

In Her Words: May



Shelley Coulter



“Sometimes we have to leave our titles at the door and enter as who we are.”

Every woman has a story. But some stories shake rooms, open doors, and redefine what’s possible. In Her Words is SAR’s series spotlighting trailblazing women who lead with courage, shape community with intention, and inspire the next generation through purpose, resilience, and grace.

Some women spend so much of their lives becoming what others need that they are rarely given the chance to ask who they are beyond it all. Shelley knows that story intimately. For years, life called her into many roles. Mother. Wife. Daughter. Provider. Builder. Caregiver. The woman who holds things together when others cannot.

Now, after decades of pouring into everyone around her, she has entered a season where she is finally pouring back into herself.

“I’m in the best chapter of my life right now,” she says.

At 61 years young, Shelley calls this her wisdom chapter. Not because life has been easy, but because life has taught her what knowledge alone never could. Wisdom, for her, has come through loss, perseverance, sacrifice, and the quiet courage to keep becoming.

“I never had time to be me. I had to wear all these hats.”

It is a truth many women know well. Long before they are invited to discover themselves, they are asked to become everything for everyone else. But beneath every responsibility was always a woman with vision.

When asked who she is beyond titles or accomplishments, her answer came without hesitation.

“I’m a friend. A confidant. Someone who likes to listen to stories and likes to tell the story.”

That instinct to care, to listen, and to build meaning from experience has followed her through every chapter. Shelley moved with the spirit of an entrepreneur before she had language for it, building businesses, trusting ideas early, and creating opportunities from instinct and determination.

But one of the most defining chapters of her life was motherhood. Shelley saw possibility in her children long before the world could measure it. She made bold decisions, trusted her intuition, and built pathways where there were none.

Today, her daughter serves as a Senior Vice President at Warner Brothers. Her son earned a football scholarship and later saw his creative talents open doors in branding and design.

Those accomplishments belong to them, but Shelley’s fingerprints are all over the foundation.

Motherhood did not make her smaller. It revealed how expansive she truly was.

She also never stopped choosing growth for herself. Later in life, Shelley returned to college alongside her son, earning her bachelor’s degree before continuing on to receive her master’s.

“You never stop growing.”

Her definition of success has changed with time. What once looked like achievement and proving herself has softened into something far more meaningful.

“Now it’s, I have to be happy where I am.”

Peace. Stability. Freedom. The confidence to choose herself without apology.

One of Shelley’s proudest creations was POWER, a movement centered on Purpose, Originality, Worth, Empowerment, and Respect. Through programs and resources, she poured confidence into women navigating identity and self worth. Years later, women still remember what it gave them.

“I didn’t know I was reflecting a walk of greatness to some people.”

That is often how impact works. The women changing lives are not always announcing it. They are simply living in a way that gives others permission to rise.

Shelley is also honest about something many strong women rarely say aloud.

“That self confidence that people see on the outside sometimes meets me as not being comfortable,” she says. “But they don’t see it. And I literally have to coach myself.”

Strength does not erase doubt. It means moving forward anyway.

When asked what she would tell women still waiting for their next chapter, her answer was simple.

“Don’t be afraid to jump. There is always something there to catch you.”

She has spent a lifetime pouring into others. Into her family. Into women finding themselves. Into dreams that needed someone to believe first.

Now, in this season, she is learning to offer that same care to herself.

Because some chapters arrive later.

Because some women bloom more than once.

This is Shelley. This is SAR.

By Hector Zamora



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