

ASU MARC SCHOLAR

(2012-13)



Ashley McMichael

My name is Ashley McMichael, and I am currently a Junior Biology major at Albany State University. I grew up in a single parent home in a small city named Buffalo, New York. In Buffalo, education in the African American neighborhoods was not a major priority. I am the product of a single parent home, where I watched my mother matriculate through school, work and provide for three children simultaneously. The image of my mother struggling tirelessly to provide by herself had a tremendous impact on my life. As an adolescent, I was influenced by my peers in many negative ways and ultimately became a victim of peer pressure and misguidance. Feelings of incompetence and worthlessness began to overwhelm me and I turned to "the world" to fill the many voids I endured as a child. School was the least of my concern. People constantly told me I would never amount to anything and that I was just another statistic from a single parent home. For a long time I believed them, but I realized that I needed to change and I needed to change soon and fast. I recognized that if I did not change, I would become a part of a cycle of stagnancy that is so prevalent within the African American community. Therefore, I decided to enroll back in high school and I actually managed to graduate on time. This positive transition made my passion for education and knowledge flourish. After peeling off one of the layers of defeat, and with this new found positive shift, I decided to enroll as a full time student at Albany State University (ASU).

The motto of Albany State University is "Potential: Realized". As a student at ASU, I can attest to the fact that I've realized my true potential and endless possibilities. My first year of college was very challenging because although I studied diligently, the concepts were not clear. As a result, I was making mediocre grades in my courses. Although I was discouraged at times, I continued to persistently study and request assistance from on-campus tutors. As the semesters progressed, I began to excel; grasping the presented information and even effectively relaying it to my peers. Through hard work and dedication, my GPA improved and opportunities began to become more available to me. For example, during my sophomore year, I was invited to be a part of the National Science Foundation-Research Experience for Undergraduates at the University of Georgia. These opportunities help me gain entrance into the MARC U*STAR program. Becoming apart of this program has made me more competitive for professional school. It allows me to focus on school and raising my daughter instead of worrying about working full-time.

