



UK Dow Jones Workshop 2009

Profile of Parys Grigsby

By: Kevin Johnson

Parys Akira Grigsby, an aspiring CEO of her own major magazine company, is a 16-year-old female from Atlanta, Georgia. She is currently attending North Clayton High School where she will be a senior. Parys gets most of her journalism experience from VOX teen newspaper. For the last year she has been improving her journalism skills and making friends with the other teen staff members.

After high school, Parys plans on attending the University of Georgia. She plans on getting into the journalism field so that she can reach her dreams of being the CEO of her own magazine company. Parys's magazine that she has planned for the future will be like Ebony and the Atlanta Journal Constitution combined. She also wants her magazine to be published in both English and Spanish so that many people all over the nation can read her magazine.

Parys currently lives with her mother and father. Since she is the only child, when she is not working on her VOX magazine she likes to hang out with her friends in the downtown area of Atlanta. When Parys was younger she used to want a sibling to play with, but now that she has grown up and had all 14 of her first cousins come to her house she no longer wants a sibling.

The most interesting thing that has happened in Parys's life was when she found out that she was misspelling her middle name. Her middle name is correctly spelled "Akira," but she was spelling it "Akaira." She doesn't know why she started writing her middle name but she quickly found out that it was wrong when her mother saw her write it on a paper. At first she thought that her mother was playing around with her but after she showed her all of her legal documents Parys found out that her mother was not playing with her.

Note: Parys' essay received second place honors in the First Amendment essay competition.

The Importance of the First Amendment

By Parys Grigsby

Imagine a world in which you were told what to do. Not so different from today's America, is it? Every one answers to someone giving directions, relaying instructions, and making demands. There is always a higher authority.

Now imagine a world in which you were told what to think. That scenario provokes deeper thought than the previous. Being told what to think strips one of all of their dignity. It removes all option of standing out and being an individual. The government, or group that determines appropriate thoughts, would have an absolute authority. The 1791 ratification of the First Amendment to the Constitution removed all threat of the United States government acquiring that much power.

Finally, imagine a world in which journalists were told what to print and broadcast. The world would completely change! The ideas would be biased and only reveal what the person, or people, deemed as "acceptable". The citizens would only know what the people in charge wanted them to know. Information would be withheld at an unsurpassed rate. America would no longer be the democratic nation that it is today. The simple assurance that no single individual, group of people, or governmental organization can gain that power makes the First Amendment the most important addition to the United States Constitution.

The First Amendment shapes the lives of so many, yet they rarely understand its importance in their daily activities. It guarantees the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press. It allows the people of America to serve whichever higher power they choose without fear. It protects American citizens' right to petition the government and gives the right to assemble in a peaceful manner. The five aforementioned freedoms are so underappreciated. Very few truly understand that their lives would resemble the lives of those living in dictatorial countries if the First Amendment was never added to the Constitution or if it was taken away.

After realizing what freedoms were granted in the First Amendment, I found a greater appreciation for living in America. I then understood that everyone's self-expression is protected by the document that shapes our country. When I choose my clothing, pierce my ears, and dye my hair, the First Amendment protects me. Every Sunday morning when I choose to attend the Church of Christ, the First Amendment protects me. Whether one chooses to serve God, Allah, or decides not to serve any higher being, the First Amendment protects them. When one listens to their favorite genre of music or attends their desired type of movie, the First Amendment protects them. If the government makes decisions that Americans do not like they can protest. People are free to assemble peacefully in order to bring about changes in their environment. Those that read newspapers or watch news broadcasts are assured that what is being said has not been censored by the government by the words of the First Amendment. It removes the threat of persecution because of one's choices and actions. It grants the people across the nation the freedom to be who they want to be. The First Amendment to the Constitution

outlines our lives, making it the most important addition to the United States Constitution.