

# THE BLACK QUEEN IS THE STRONGEST PIECE ON THE CHESSBOARD

The encouraging power that intertwines with the voice of a Black woman is one of distinction; mirroring that of a loud, supportive whisper transcended from the ancestors. As a postsecondary Black student, the only one in many of my classes, I often felt I was the spokesperson for all Black people.

Rather than becoming offended by that awkward silence and stares from others in the class, I gladly accepted the microaggressions to illustrate how this resilient Black woman relishes courage and stands tall in my purpose to speak undeniable wisdom. Often times, upon entering any room, I comprehend the power and voice of a Black woman precedes the words yet to be spoken. In the rippling words of the late great Malcolm X, "The most disrespected person in America is the Black woman. The most unprotected person in America is the Black woman. The most neglected person in America is the Black woman." I am forever a proud, beautiful, unapologetic Black woman.

Transitioning into a Black woman came early for me, as too many of our young Black girls are forced to. As sixth-graders in my language arts class, we were to write about what we did for spring break. I was eager to share the special experiences about spending an entire week on a college campus, a rarity among my peers at that time. Filling two complete pages of loose-leaf paper with memories that would forever be etched into my memory was easy, only to be interrupted by the teacher calling me up to her desk. She asked if I understood the assignment and had me repeat it. After repeating what we were to

write about, the teacher acknowledged my correct answer and instructed me to write about what I did, not what I wanted to do. I am certain the look of confusion and perplexity was masked on my face as the teacher grabbed her red pen and wrote a large X on each side of both papers. She gave my destroyed papers back to me, firmly looked in my face, and said, "Black people don't go to Notre Dame." As I returned to my seat, with feelings of defeat and bafflement, how could my teacher utter these words, and she's married to a Black man with Black sons? It was at that moment that I knew I'd become a phenomenal educator as a Black woman! My first teaching position landed me at the very school with that same teacher, as a colleague!

Reflecting on the above story as a Black woman today with a voice, I am continuously reminded that hearing the extraordinary voices of determined, strong, wise, and fervent Black women is a testament to pliability and conviction. I am thankful for the resounding voices of Harriet Tubman, Mary Church Terrell, Ida B. Wells, Mary McLeod Bethune, Audre Lorde, Shirley Chisholm, First Lady Michelle Obama, Vice President Kamala Harris, Nikole Hannah-Jones, and JoyAnn Reid, whose voices echo the shoulders from which they stand. As I continue navigating life's twists, turns, and crossroads of inequity, a daily reminder I've learned is that life's game mirrors chess. The Black Queen is the strongest piece on the chessboard, with high mobility and the ability to deliver...checkmate!

*I am Dr. Priscilla Culp TS#17 of 52 of The Soutltown Magazine. I want to thank you all for having SOUL! ♪*



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**CHECKMATE!**



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