



Editorials

McCracken a Greene success

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OK, Elissa McCracken didn't win the Miss America Pageant. Neither did Autumn Marisa, another Greene County young lady who competed before her.

But being one of 53 young women competing on one of the biggest pageant stages is an achievement nonetheless, and we salute her success.

Next month, the motion picture industry will honor the "best" in a host of categories with an Oscar statue, and from now until the Academy Awards are handed out, we can expect to hear many competitors say, "It is just an honor to be nominated." There are no doubt many who do feel honored, but we are not so naive as to not recognize that what they really want is to win.

This is not to suggest McCracken did not feel honored to qualify for Miss America by winning the Miss Ohio pageant. Surely she did, but the 21-year-old pharmacy major at Ohio Northern University has quite a future ahead of her, and it does not revolve around tiaras and sashes.

This former Miss Rain Day Queen from Waynesburg has shown she can compete in the big time, and not coming away with the Miss America title should in no way be construed as a "failure."

We would be hard pressed to find a county the size of Greene that has sent two women to this prestigious pageant. And moreover, we were heartened by the support the Waynesburg community showed her in her quest to win the crown.

McCracken was no different than any little girl growing up, dreaming about being Miss America. She came closer than thousands of other girls who held on to that same dream.

Dream. Dream big. Dreams do come true. What if you allowed yourself to believe in the possibility that every dream you have can materialize? It may sound crazy, it may sound like mystical or magical

thinking, but it is not. No one embodies holding on to a dream more than McCracken, and that tenacity paid off in big dividends for the 2009 Waynesburg Central High School graduate.

After being named Miss Ohio, McCracken said, “It was really a dream come true. It still has not sunk in at all, but it’s just an amazing feeling.” The experience at the Miss Ohio Pageant was similar to other pageants McCracken has competed in, but she only compared being crowned Miss Ohio to winning Miss Rain Day.

“It was actually kind of very similar to the feeling I had when I won Miss Rain Day, just on a larger scale,” she said. “The biggest dream I ever had was competing for Miss America ... that’s the most surreal part.”

She had said she wanted to be Miss Rain Day since she was 3 years old, and after she won, she was quoted, “It’s a wonderful feeling when you achieve a childhood dream.”

McCracken competed for the Miss America title on a platform of stopping cyberbullying, and she has been invited to speak to student groups about her experiences. She describes her battles against bullies and the steps all student groups can use to become bully-free.

“Pageants have provided me with an outlet where I can express myself,” she said. “I had little self-confidence, and I participated in these pageants to overcome that. I had to believe I was beautiful and intelligent.”

If that doesn’t define a winner, we don’t know what does. And McCracken’s journey has proven one thing: Dreams do come true in one form or another.

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