A Blended Wolfpack Family

My mom is sobbing and my step-dad is moving suitcases and boxes into my room. My sister and I are checking out my room and deciding which side I should have. My step-brother keeps trying to FaceTime as we are getting work done. That was freshman year, and only a little has changed since that time. My family has been active throughout my time here at NC State and have contributed to my success in the University and that is why I believe that they should be named the 2015 Family of the Year.

My mother, Angel, re-married right before I entered to college to a man named Montrell. My sister, Tia, and I gained a step-dad and a little brother, Xavier. We are not your typical family, but we are a family nonetheless. They support me in everything I do here at NC State and that is a major motivating factor in my success on the campus. From football games, to fundraisers, to honor society inductions and programs that I help plan for campus, they are always there to support me either with a phone call or in person to show that they are as invested in my education and co-curricular activities as I am.
I am Tsharre Sanders, a senior majoring in Psychology from Clayton, NC. My mom is an alumna of NC State and is very proud of that; you can see it when she comes back to campus and starts reminiscing about her time here. She never has pushed me to do anything here that she did or lives through me vicariously. The only time that it happened was during my application process when I got accepted to NC State and she was just as, if not more, excited than I was for the Big Envelope!

My step-dad is from the same county as we are and he has come in and treated me as if I were one of his own during his time in our lives. He helps with move-in and move-out every year and, honestly, handles most of the moving. He was originally a UNC fan, but after my acceptance to NC State, he became a member of the Wolfpack! He even brought his young son along to the team. My little sister is an Eagle from North Carolina Central University, but that doesn’t stop her from coming on Wolfpack territory. She comes to events to support me in what I do and I do the same for her. When we were younger we were always fighting, as
siblings often do, but as we have grown older and matured, so has our relationship. Her support means a lot to me and helps me to accomplish great things because I know I have her looking up to me.

Growing up, in any situation there was always me, my mom and my sister. We did everything together. She raised us to be hard working girls and to accomplish everything we put our minds to. She was our biggest fan and advocate and with that, taught us how to advocate for ourselves, which I know has translated to my college years. I have been on Dean’s List multiple times, learned how to successfully navigate sometimes tough conversations with professors, and how to get involved without overwhelming myself. As far as being my biggest fan, she still is. She is a huge cheerleader and always highlights my successes and finds ways to encourage me to learn from my mistakes and failures. Mom always was the perfect example of what it means to be a good mother. She put me and my sister before herself and that still holds true today—even with us being adults in college. Since I am only twenty minutes away from home, if I ever need anything, she’s sure to provide it, and that support is something that has pushed me through and helped me to get where I am today.

Mom always pushed us to be involved in something and I presume she knew the importance of involvement and how it helps a student to feel connected to their institution and how that in turn aides in a students’ success. In high school, she always said if I quit band then I had to find something else to do. I currently serve on the Union Activities Board (UAB) as the Black Students Board (BSB) chair and I serve as the president of PEACE Church on campus. She’s attended PEACE church with me and come to some football games when I was a member of the Power Sound of the South.
When my mom re-married I was sad that it wouldn’t just be the girls anymore, but the joy that Montrell brought to her life was sufficient enough for me to get over my selfishness. His son also helped with that because my sister and I had never had a smaller person to look up to us. We all accepted one another and learned how to live and function most efficiently together. This union was not one that was an impediment to my success and in many ways, it actually helped everyone’s transitions to be less stressful. Montrell and his son also were very active in my time here at NC State and serve as an integral part of my support system.

As I enter my fourth and final year here at NC State, I am full as I think about how my family has contributed to my success over the years. We have done so much together and they have done even more for me. We are a new family that has little traditions, but the one thing that is for sure is that my family cares for me and is an essential part of who I have become. Because of this I believe that this blended Wolfpack family should be the 2015 Family of the Year.