



Diana L. Bernstein:

Two mentors have been especially instrumental in motivating me to strive for success. In eleventh grade, Mr. Robert Thomas taught both my European History and Theory of Knowledge classes. Whether providing gory accounts of the Roman Empire or deciphering the works of Cicero, Plato and Fukuyama, Mr. Thomas always encouraged his students to stretch their imaginations. The philosophical approach I learned in Mr. Thomas' Theory of Knowledge class continues to impact my life today. Similarly, Professor Georgios Skoulakis brings his field of specialty, financial investments, to life. His enthusiasm for this subject inspired me to learn more about the role of financial instruments. His teaching skills and dedication to his students are outstanding. I am extremely grateful for the guidance and motivation imparted by my mentors, Mr. Thomas and Prof. Skoulakis.



Lindsey A. Bernstein:

Ms. Elizabeth Slyne, my kindergarten teacher and first mentor, has had a long-lasting impact on my life. She taught her students to be confident and to treat one another with respect. I try to hold these values in everything I do. Twelve years later, Ms. Slyne attended my high school graduation, and she brought with her a letter that I had written when I was five years old. Ms. Slyne exemplifies the important role that teachers play in the community. Professor Elinda Kiss is anything but a stereotypical college professor. She makes finance classes interesting through an equal mixture of theory and real-world applications. Before taking Prof. Kiss's class, I knew little about careers in finance. In addition to her effective teaching strategies, Prof. Kiss goes the extra mile for her students. Even though I took her course a semester ago, I still receive e-mails about job openings and other opportunities to get involved at the Smith School of Business. She teaches her students how to become successful businesspeople.



Kevin R. Blusewicz:

Throughout my academic career, I have been fortunate to meet teachers whose unique visions inspired me to excel and expand my creative boundaries. At High Technology High School, I studied French for four years with Mr. Martin Januario. I learned not only a foreign language but also a different way of interpreting the world. Mr. Januario created an interactive learning environment, engaging students through literature, creative writing, and the arts. Through this multifaceted approach, I became deeply interested in the intersection of different disciplines and the combination of varied representational media. Mr. Januario's French classes prepared me for the cultural abstraction and experimentation that I now embrace in the field of architecture. At the University of Maryland, Professor Richard Etlin's courses on architectural history have inspired me. Through his lectures, Prof. Etlin creates a clear narrative of the progression of architectural styles while communicating an intense passion for the subject and bringing new life to the material. Continually encouraged to ask questions, I have become a more experienced architectural historian and a better designer with an expanded toolkit and an open mind.



Valerie Branch:

Ms. Janice Tavarez, my junior high school Spanish teacher, is one of the many people who have influenced me. Ms. Tavarez encouraged me to succeed in my Spanish class as well as my other classes. She demanded excellence, and as a result, I learned to strive for nothing but the best.

During my educational journey at the University of Maryland, many professors and mentors have pushed me to succeed, and Professor Mim Rosen has been one of the most influential. Prof. Rosen encouraged me to be active within the dance department. She also provided an opportunity to learn from her leadership when she asked me to be a teaching assistant for her improvisation class. This was an honor and wonderful experience with a prominent figure within the dance community. With Prof. Rosen's encouragement over the past year, I have had the opportunity to further my knowledge of dance, and I have strengthened my focus as a student at Maryland.

Raquel Christie:

As a fourth grade student, attending Mr. Bobby Johnson's advanced reading class with the fifth graders always made me feel special. Mr. Johnson encouraged us to discuss more than *The Pearl* or *Tom Sawyer*; in each class, we delved into current events and analyzed world problems. I remember one class in particular in which Mr. Johnson asked us our opinions on the ongoing O.J. Simpson trial. I was about 10 years old, and nervous and unsure of myself, but Mr. Johnson instilled in me the confidence to voice my thoughts and think critically about the way our country's legal system worked. That confidence is something I couldn't learn from any book, and skepticism has influenced my approach to the field. On the first day of Journalism 201, Professor Steve Crane scared me. On the last day of Journalism 201, Prof. Crane scared me. Today, Prof. Crane still scares me, but I understand him. He's stern and unforgiving about work because the world is stern and unforgiving about work. He does not accept incorrect facts, late stories or misspelled names because journalism would not function with incorrect facts, late stories or misspelled names. Prof. Crane not only taught me how to put together a full story on deadline, he taught me to respect journalism as both a necessary check on power and a powerful mode of citizen expression. Scrutiny of the press is growing as media proliferate; it is up to responsible journalists to keep the press respectable. I go into professional journalism with this understanding because of what I learned in Prof. Crane's classroom.



