



UK Dow Jones Workshop 2009

Profile of Victoria Larkin Walker
By: Sara Fletcher

Victoria likes to go by her middle name, Larkin. She is 17 and will turn 18 in August. She will be a senior this fall at Bryan Station High School in Lexington, Ky.

Larkin's mother works from home managing a day care. Her father works as a videographer at KET television and her little brother will be turning 15 in July. Larkin also has a few dogs, two Yorkies named Ally and Sally and a chocolate lab named Bella.

Before coming to UK, Larkin had no experience in the journalism field but she hopes to gain a lot from this workshop. She'd like to work on writing faster and developing her skills in all things to do with journalism. She's especially into photography.

At school, Larkin says that her favorite teacher was Mr. Hicks. "His class was really fun. He's funny." She has gone through all grades speaking Spanish. She's very fluent and is in part the Spanish Immersion program. After getting her high school diploma she plans on going to UK. Larkin learned about this program through her cheerleading coach.

Larkin explains that the most interesting thing that has ever happened to her was that she got to go to the NFL Hall of Fame. Her father went to high school with Andre Tippette so that allowed Larkin and her family to be fortunate to tag along. "I got mistaken for Rhianna a lot," said Larkin.

In Larkin's spare time she likes to cheerlead and swim, "...but that's all I do because it takes up all my time." When she was little, she wanted to do ballet.

Larkin explains what people she would hang out with and why. Obama because “He’s the president.. Duh.” Kobe Bryant because he seems like a cool guy to talk to. Chris brown, and Bobby Perry because he’s “the all time favorite crush.” She said that the happiest day of her life was when she met Bobby Perry.

Larkin says that the little things inspire her. But it all just depends really. Her favorite place to go is the beach,with her family and to Raising Canes, because that’s her favorite place to eat. “The one thing I can’t live without is my family,” Larkin said. That is Victoria Larkin Walker, student at the Dow Jones workshop.

Note: Larkin's essay received third place honors in the First Amendment essay competition.

First Amendment
By Larkin Walker

It wasn't until this workshop discussion with Dr. Mike Farrell that the wheels in my head really started to turn and ideas started to come to mind about the First Amendment and what it means to me. I began thinking about the history of the First Amendment, what life would be like without it and how I use the rights it gives me.

Dr. Farrell started the class with a fourteen question quiz about the First Amendment. When he set the quiz on my table and I realized what it was over I tried to gather all the information that I had stored over my almost twelve years of school but quickly realized that there really wasn't too much to pick from. I sat there trying my best to logically answer the questions with the little bit of knowledge that I was able to dig up. When I got to the third question it read "The First Amendment guarantees freedom:" and there were three possible answers to pick from. I was lost.

After I read all three of the possible answers they all sounded like they could be a part of the First Amendment and I was stuck. I looked around at my friends around me and they didn't know either. We all four put the pieces of knowledge that we had together and used process of elimination to find the right answer.

In my generation of people, we aren't nearly as patriotic as generations past. Therefore, we don't consider the history of the United States and the battles that Americans have fought to create, defend and maintain the rights that we have today. We don't consider what these rights mean for our country. If I wanted to print an article about my angry opinion towards something that the government had done, I could. If I wanted to read the Bible in my English class when I'm given free time, I could. I can do all of these things because of the First Amendment, which is my right given to me as an American that cannot be taken away.

As I sat listening to what Dr. Farrell had to say to us about the amendment I began to ask myself questions about what my life would be like had I not had the rights guaranteed to me by the First Amendment. Being the very opinionated person that I am, I use this right on an everyday basis. I use it and never thank my ancestors, the people who fought for the rights and most importantly the people that fight today on the home front and overseas for the risks that they take to protect my freedoms. When I pass a United States Marine, soldier, police officer, whatever section they might be a part of, I don't take the two seconds out of my life to say thank you, thank you for what you do to protect my country and our rights.

My grandmother, who we called Mother New Jersey, marched with Civil Rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. to allow me rights not only as an American but as an African American. My ancestors and many other Americans' ancestors fought a long and enduring fight to give us what we take for granted today.

The First Amendment allows me the right to decide what I want to believe and what religion I want to follow. Because I can practice what religion I want to, I am the religious person that I am today. God plays a big role in my life and religion could have a different effect on my life if I did not have my choice of religions.

Without the First Amendment I would not be the person that I am today. I would not be as creative, I would not be the individual that I am. I might even act, think and speak differently than what I do now. I am thankful for my rights given to me by the First Amendment. They make me the person I am today.