MARY C. SMITH

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 I am a 42 year old female, mother of two and a wife. I have been on my own since the age of eighteen. I became pregnant at eighteen and due to the fact that I was not married, my parents put me out when they learned I was pregnant. I moved in with my now husbands family and we lived in his mother’s basement until we could afford an apartment of our own. I had my son in October 1989 and I began my college education at Mott Community College in Flint, Michigan in January 1990. I never received cash welfare benefits, instead my husband worked days and I attended night school so that we did not have the burden of child care expenses. Once I graduated with my Associate Degree, I enrolled at the University of Michigan Flint in pursuit of my bachelor degree. While obtaining my bachelor degree I also worked full time as a shift manager at Taco Bell. I graduated in December 1996 and began my employment with the State of Michigan in February 1997. I am proud to say that this past July, my husband and I have been together for 26 years.

 I have held several positions with the State of Michigan that have taught me responsibility, dependability, commitment, reasoning, social awareness and problem solving. I have worked to protect vulnerable children from abuse and neglect for over 16 years. I have also worked with the poor and vulnerable adults and families of Genesee County and have always ensured that if I am unable to help them with that I am able to refer them to an agency that can help. I am dedicated to working with the public and in the social work field. I am able to overcome adversity and work with all people effectively and cooperatively. I am passionate about my commitment to social justice for all people. I have the utmost respect and sensitivity for the uniqueness of all individuals. I am able to accept constructive criticism as well as incorporate any changes to correct the behavior. I always keep an open mind, listen tentatively and try to get others to feel comfortable with me while always treating others with dignity. I believe that both education and work experience combined have made me the person that I am today.

 I have been out of college for almost eighteen years. When I graduated with my Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Michigan Flint in December 1996, I immediately became a full time employee and have longed to return to finish my education. I was so dedicated to my employment that I could never find the “right” time to return to school. However, when my husband became ill and permanently disabled I decided that the time is now. This was very devastating to our family as we had a child completing high school at the time and about to enter college. I am now the main financial supporter of our family. Not only have I returned to college, our son is in college as well. I decided that I must put my family and education first and return to school in order to complete my journey.

 I have a dream of working in a local hospital with geriatric patients. That is why I am currently working at my field placement at Hurley Medical Center. I currently work a majority of my time with geriatric patients who are in need of placement in psychological facilities. It is very rewarding to me to work with geriatric patients as I believe that I serve as their voice of reason and comfort. Many times people “talk at” geriatric patients instead of “listen to” them. My mother is now 76 years of age and I sit back and watch how people at the doctor’s office brush her off and do not try and meet her needs. This has touched me deeply and I want to be a Geriatric Social Worker that is able to communicate the needs of my patients so that they can be heard and treatment plans include their needs.

 By returning to college to obtain my master’s degree in the field of social work, I will be able to support my family, fulfill my lifelong dream and seek further advancement in my career. By obtaining my MSW degree I will seek supplemental employment as a Geriatric Social Worker, which is another dream I have. Without a master’s degree I will not be able to apply for any positions higher than the position I hold at this time. I have reached the top of the ladder with the degree I hold at this time. Also without a master’s degree I will not be eligible to teach at the college level.

 As you review my application, transcripts and updated autobiographical sketch you will see that I am committed to achieve excellence by always doing my best. I believe that if you study hard, work hard and treat others with respect and dignity all things are possible. I believe in setting goals and achieving those goals. My goal at this time is to obtain my MSW degree from Michigan State. Once I complete school, I plan to apply for an upper management position with the State of Michigan that will allow me to mentor others to be the best they can be. I also must continue to support my family and ensure that my son is able to graduate from college and that my husband is rest assured that we are going to make it during these struggling times.

 I was awarded the Mildred B. Erickson Fellowship for the Fall 2013 semester in which the fellowship support paid for my SW 894A required 4 credit course in which I obtained a 4.0. I was awarded the Mildred B. Erickson Fellowship for the Spring 2014 semester in which the fellowship support paid for my SW 894B required 4 credit course in which I obtained a 4.0. I have been able to maintain a 4.0 GPA while working full time, attending school part time and working an additional 16 hours a week in a field placement required for my MSW. I plan to continue to strive for a 4.0 grade point average as I believe that all things are possible with hard work, dedication and prayer. I hope that you find it in your hearts to award me a 3rd and final Mildred B. Erickson Fellowship as I am a returning adult student in need of assistance at this time. I am asking that you take into consideration awarding me a fellowship to cover the 9 credits that I am enrolled in for the Fall 2014 semester. All of the courses I am enrolled in and asking for assistance by the MBE fellowship are requirements to fulfill my degree for a Masters of Social Work (MSW). Without assistance I am not sure I will be able to complete my education.

 I did attend the yearly Mildred B. Erickson reception on April 24, 2014 and I enjoyed meeting many of the MBE Board of Directors and Women’s Resource Center staff. I would like you to know that I would be more than willing to speak at next MBE annual reception as I am eager to continue to spread my gratitude for this fellowship to your donors and board members. I thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary C. Smith