



MY HERO, MY AUNT

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"I'm not ordering you any tools, yet," the man informed her. "You're only here to find a husband, start a family, and quit. And I'm not wasting money."

This was the answer my aunt received from her boss on her very first day at her new job at General Motors as an electrical apprentice. When my aunt arrived at her workplace and realized she had not been given any tools, she had gone to her boss for some. The answer she received was discriminatory and rude. All the other men working around her were fully equipped with their own tools that had been provided by the company.

That is just one example of many trials my aunt would face starting her career as an electrician. She could tell story after story of men stereotyping and discriminating against her. It must have been hard to continue to go to work every day, knowing what could and would happen.

My Aunt Laurie is an electrician. She started working with her father at age eight and continued on after high school to work for a small electrical contractor. After that, she transferred to Buick, GMC, and Delta plants as an electrician.

She is my personal hero. She is an inspiration not only to me, but to every other woman who has experienced working in an environment that consists of people who were unaccepting of her working there.

My aunt has done many things in her lifetime that have taken courage. Just deciding to be an electrician was a big leap to take: Studies show that less than three percent of all electricians are female, and going into a career with those statistics would be very intimidating. Especially when she began her job, she was faced with prejudice. People judged her as weak because she was a woman in a man's world.

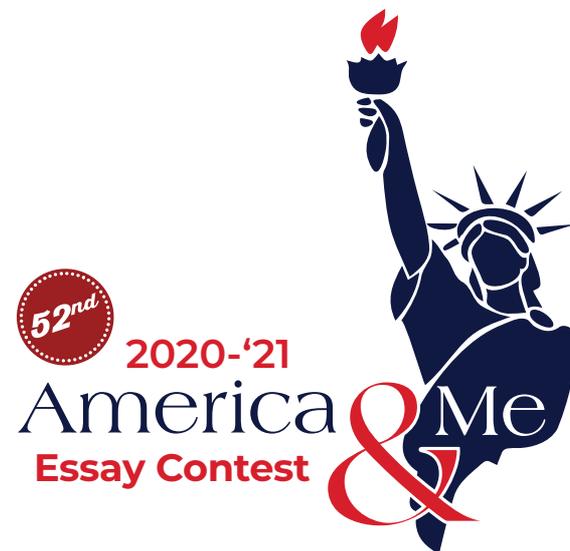
In spite of this, she kept going and worked harder because she was determined to prove them wrong. She is an inspiration to me in her strength to go against the opinions of others over and over again for

years. Just as she could have easily given into their jeers and quit, she persisted and has kept her job there for over 20 years.

She has been forced to work crazy shifts while being a single mom trying to take care of her two kids at the same time.

When Laurie was young, she would boast, "Anything boys can do, girls can do better!" Looking at her now, I think my aunt has proved the truth in those words. She has shown others that she can accomplish anything a man can do in her workplace and has done the job even better.

I am so honored to call her my aunt and am proud of everything she has done. She has shown me that nothing can stop women from pursuing their goals if they work hard and have the persistence to keep going.



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