



UK Dow Jones Workshop 2009

Profile of Rachel Cunningham
By: Amanda Wilkerson

Rachel Cunningham was born in Louisville, Ky. on October 18, 1991. She is the daughter of Terry and Sha'reese Cunningham. She is the baby of the family.

Rachel attends Mason County High School, and will be heading to the 12th grade this fall at the age of seventeen. She was interested in the Dow Jones workshop because she enjoys writing and meeting new people. Her brother also told her to try it and see how she likes the career of journalism.

After Rachel graduates from high school she plans on going to Spelman University and looking into the field of either communications or psychology.

Some of Rachel's hobbies are hanging out with friends, going to the mall and movies and just living life at its best! One of her best moments in life was meeting the president of the United States, Barak Obama.

Rachel is a very warm-hearted and funny person, and it has been real enjoyable to meet her on this trip. My most memorable moments with her are being around her when I trip or fall and she is always there to laugh at me, help me up and then watch me trip again. I will truly miss Rachel. She is going to have a bright future and I wish her the best of luck.

Note: Rachel's essay received honorable mention honors in the First Amendment competition.

The First Amendment
By Rachel Cunningham

What would everybody do if the First Amendment was suddenly taken away? Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom to petition and freedom to assemble peacefully are all rights that the public would be lost without.

Many young people don't realize what our ancestors had to overcome in order to protect our rights, which were very limited, until the First Amendment was adopted. "You have to know where you've been before you know where you're going." This was a notorious quote from my late great, great aunt. At 101 years of age, my aunt would tell my brother and me about how hard it was to be an African American woman in the early 1900s. Blacks were denied a chance to have the same rights as white citizens everywhere. Like normal children, my brother and I never really took to heart everything she said. As I've grown I have become more and more aware that teenagers today really take for granted the life they live, especially African Americans.

Without freedom of the press, most of the doors to communication around the world would close. News is an extremely vital part of entertainment and understanding of events. Without the press it would become harder and harder to learn about important global happenings.

Without freedom of religion, nobody would be able to express their own beliefs and develop their own cultures. No two people have the exact same ideas about how the human race was put on this earth. It wouldn't be fair to dictate what every person in America should believe.

Without freedom of speech, Americans' perspectives would not matter. The government would have the power to limit everything a person says that they didn't like. There's no justice in the government taking over the power of the people.

Without freedom to assemble peacefully, I believe there would be extreme chaos across the United States. Assembling (sometimes not so peacefully) is something young people do on a very regular basis. If this right were suddenly taken away there would be some strong repercussions, especially from teenagers.

Without the freedom to petition, the citizens of the United States would have no say on many events taking place in a majority of their own neighborhoods. For example, if an important landmark was going to be torn down in order to provide land for a new shopping mall, the citizens living in that neighborhood could express their disapproval, but actions speak louder than words. In order for the people to really get their point across it would be helpful to be able to organize a petition to really show their dedication to the cause.

The First Amendment is such a big aspect of our lives, and we don't even realize how much it impacts us every day. Looking back on famous historical figures such as Harriett Tubman, Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks, they would be disappointed to know that all their hard work to provide future generations with a better life has been disvalued. Losing the First Amendment would really make people think. You never really appreciate something until it's gone.