Claire E. Ciarkowski:

Throughout my education, several teachers and professors influenced my interest in science, including Ms. Lisa Vokatitis and Professor William Higgins. In high school, Ms. Vokatitis was enthusiastic about chemistry. She helped me understand and appreciate chemistry by making the most mundane reactions, such as how solute saturation worked, interesting. In college, I had the privilege of studying abroad with Prof. Higgins in Belize, Australia and Alaska. As my advisor and teacher, Prof. Higgins has inspired my passion for chemistry. In class, his enthusiastic attitude makes information memorable, and he provides clear explanations of complex topics. Prof. Higgins also advised me to join the Biology Departmental Honors Research group, which allowed me to pursue my interest in research and neuroscience.



Luisa Cole:

Over the course of my educational career, I have had the opportunity to study under several inspiring mentors. In high school, Ms. Deborah Flynn used her creativity and ingenuity to teach French. Instead of simply teaching from a text book, Ms. Flynn constantly invented exciting ways to teach us about French culture. Her active interest in the subject matter created enthusiastic students who were eager to learn. As a result, she peaked my interest in traveling the world in order to learn about different cultures firsthand. Professor Michael Olmert demonstrates these same qualities in teaching English Literature. Prof. Olmert emphasizes that literature is a vital part of everyday life. At the same time, he constantly inspires me to expand my horizons. Prof. Olmert encouraged me to attend museums and plays as well as study abroad in England. Both of these teachers are excellent examples of mentors who have a tremendous impact on their students.



Alison Anne Daniels:

Ms. Sarah Read, my high school World History teacher, taught me about the Lusitania and how to write a better essay. The most important lesson that she taught me, however, had nothing to do with the world of the past. As my advisor and homeroom teacher, Ms. Read took an interest in my life and provided an outlet for my concerns and troubles in both my academic and personal lives. To this day when I return to visit, the first question I usually hear from my favorite teacher is, "So Ali, do you still have too much on your plate? How's that working for you?" Ms. Read taught me that a good teacher has a strong influence inside and outside of the classroom. Professor Leslie Felbain, a faculty member in the Theatre Department, constantly encourages me in my performance studies and also takes an interest in my growth as an individual. I know that I am always welcome in her office to discuss anything, and she has taught me what it really means to use performance in my life, whether it be in a professional or educational capacity.



Rachel E. Elias:

When I was a junior at Centennial High School, the class I anticipated the most was Advanced Placement US History with Dr. Will Klingaman. I had heard that his class was both challenging and rewarding, something I was very much looking forward to despite the rigor of my other classes. Everything that I had expected became a reality that year: There was never a dull moment in class, and my love for early American history grew stronger. At the University of Maryland, I learned from Professor Laurie Brooks inside and outside of the classroom. As a sophomore in her Law Enforcement Administration class, I benefited from her passion for teaching and her encouragement to always strive for excellence. She also was a great influence behind-the-scenes while I served as her undergraduate teaching assistant during the Fall 2006 semester.



Laura Felgendreger:

Mr. James Parker, my Advanced Placement Biology teacher from Rumson-Fair Haven High School in New Jersey, helped me discover my passion for the life sciences. Mr. Parker demonstrated his vast knowledge while making AP Biology fun and fascinating. He helped me choose the college I was going to based on the merits of Maryland's biology program, and he helped me to become confident in a subject in which I was able to excel. His challenging but well-constructed tests prepared me for college and the study of biology. His wonderful teaching skills and well-structured course led me to discover a strong interest in biology. Professor Jens Herberholz is also an excellent mentor and has provided me with the opportunity to work in his crustacean neurobiology and behavior lab. Prof. Herberholz is helping me determine my plans after I graduate college. Working with him has made me realize the importance of the behavioral aspects of the sciences. Prof. Herberholz is an extremely patient and enthusiastic lab investigator, and he has allowed me to experience the rewards of research.



