Remarkable to Me

By Bianka Bailey

The symbols I relate with “remarkable” are noteworthy, memorable, and extraordinary. The woman I choose to shine light on is a true emblem of remarkability. Marilyn has been a Meredith Housekeeper since September of 1993, making her employment here exceed 21 years. Her commute from Willow Springs to Meredith College every morning is about 19 miles. She arrives at six thirty in the morning and doesn’t leave until about two thirty in the afternoon (Monday through Friday). During this time she is responsible for maintaining cleanliness and order in Johnson hall, the technology building, all residence halls, hallways, and public bathrooms on campus.

I remember Marilyn from the first day I moved onto Meredith’s campus back in 2011 to begin my journey at Meredith. I was a scared seventeen year old coming all the way from Brooklyn, NY to settle into a new environment hundreds of miles away from home. I was walking into Faircloth as she was pushing her yellow cart out of the front door and she gave me one of the warmest greetings with a huge smile to go along with it. She welcomed me onto campus and told me not to hesitate if I ever needed anything. I am now a senior at Meredith and that one interaction still lingers in my mind, four years later. It takes a memorable individual to create such a long-lasting pleasant first impression. Looking back at my years here, I observed that I have never encountered Marilyn and she didn’t look like the same happy individual I met that day. Never has she passed me on campus and not spark-up some sort of communication, whether it be a smile or a “how was your weekend/day?” There were many days when
she would brighten my day without knowing how far just her smile at me would go. For that, I appreciate this remarkable woman.

Marilyn is a classic example of what humility looks like. Watching her for four years be so happy with her job taught me that life is what one makes it. I doubt when she was a young girl and was asked what she aspired to be, maintenance was more than likely not in her future. That doesn’t stop her from coming to work, putting forth her best effort all while still being a friendly face for the rest of the Meredith community. This greatly impacted the way I see life, she taught me how beneficial reframing situations can be. Through being a humble soul she is able to exhibit humility, showing me that no matter what the circumstance you can “GO STRONG”. Regardless of what my future holds, I will always remember Marilyn’s noteworthy ability to make life what she wants it to be. No matter what life throws at me, I will be sure to make the best of it.

After observing and getting to know Marilyn better through the years she taught me how important it is for us to find our correct role. Marilyn stands out from the rest of the housekeepers because you can tell, just by looking at her, that she enjoys the role she plays at Meredith College. Not every person could drive forty miles, five days a week to clean an institution for over twenty one years and still “thank God to have somewhere to go when getting up in the morning”. Marilyn can do this because she found a role that suites her character. As a senior, the majority of the thoughts I have pertain to my future. Marilyn has impacted the way I think about my future in a profound way. My first priority changed from having a future that others would see as
acceptable, to making sure I was in my right role, therefore making me happy and fulfilled in my job. This shift in priority stemmed from watching Marilyn, whose eyes formed tears during our interview, as she spoke about her love for her job.

Marilyn has seen people come and go through the years, but she says it is the students that keep her coming back each and every day. Housekeeping jobs generally have a high turnover rate, but for Marilyn, watching students reach their full potential and grow into successful young women is enough to keep her coming back. Hearing her say that only solidified how remarkable she truly is. It takes an extraordinary individual to take pleasure in seeing others achieve their goals.

Marilyn is a remarkable woman who has taught me bigger life lessons than some of my own professors have. When I leave Meredith, these life lessons will stick with me and assist me when making life decisions. Marilyn is a noteworthy, memorable, and extraordinary woman and I aspire to be as REMARKABLE as her one-day.

I believe Marilyn deserves to be honored because often times people like Marilyn are over-looked. They are looked at as non-entities because they don’t have power or superiority in the classical sense. In my eyes, I see Marilyn as an emblem of strength, hope, and love.