

Silence has never been an option.

It has been a long four years. After almost three and a half of those years filled with exploring the art within journalism, my high school journalism career is soon coming to a close. As I reflect on the impact that newspaper has had on my life, I am reminded of the importance of the platform I have been given.

As a soft-spoken sophomore, new to the newspaper program, but showing promise in writing, design, and work ethic, I was assigned an editor's position within my first semester on staff. As years passed, my role grew as my passion expanded. Soon developing into the outspoken and opinionated Black woman that I am today,

I have become tasked with increasing responsibilities that allow me to combine all of my interests into one. Bringing my words to life on paper and heightening the impact by pairing the stories with eye catching illustrations allows me to utilize my love for both writing and art.

Though our program and school is diverse, early on I noticed that there were not many articles pertaining to Black culture. So, I took it upon myself to write stories, design covers, and create illustrations that tell Black truth. After the horrific murders and injustices towards Black people that have recently gained media attention, using my platform to fight for Black liberation is of the utmost

importance. Staying silent is not an option. Journalism has provided me with a platform to speak my truth and begin to make the change necessary in my community. This platform has allowed me to become the 2021 IHSPA Writer of the Year and second place Designer of the Year.

Though I strive to use my platform to create change within the Black community, it is not and has never been my job to educate closeted racists. After becoming an IHSPA award-winning student journalist, the thought of multiple school officials has been that I must use any and every opportunity to educate those who do not value the lives of people who look like me. It is not a Black person's job to do this, ever. My message has always been to uplift and change Black lives, not to change the minds of those outside of my community.

When quite literally sharing this message in front of crowds of people, I should never be told that I should share a more "educational" message because I am "one of the school's top journalists, so it is expected better of me." Though it may have been intended to be encouraging, this statement is a form of censorship of an uplifting message by school officials supposed to promote equity. Boldly stating that I am rooting for everybody Black may not be a digestible idea for many, but that is the message that I will wholly embody in life and journalism, no matter the expectations that someone may have of me.

I have always been and always will be, rooting for everybody Black.

Refusing Silence



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