

BREAKING BARRIERS AND REIGNING RESILIENCE



“Many people put off their educational goals because they don’t think they have the motivation or resources to fuel what is possible.”

Gloria is an amazing mother of two who has mastered the skill of full-time work and school, which is not an easy feat. “I come from a family of three generations of single mother dropouts. At the age of 15, I left home and entered a nine-year abusive relationship. When I found out that I was pregnant with my first child, I wanted to end that cycle. At 26, I went back to school and earned my high school diploma. I had all of the odds stacked up against me. I was a single mother, unemployed and battled chronic homelessness. Little did I know that earning my high school diploma would change my life and later become one of my biggest accomplishments. With a 4.0 GPA and all the support of my teachers, educators and mentors, I went to college. As I embarked upon an unknown territory I was driven by earning a college degree. I promised myself that I would make it all the way to my PhD. Along that journey I had many stumbling blocks ones that included failed relationships, doors being closed, and homelessness. I was motivated by my children and wanting to see them succeed by being a living example. I guess I wanted to show them that in spite of all of my

failures, I would make good on my promise of being a college graduate. In 2016, I graduated with my associate's degree in Human Services. While enrolled at Ivy Tech Community College, I wanted to maximize my experience by becoming involved in several on and off campus organizations." While at Ivy Tech Community College, Gloria was a Student Government Association senator and Vice President of Fellowship for Phi Theta Kappa. She was also Community Service Chair for the National Society of Leadership and Success. Gloria is also involved in Women in Philanthropy and Project Grow. "Once I got involved and started to surround myself with like-minded people, I was inspired to do more." Gloria has been a life coach for the last five years empowering adult students to earn their high school diplomas and go on to college. "I even developed the courage to get involved in pageants. This was definitely a new thing for me" says, Gloria. "I never considered myself a beauty girl. In 2016, I was named Ms. Indiana Plus America and competed in a national pageant. I currently hold the title of Ms. Indiana Classic Beauty 2017-2018. Through pageantry, I developed a sense of humility and a passion to do for others. Throughout my reign, I have volunteered nearly 2000 hours of community service and developed The A.L.E.R.T Foundation, INC." This organization stands for "Adult, Learners Educated, Restored and Transformed. The goal is to connect non-traditional students to resources that make educational opportunities more accessible. "I believe that we have the ability to boost the social and economic mobility of underserved, disenfranchised communities if we educate them one community at a time. I am so excited to announce that I will be giving my first barrier removal scholarship in the fall of 2019. I have been put in a position to take advantage of several opportunities, networking, meeting different people and leadership opportunities through various clubs," she said. All of her experiences have helped her build confidence for future endeavors. Gloria plans to complete her degree in Social work and Non-Profit Management. This educational accomplishment is huge for Gloria, as she never had any plans to go to college before earning her high school diploma as an adult. Now, education has become a large part of her life that she encourages her children to pursue, too.

Gloria's time in various clubs and organizations presented her with several scholarship opportunities. She has been awarded over \$50,000 in scholarships including being a 2016 ANTSHE Scholarship recipient. What is next for Gloria? " I plan to marry the love of my life, Toddrick Combs and grow my foundation. I also hope to continue to inspire adult- learners all

over the world and empower them to achieve their goals to complete their educational endeavors.” When Gloria was asked what advice she would give to an adult students? She said, “I would love to see more adult learners utilizing community resources to educate themselves. Seeing people take advantage of those resources for a high school diploma and /or degree will have such an impact on demographically-challenged areas. Unless you know someone who’s been there or been there yourself, it’s hard to understand why some people dropout in the first place.” To learn more about Gloria Turner’s journey and accomplishments please visit.

<https://100.uwci.org/100-heroes/2018/3/24/gloria-turner>