, and we began our journey of blending two families. Soon, after we were married, we brought another daughter into the marriage, and we had yours, mine, and ours. We have been a blended family for almost 28 years. We now have 2 grandsons, and we are all extremely close. My husband and I have tried to instill in all of them a love for God, good morals, and high standards. I love my family, they are my first passion!

Which brings me to my second passion. Teaching! I have been teaching for 22 years. The first 17 years, I taught in a very affluent school in our city, but I felt God was calling me to do something different, so I requested a transfer to one of the poorest public schools in our district. I have been there ever since, and I love it. My school is actually the poorest in our city, we are at 100% poverty level, with all of our students receiving free breakfast and lunch. Our students come from such a wide variety of backgrounds, and the fact that they just make it to school every day with a smile of their faces absolutely amazes me. The other part of my job that I love is the fact I teach an all-girls class of 5th grade students. At our school we have one single-gender girl and boy class at every grade level. We are trying to show that since girls and boys learn differently, they need to be taught differently, in ways that meet their needs. I love teaching all girls because I get to empower them to be all they can be. Each year I talk to them about manners, etiquette, first impressions, poise, grace, self-confidence, and believing in their selves. We actually practice manners and etiquette by using Emily Post's original book on Etiquette. The girls love it, and then every year I find sponsors so I can take them to a very special lunch, at one of the nicest restaurants in Greenville, SC. They get all dressed up, and they are presented a very special menu, and they practice using their best manners. It is the best day of the year. However, I know there is more out there for them than just manners, poise, and etiquette, so I also try to inspire them through women in our history who have done great things. In Social Studies and Science, I try to use women that have shown strength, confidence, and excellence in these areas as examples of what they can become. This is the reason why I am writing. I am writing different famous women, who are good examples for my girls, and asking them to share with me a woman in history, science, math, or even entertainment that made a strong, positive influence on you and your choices. If you could share the person, maybe a quote from her, or information that I can share with my girls, I am going to start a new program this year where we look at different women each month and how they contributed to the growth of our country or even the world. I want to empower them to become so much more than what their current situation can afford them in life. I truly believe that if we can inspire them early, it will motivate them to work hard and stay on the right track. They do not always get a lot of positive influence at home, so I am trying to give them lots of positive influences at school.

Thank you in advance for just reading my letter. My husband always tells me I like to talk, and when I can't talk I just write. I had to start a blog to get all my feelings and thoughts out, and I have been encouraged quite often to write a book. Maybe one day! Being an author was always my second choice of career, it is never too late to start something new.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Lynne Murrell
Hollis Academy
200 Goodrich Street
Greenville, SC
29611