

Three ECSU Women Share What It Means To Be A Woman

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The month of March is set aside to celebrate mothers, daughters, sisters, wives, doctors, actresses, nurses, wives and so many other titles that American women hold.

Although women have been long thought of as the weaker half, too emotional and unintelligent, women have proven through the ages how strong and powerful they are.

There have been many women who have contributed to women's history and paved the way for later generations of women. Maya Angelou, Venus and Serena Williams, Susan B. Anthony, Ida B. Wells and Florence Nightingale all overcame oppressions and obstacles and motivated later generations of women to be proud of who they are.

Three of Elizabeth City State University's intelligent and striking young ladies tell why they are proud to be American women, unique things about themselves and discuss some of the issues they face as women.

Shatrina Nicole McCoy is a sophomore English major from Durham, NC. McCoy is currently a part of many prestigious and active organizations. She is a part of the NAACP, New Generation Campus Ministries, two praise teams, CBAC, the Children's Telethon and she is the president of the New Residence Hall. When asked how she feels about being a woman, she said that she feels honored to be a woman because of the uniqueness of women's silent strength and their God given ability to bare children. "We are the caregivers and the nurturers, the backbone behind the man. If it were not for us, there would be no man because we give birth to them," she said. McCoy stated that she also feels honored to be an American woman. "Women from other countries are trying to get here because of the freedoms that we have, and it is sad that we take it for granted," she said. McCoy added that sometimes she feels that American women have a little too much freedom, because in some countries the women's dress codes are strict, and in America, women are allowed to wear whatever they want, which she said is sometimes next to nothing. "I can not look out for every woman, but I can try to set an example by the way I carry myself," said McCoy.

McCoy says that she is proud of where she is and how far she has come. She remembers being in love for two years with a guy who tried to pressure her to have sex with him. She remembers being so in love with him that she felt incomplete without him. "He got another girl pregnant, and it was then that I realized that I would not com-

promise myself for him or any other man and I moved on," said McCoy. Now, McCoy said that she will be proud of who she is before she tries to fill that missing part of her with someone else.

Katrevia Rodgers, a junior Social Work major from Williamston, NC, stressed her natural passion to work with children. "I have the patience and determination to work with children. I want to make a difference in at least

like and respectable. "My mother is truly an example of a virtuous woman because she stood up for her beliefs in God and she never compromised His word," Rodgers said. She says that without her mother's perseverance and determination to raise her right, she would not be a woman of God today. Rodgers admitted that she is independent, and that she is aware of the intimidation that it causes to men. "My parents taught me to be independent,

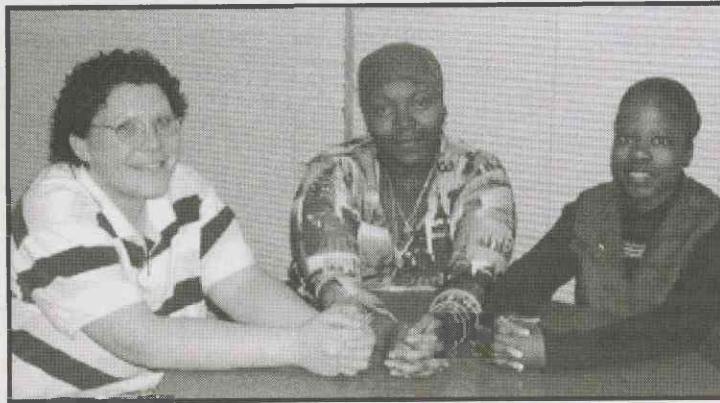
stood.

When asked what defines her as a woman, Autry said that a woman has inner pride. "A woman does extraordinary things, yet does not crave credit for it," said Autry. She added that she believes that many men are intimidated by a woman, especially an independent woman. "A lot of women say that they don't need a man and they can take care of themselves, and that is true to an extent, but sooner or later a woman is going to desire a companion, it's natural," Autry said. However, Autry believes that a woman's desire for a companion can cause her to become desperate and thus some get impatient. She said that as a result of impatience, some women make the mistake of taking the first available man who comes their way, who may not be worthy of their time and end up getting hurt. "Many women are hurt because of an unfulfilled need of a mate and when they do date, they think that automatically they are supposed to sleep with the man, as a result they end up only getting a one night stand," said Autry.

Autry said that although she is proud to be an American woman, she admires the way men in third world countries appreciate and respect their women and how the women dress and carry themselves. "In other countries men appreciate women more because of their conservative dress. They don't show off what they have because they are a woman. But in America, women show off everything that they have and the ones that do, do not take pride in being a woman."

As a woman, Autry realizes that there are times when she will experience pressure, unfairness and even harassment. She remembered being sexually harassed on her job and the frustration that it caused her. "On my job I was continuously asked by co-workers and managers to have sex with them. One particular guy tried to make it look like something was going on between us and when I told him that I wouldn't have sex with him, he started spreading nasty rumors about me," Autry recalled. Autry said that her male co-workers and some managers would sometimes touch her in places that she did not feel comfortable, yet she still had to work with them everyday. She said that it started as a joke, but she ended up getting really frustrated. She said that was one of her worst experiences.

McCoy, Rodgers and Autry, each one delightful and charming in their own unique way, had interesting input on their experiences as women in hopes of inspiring and encouraging others.



From left to right: Shannon Autry, Shatrina McCoy and Katrevia Rodgers

one life and supply someone with the attention and guidance that they need," Rodgers said. She said that over the years, women have proven that they have the natural ability to be unselfish and compassionate.

Rodgers also shared some of her views about male and female relationships and how her personal relationship with God helps her to overcome obstacles she faces as a woman. She believes that single people can become desperate for a mate. "A lot of women long to be loved and, in some cases, no matter how the man treats her, she will stick around because that is all she knows," Rodgers said. "In one particular relationship, I felt like I settled for less. Eventually, it didn't work out because when I got into the relationship, I didn't have the right motives," Rodgers said. To avoid this happening to others, Rodgers advises women to seek the individual who fits their standards and to not get into a relationship instantly. Rodgers added that if a woman is patient, God will send the man for her and she will not have to worry about being mistreated.

Rodgers defines herself as a virtuous woman because she trusts in the Lord and makes Him her hope and confidence. She also said though as a virtuous woman she makes mistakes and falls, she is able to rise again. She said that her mother, a genuine example of a virtuous woman, is the one responsible for shaping her into being lady-

and I'm grateful because being independent makes me strong enough to overcome obstacles that come my way, and I keep pressing no matter how long it takes to overcome," said Rodgers.

Shannon Autry, a freshman Art major from Fayetteville, NC, desired to strongly emphasize the modest strength of women. Autry said that women are less egocentric than men and are therefore able to perform multiple activities at once. "Women are more flexible because we do not let our egos get in the way of what we have to do. We allow ourselves to be emotional, we are not concerned with egos, so we do what we have to do when it is time to rise to any occasion," Autry said. Autry added that women have proved throughout history that they are capable of taking care of their families, outside activities and other people. "The mother is the backbone, the one who holds a family together," said Autry.

Autry said that she learned to be strong and independent from her mother. Autry remembered once when she was in the hospital, her mother was by her side every second, and she let the doctors know how serious she was about them giving Autry the proper care. "When my mother entered the room, their egos were left outside of the room because my mother came of as authoritative to ensure that it the importance of my health was under-