Adam S. Fisch:

A great European and US History teacher, Dr. Terry Chase was an incredible mentor for me in high school. His concern for students' knowledge of history was accompanied by a strong interest in students' overall well-being. His enthusiasm for the material that he teaches was contagious, and Dr. Chase kept classes lively with catchy phrases and interesting side information. He also emphasized the significance of issues discussed in lecture to contemporary events. Dr. Chase's concern for students also extended outside of the classroom, where he was always extremely approachable. As the coach of the mock trial team, Dr. Chase pushed us to do our best, and he always made sure to tell us that he was proud of our performances and successes. At the University of Maryland, Professor Raymond J. St. Leger has been the most influential professor that I have encountered. I took his genetics course in the spring of sophomore year, and after only two weeks of attending his lectures, I knew that I wanted to join his team of researchers during in my college career. His lectures were always extremely intriguing, due not only to the interesting subject matter, but also to his inclusion of interesting facts, statistics and humor. Prof. St. Leger is a natural-born mentor who welcomes questions, and we have had many interesting and informative conversations about medicine as well as other topics. Prof. St. Leger has helped me make very important decisions about my career.



Jennifer J. Harger:

Ms. Susan Gerber's English courses inspired students to express their thoughts. She inspired her students to expand their horizons, through discussions and activities that bolstered higher-level thinking and encouraged innovative perspectives. Through her advanced creative writing exercises, Ms. Gerber stretched students' creative capacities, in turn developing their literary voices in poetry, prose, short stories, and essays. By guiding me through creative expression and strengthening my writing skills, Ms. Gerber helped me become more confident, preparing

me for college, my career, and beyond. Professor Christy Tirrell-Corbin's insightful honors seminar courses also prepared me for a bright future in education and graduate school. Over the course of four semesters, Prof. Tirrell-Corbin provides students with a multi-faceted perspective on the No Child Left Behind Act. She promotes student understanding by selecting informative guest speakers and facilitating in-depth discussions. Following a comprehensive review of this educational legislation, Prof. Tirrell-Corbin actively guides students through the thesis process, ensuring that students remain on-track. Due to her continual guidance and support, I will complete my senior thesis feeling accomplished and prepared to make a difference within the field of education.



Christina C. Heshmatpour:

I received my first failing grade on an assignment in Dr. Peter Adams' AP US History class. I was the youngest student in the class and by far the most intimidated. I had just transferred to a new high school during my sophomore year. Over the next two years I learned from Dr. Adams how to think critically about the world around me and convey that understanding in written assignments. I went from failing that assignment to scoring a 5 on the AP exam. Dr. Adams' passion for his field inspired me to major in Government and Politics, a field in which I hope to eventually obtain my Ph.D. Professor Wayne McIntosh of the Government and Politics Department has played an important role in helping me translate the knowledge I have gained from classes to the practical realm. He provided me an opportunity to participate in graduate-level research, and he was my mentor for my Senior Summer Scholars project and my Honors thesis. As a sophomore in high school, I was a meek little girl unsure about her future; now, I am a confident young woman pursuing her dreams. Both of these phenomenal mentors have helped me find my calling and my place in the academic world.



Katrina L. LaCurts:

During high school, I was fortunate enough to have my father, Mr. Carvel LaCurts, as my math teacher. I was consistently impressed with his ability to explain theorems to students possessing varying levels of mathematical skills. He always had the perfect example to illustrate a difficult concept, and it was clear that he was still fascinated by his subject. It was my father's love of mathematics that inspired me to pursue the field in college. At the University of Maryland, I had the good fortune to take an advanced algorithms course with Professor Bill Gasarch. His enthusiasm for the subject led me to pursue an independent research project under his supervision. While working on this project, Prof. Gasarch has taught me the importance of truly understanding a problem before trying to solve it. Prof. Gasarch has exposed me to concepts in mathematics and computer science that I would not have encountered otherwise, and his teaching has encouraged me to pursue a career in theoretical computer science.

