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Professor LaRosa

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Personal Story

For my personal story, I would like to pitch the story of my mother Jeanette Rivera. She grew up in the South Bronx quite poor and through hard work and dedication, managed to graduate from college and build a good life. My mother grew up in a six story apartment building in the South Bronx. The building was beautiful, and grand, with marble stairs. Everyone in the neighborhood looked out for each other. But soon, the urban renewal and white flight affected the neighborhood. Working class people and business owners joined in on a mass migration out of the area. The new residents were unsavory, and the building and the neighborhood deteriorated quickly. Gangs patrolled the streets, and lots where building once stood were stacks of trash and rubble. Drug use was publicly visible. My mother was an excellent student and was slated to attend the local high school, where she would undoubtedly be lost in a web of educational bureaucracy. The guidance counselor gave her the opportunity to get a better high school education. He called in every favor owed to him and got my mother assigned to Truman High School, which was completely out of district for her. Truman High School, located in Co-op City in the Bronx, was at that time a of complex of safe, and beautiful terraced apartments, a far cry from where my mom lived. While attending Truman my mom realized how poor she was and became determined to work hard for a better life. Upon graduating from Truman, she attended John Jay College in New York. Her college years were difficult. My mom's father

passed away and the responsibility fell upon her to help with bills. So, she worked full-time and attended college full-time. Finances were a challenge, and at times she had to borrow money just to buy her books. Yet, she never gave up because she understood that working hard meant a better future. Graduating from college was a proud moment for her, but tough times were not over. Landing a job in her field proved challenging. Eventually, she landed a job with the Administration for Children services, where she worked for 5 1/2 years and was promoted two times. She left there and joined the NYS Division of Parole where she worked for about 1 1/2 years, and was assigned to the Absconders Search Unit, a prestigious unit within Parole. Finally, she left the Division of Parole and became a Police Officer with the NYC Police Department, My mother views her life as successful. We have a very nice home, have had unforgettable vacations, have enjoyed Broadway and so many exciting activities that she never experienced as a child. My mother helped to create a path for my brother and I that would lead us toward more opportunity and successes. Also, proving that it doesn't matter where you come from but rather where you end up at.