

Name: Savannah Morgan Lane
Title: Miss Virginia
Hometown: Midlothian, Virginia

Date of Birth: April 3, 1995

Education: University of Virginia-2nd Year; Foreign Affairs & Middle Eastern Studies
Midlothian High School

Platform Issue: The Power of Performance

Scholastic/ Career Ambition: Obtain a B.A. from UVA; Obtain M.A. (in Arabic Language) and a J.D. (law degree); Serve as an FBI agent and ultimately serve in United States Congress.

Talent: Broadway Vocal – “Don’t Rain on My Parade”

Scholastic Honors: Congressional District’s Harry F. Byrd Scholarship; American Const. Spirit Foundation’s Constitutional Essay Winner; Superintendent’s Award/Scholarship; Nat’l Hon. Society Scholarship; Midlothian Women’s Club Scholarship; Chesterfield County Fair Scholarship; DAR “Good Citizen” Award; Fleet Reserve Association’s “Americanism” Essay East Coast Regional Winner; AP Scholar With Distinction.

Leadership Roles: UVA Arts Advocacy Board; Lobbied U.S. Congressmen for Arts Advocacy initiatives; UVA Delegate to Nat’l Character & Leadership Symposium at U.S. Air Force Academy; Mentor for Students with Autism; Former Aide for Chesterfield County Autism Program; Drama Instructor to Underprivileged Children; Show Choir/Dance Team Captain; Leading Roles in Community Musicals; Revamped “Sidekick” program at Midlothian High School to include transfer students and those with disabilities.

Accomplishments: Accepted as 2014 Global Youth Ambassador for Platform Work; ANNPowr Fellow (Ann Taylor/Loft & Vital Voices initiative); Nat’l ANNPowr Grant Winner; UVA Women’s Water Polo Team; UVA Dance Company; 2nd and 3rd Place National PTA Reflections Choreography; Radio City Rockettes Summer Intensive; Chesterfield Aquatic League Record-holder.

Interesting Facts: Spokesperson for #WeAreHaileyStrong; Family includes two sets of twin girls; Taught piano to Iraqi refugee; Used songs by One Direction and Miley Cyrus for Virginia History lecture for children; Featured as Campus Celebrity for service and presence in college community; Distantly related to Elvis.

Employment: Resident Advisor; Volunteer Swim Coach; Volunteer Church Musical Theater Camp.

How has the world you come from shaped your dreams and aspirations? Growing up in a boisterous and civic-minded family not only shaped my patriotism, but my aspirations and ethics. From my grandfather, who became a physician knowledgeable in classical languages, and music, I learned to relish education and the arts. From my FBI agent godfather and Cadet sister, I learned the value of service to my country. My sister, Brianna, exemplifies determination despite significant disabilities, and my 10 year old brother Brennan reminds me of a world of magic and mystery. Lastly, my twin sister’s shocking cardiac arrest and miraculous progress compels me to promote the power of music, grassroots movements and the value of a healthy lifestyle.

Of all the ways you could succeed in your life, why have you chosen to succeed in the Miss America Pageant? To serve vulnerable groups through performance it is vital to have the backing of an organization of excellence and model of trust. With this organization, I was thrilled to discover a means for community outreach, and the fact that the Miss America Pageant provides scholastic incentive and scholarship makes it irresistible.

What social issue, other than your platform, will have the greatest impact on your generation and why? Social media is seen as empty entertainment. I have learned as an arts advocate that social media connects people through promoting music and the arts. I have also witnessed a movement of compassion and support initiated largely by teens and young adults who harnessed social media for the good of my sister and her struggle for survival. Whether promoting prayer, connecting with national spokesmen, arranging goodwill visits, or reporting progress, this generation can learn to strip away artifice and forge real connections through social networking.

Name: Savannah Morgan Lane

Title: Miss Piedmont Region

The Power of Performance (“POP”)

That sunny day, I marshaled facts and figures from training partners and the National Endowment for the Arts, but additionally focused on my deepest convictions about the power of music and the arts in addressing Virginia’s U.S. Congressmen on Capitol Hill. I had spoken about the experience of mentoring students with autism and young adults with disabilities using the transformative power of the arts which is free of discrimination and barriers. I recounted the privilege of introducing Iraqi refugees to piano lessons and the universal language of music as I practice my conversational Arabic in a cultural exchange. That life changing day, I stressed to a budget conscious Congress the correlation between higher graduation rates, lowered student absenteeism and the weakening of the effects of income inequality connected to arts exposure in schools, thereby providing concrete advocacy for the arts. That earth shaking day, March 23, 2015, my greatest test of my belief in the power of music and the arts did not coincide with my congressional conversations, but with the aftermath of news that my twin sister, Hailey, a second year cadet at the United States Air Force Academy, had suffered a massive cardiac arrest.

My Power of Performance platform emanates from a time when I was 8 years old and observed with sinking heart the isolation of another sister, Brianna, due to her significant disabilities. My siblings and I found solace in music and I began a ministry of music. I found that the sharing of performing arts with the community is the best way to make sense of a chaotic and troubling world, to promote patriotism and to encourage the “Three C’s” of confidence, compassion and love of country. I vividly recall watching Congress members singing “God Bless America” on the steps of the Capitol after the events of September 11, forever changing the lives of all Americans. From a very early age, my siblings and I were taught that being a citizen meant bettering your community.

My own community outreach included variety shows that I created to perform for neighbors, elderly relatives and the homeless through CARITAS program during my elementary school years. Through these shows, I learned the true power of performance was to touch hearts and bind people together. Fast forward to the present, and I am still producing shows, including veterans shows, but I also provide motivational talks to students to join me in this mission. I emphasize that the sharing of the arts with others does not take enormous reserves of talent and training, but it does take resolve and courage. I talk about the *confidence* realized because of taking chances. Additionally, I encourage respect and teamwork and speak about *compassion* and finding ways to reach out with performances to others in the community, reminding students to reinforce America’s stature as the most philanthropic country in the world. The emphasis on *love of country* also permits students to better envision ways they can perform for the community because often times the only songs that students can immediately recall are those patriotic tunes taught in their music classes. Music has also provided inroads for my service to the most vulnerable: in teaching classes for Autistic and disabled students and music classes for underserved economic centers.

All gifts of a life immersed in the arts were pressed into service for Hailey. The compassion that I felt for my precious twin was shared through my voice singing at her bedside, knowing that even in her coma, her ears still heard the music. Hailey’s love of country, was applauded as I sang the patriotic verses that had always uplifted and motivated her in her choice to serve her country. Moreover, my confidence gleaned through musical performance and dance allowed me to become the spokesperson for my sister as she captured the heart of the nation and even the world through the #WeAreHaileyStrong social media campaign that raged like wildfire when news of a beautiful 19-year-old cadet’s mysterious collapse forced young adults everywhere to question false notions of invincibility. I fielded interviews from multiple major news affiliates with Hailey’s story featured in Cosmopolitan, Huffington Post, and even the BBC. With the goodwill of the world behind her, Hailey continues to make miraculous strides after multiple surgeries. Still, in the dim light of a sterile hospital room where life and death hung in the balance and the hum of the world was so distant, the only thing that I could offer to the one person closest to my soul was music. In those transcendent moments of terrible beauty, the Power of Performance was never so clear.

Signature/Date