**Daniel Levy:**

Ms. Jean Edwards, my second grade teacher, played a significant role in molding me into the successful student that I am today. As far back as I can recall, she encouraged, guided, and challenged her students. Her continual support and commitment to students was unwavering. Before entering college, I did not encounter another teacher that motivated me as strongly as Ms. Edwards did. I attribute most of my accomplishments to the strong personal and educational foundation that she helped to build. As a finance major at the University of Maryland, I was very fortunate to have

Professor Susan White as my instructor for advanced finance. By providing analyses of real world case studies and informative lectures, Prof. White engaged the class in interesting financial discussions and theory. I firmly believe that she has contributed the most to my college education and has successfully prepared me for a career within the financial field when I graduate.

**Daniel S. Marcin:**

During my junior and senior years of high school, I took AP Calculus with Mr. Ron Fish. Mr. Fish is one of the most enthusiastic teachers I have ever known, and his class helped me realize that I would major in mathematics. Mr. Fish showed confidence in his students and taught them to realize their potential. I also had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Fish as an outstanding Kairos Senior Retreat leader. Professor James Schafer has been the most influential and the most difficult math professor that I have encountered in college. Prof. Schafer pushes students to do their best.

Though his class was very difficult for me, Prof. Schafer helped me learn more about my capabilities than my limitations. His door is always open, and he is always happy to help a student. Prof. Schafer shows a genuine interest in working with undergraduates. Though I had a "humbling experience" in Abstract Algebra, I learned more in this math class than any other, and I look forward to another semester in his class in the fall.

**Brooke M. Mayhew:**

Ms. Leslie Shear is a dedicated kindergarten teacher who was the first to encourage me to have a love for learning. I received the "Most Enthusiastic" Award from Ms. Shear when I was only five years old, and ever since, I have had a passion for learning. I chose to pursue the same profession in order to motivate young students in the future. When I visit her classroom now, I notice the effort and organization behind Ms. Shear's lesson plans and the stimulating activities she creates for her students. I admire her drive and commitment, and I hope that one day my

students will perceive me as I see her. At the University of Maryland, I was truly inspired by Professor Jane Benesch, who teaches a course entitled Creative Experiences for Young Students. Prof. Benesch demonstrates that there are numerous ways to engage students academically while promoting the development of innovative thinking. Through hands-on activities, she has inspired me to plan similar lessons for my future students.



Jessica Milcetic:

Some of my best teachers taught me more about life than they did about a certain subject. In high school, I took freshman biology with Mr. Thomas Shive, and while I learned about plants and animals, the most important lessons he taught weren't found in textbooks. I learned never to second-guess myself, that my instincts were probably right, and that if I worked hard, I would succeed. When I came to the University of Maryland, I was lucky enough to take a class with Professor Penny Bender Fuchs. She challenged me in my first news reporting class, and as a result, I double and triple check every story I write to ensure that it is error-free. She also encouraged me to shoot for the stars when it came to applying for internships, never letting me settle when she thought I could do better. Due to the encouragement I received from both these excellent teachers, I have grown as a person. I am truly honored to have had the opportunity to learn from Mr. Shive and Prof. Fuchs.



Kathleen L. Miller:

I have been very lucky to meet numerous inspirational teachers in my academic career. In high school, my Spanish 3 and AP Spanish teacher, Mr. Eduardo Polón, had the greatest impact on me. Mr. Polón was passionate about teaching Spanish and helped us develop competence in public speaking and cultural awareness. One of my best memories of high school was “Paella con Polón.” This annual dinner brought our class together over a traditional Spanish meal and movie. At the University of Maryland, Professor Charles Hulten has had the greatest impact on me. Prof. Hulten offered insight into careers in economics and inspired me to pursue a career in the field. He has also supported me in my first economic research endeavors, sponsoring me in a two semester independent study and allowing me to assist in his latest research.



