



Thursday, February 21, 2002

## All Campus Essay Contest Winner -

By **Heather Evans**, OU senior elementary education major

Tight spandex, brightly colored capes and incredible superpowers characterize the heroes of my youth. With Superman and Rainbow Bright fighting for good and truth, the world was a safer place and I could sleep at night. The innocence and gullibility of childhood soon faded with adolescence though and I was in need of another hero. But growing up is often marked by disappointment and suspicion. It would not be until high school before my champion, my defender of all that was decent and right, would enter my life. This time she would appear with a book in hand and a smile on her face. Her superpowers were not contained within a magic wand and she did not call upon the gods for help. Indeed her super strength was in her patience, her kindness and her ability to make me laugh. You see it was not until I met her that I first understood what heroism was all about. Valor and courage does not always lie in muscles and x-ray vision but in encouraging words and a warm embrace. My defender of good and protector of truth was in fact, a teacher. A teacher of unprecedented character and intelligence. A teacher with incredible patience and love. You only had to see her in action to know her superhuman capabilities and to know you wanted to be just like her. Thus began my quest for heroism.

I regard teaching as one of the most important professions of any society. It is the teachers of this world that make our Einstein's and Mozart's great. It is teachers who provide for the common good of those around them. It is teachers that wake up early and stay late to touch just one child's life. Teachers go the extra mile and brace all trials to help just one soul – because that is what heroism is all about. There is no greater satisfaction than seeing your hard work, sweat, tears, and laughter become something great through a child. It is not in personal gratification and fanfare, it is providing for the common good. It is standing up and protecting the beliefs and freedoms of people, often people of lower status and power. It is providing for the future. Heroism cannot die when we teach others to be heroic. As a teacher, that is my job.

Children of a young age are especially impressionable and their potential is limitless. I chose elementary education as my field for I believe it is where I will have the most impact and where a child's intellectual, emotional and social foundation is built. It is where my passion resides and where I will do the most good. A hero is always in the right place at the right time.

As with any adventure story where the hero saves the day, there is a moment when life and perspective is altered. The bad guys turn good, the poor become rich and balance is reached. There is always improvement. Those involved in the story never leave the same. As a teacher, as a hero, it is my responsibility to be a voice for improvement and an advocate of children. Is that not a responsibility of us all as citizens? I believe it is an obligation of our nation as a whole, to be continually improving and bettering ourselves in every aspect of our lives, especially the education that we provide to the next generation. It is my belief that any man made institution or object is inherently flawed and thus must be continually improved upon. As a teacher, I will constantly strive for improvement and progress in myself, in my profession, and in my world. Although I am unaware of all the ways that this may be realized. I will pursue any opportunity I can to better my world for teachers and students alike. Our society and life can only improve if the people who depend on it are willing to devote the necessary time, energy and enthusiasm that progress demands and deserves.

I will also be a model for my students of what a true lifelong learner is and manifest the importance of education in my life. I plan to be involved in as many activities as I realistically can and to have an active and assertive voice when necessary. Only when one speaks up, can change begin. I cannot promise that my career as a teacher will be filled with big occasions, many awards, or loads of money. However, as a hero, it will be one devoted to the betterment of my students, my world and myself. Like those before me, I will pave the way for progress by my daily examples and dedicated life. I cannot shoot laser beams from my eyes and I will never fly amongst the clouds, but if I touch just one child's life and inspire them to do great things, then heroism is available to us all.

### SUMMARY

Heather Evans, a senior elementary education major, took first prize in the fifth annual All Campus Contest in commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with her essay, entitled "The Hero in Me."

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