Thea J. Nielsen:

As my orchestra conductor in middle and high school, Mr. Patrick Smith taught me many valuable lessons. He inspired students to strive harder, keep commitments and complete daunting tasks. String players throughout Massachusetts knew him as one of the finest conductors in the area. This is due not only to his excellent musical skills but also to his ability to connect with students. Mr. Smith could relate to people of differing ages, backgrounds, abilities and interests. He brought out the best in each student and in each orchestra he conducted. He motivated students to set and meet high standards while having fun. Professor William Rivera of the Applied Institute of Agriculture has also been a great mentor. Current and former students are always amazed at his depth of knowledge and graciousness. As a research assistant to Prof. Rivera during my sophomore year, I learned about his research and experiences abroad. He taught me to always do a thorough and excellent job when completing a task, even if doing so is not required. Prof. Rivera's outstanding work has inspired me to learn more, seek out unique opportunities and build relationships with people.



Stephanie M. Petillo:

Mr. Bill Noeth taught my 11th grade Honors course on Trigonometry and Analytical Geometry. His enthusiasm inspired many students, and his approach to teaching new concepts relied on interactions with the class.

This changed the way I looked at math, making it more interesting. Mr. Noeth inspired me to work hard while enjoying what I do, and he taught me the importance of understanding the method behind solving a problem.

I have carried these techniques through high school and now apply them to my engineering courses. Professor Mary Bowden of the Aerospace

Engineering department has been a mentor to me over the past three years. Since my first semester at the University of Maryland, Prof. Bowden has been served as the project advisor for the Balloon Payload Program, and I have also been her student in two engineering classes. Her door is always open to help students, both as a professor and advisor. She has on many occasions helped me balance my class load, allowing me to major in engineering and minor in Italian. Prof. Bowden has always encouraged me to do my best and follow my interests as they have shifted and developed throughout my college career.



Anne Powell:

Mr. Peter McAdams' enthusiasm and humor made me feel welcome in his challenging sixth grade English class. He helped me acquire a more advanced vocabulary and improve my reading comprehension. His "How to Throw a Ball" assignment taught our class the importance of writing clearly when he hilariously followed our flawed instructions. As a result of his class, I continued to pursue my interest in English during high school and eventually enrolled as an English major at the University of Maryland. When I was a freshman, Professor Michael Olmert helped me

direct my enthusiasm by inviting me to join a group of students that studied and performed plays outside of class. It was inspiring to be part of such an intellectually curious cluster of students, and thrilling for a freshman to be among upperclass students and alumni. Two years later, Professor Olmert guided me through contemporary theatrical works when he recommended a play that is now the subject of my senior thesis project.



Jennifer Thackston:

Throughout my education, I have been fortunate to have a number of inspiring mentors. Ms. Dawn Barbe and Professor Sue Kogut have encouraged my love of learning and helped me to develop leadership skills. Ms. Barbe was my physical education teacher during the three years that I spent at Monocacy Middle School. As a result of her teaching, I became fascinated with physical fitness, living a healthy lifestyle, and encouraging others to do the same. Later, as a high school student, I had the good fortune to spend a semester teaching alongside her. Prof. Kogut

has inspired me since my first class with her at the University of Maryland. I admire her enthusiasm as an instructor and her passion for promoting fitness among our youth. She has provided me with professional opportunities at the state and national level. Most of all, Prof. Kogut has given me the confidence to succeed as an educator.



Scott T. Watson:

Mr. James Barton, my advanced placement physics teacher, showed me a path towards engineering and helped me to develop a love for learning. His annual Rube Goldberg projects challenged students to think critically about complicated design challenges. These projects require students to accomplish a “simple” task using a minimum number of simple machines in a creative way. My project helped me realize my love for engineering. Mr. Barton also encouraged me to give a presentation at the Maryland Junior Science and Humanities Symposium. This experience exposed me

to some of the brightest students in the state studying science and engineering. Professor Gilmer Blankenship first introduced me to the broad field of signals and systems research through his class on numerical techniques in engineering. His emphasis on real world problem solving during class drew me in. At the end of the semester, I felt a sense of accomplishment when I reflected on the Matlab code I had written as a direct result of the theory I learned in class. Currently Prof. Blankenship is mentoring me in the development of a robotic sensory system capable of indicating the direction of people using auditory clues.