



## Why Eagle Forum Means So Much to Me?

by Deborah Love, Executive Director, Eagle Forum of Alabama

My passion for Eagle Forum began at a very young age. During high school while participating with Teen Eagles, I attended Eagle Council in DC for the first time with my mother, Vivian Garrett. It was an exciting conference to hear the speakers and understand Eagle Forum's national and international reach. This experience was one of the first to introduce me to Eagle Forum and the great opportunities for young leaders.

My mom, as a leader in Eagle Forum, hosted local meetings on pertinent issues, organized candidate debates and issue related banquets, distributed candidate surveys and frequently wrote editorials. She received the 7<sup>th</sup> District Award 1991 for leadership and activism within Eagle Forum. In 1993, she was presented The Eagle Award for Alabama by Phyllis Schlafly. Later, she became our Alabama Teen Eagle Leader, helping teen leaders plan and execute monthly meetings along with service projects, retreats and trips to Montgomery to learn about government. For this effort, she received The Olive Spann Award: Alabama's Eagle of the Year Award for 2007.

As I grew up, I learned more about my grandmother, Joan Pate, and her involvement with conservatism in Alabama which influenced my mom. For years, she was President of the Lowndes County Republican Women and went to DC to campaign for Phyllis Schlafly to be the President of the National Federation of Republican Women, becoming friends with Eagle Forum faithful's Olive Spann and Bobby Ames. In 1970, she ran unsuccessfully for the Alabama House as a Republican in a heavily Democratic area of the state. My grandmother's political legacy with Phyllis and my mother's involvement with Eagle Forum impressed on me that conservative women can transform their communities through grassroots activism and convicted leadership.

**There were no other programs like the Teen Eagles program for high school or middle school students in Alabama. I loved it so much; I was involved throughout high school and served as president in my last two years.** From my experience, Teen Eagles provided opportunities and education to grow in my understanding of conflicting worldviews within the realm of public policy. In addition, I was trained how to lobby and lobbied throughout high school. I also gained a deeper interest in community service and participated in many Teen Eagles' service projects which gave me a solid understanding of American principles of freedom like federalism.

I will never forget my first day as a college freshman attending my political science class. **I had a very liberal English professor who caught me reading Phyllis's book the "Supremacists" in the hallway. He was intrigued and said, "You know she is a contradiction, she tells other women they can't work outside of the home but then she gets a law degree." I shot back, "I don't think you understand her actual positions. Have you ever read any of her books?"** I didn't know at that time that would be my only political science professor during college. After facing threats for speaking out and bias in the classroom towards my conservative ideals, I decided to become even more engaged with conservative activism by starting an organization called "Students for Liberty at Huntingdon College." From my professors, I heard statements like, "nude stockings are racist," or that I must say, "founding persons instead of founding fathers." I hosted events such as "Grave Yard of Innocence" to promote awareness and create discussion about the evils of abortion. A mock graveyard was set up on the green, which is a central part of Huntingdon College campus. I wanted my college which is a liberal arts college to promote ideals of liberty and intellectual diversity including discussion of ideas.

I had the great opportunity to speak at the Eagle Forum of Alabama Leadership Conference about political correctness and other topics. These opportunities at a young age allowed me to grow professionally and provided unique leadership training. It also provided an important network of support for my college conservative activism.



**After the end of my sophomore year of college I interned in the St. Louis Eagle Forum office with Phyllis Schlafly.** She was an amazing woman, who changed the course of American history and her story was documented in my college history class. I was so impressed by how much time she used to promote young women into the Conservative movement. Phyllis was never afraid to get involved on controversial topics such as abortion. She and Eagle Forum were instrumental in ensuring the Republican Party had a pro-life platform following Roe v. Wade. Phyllis was even kind enough to throw me a birthday party at the office and give me a signed copy of her biography. **I also benefitted greatly from attending Eagle Forum's Collegian Seminar on Capitol Hill several times. I was blessed to be awarded the Collegians Scholar Award for my activism. My Eagle Forum contacts helped me earn an intern spot in Senator Sessions' office in Washington D.C.**

I remained active in the conservative movement by serving as president of the Jones Federalist Society while at Jones School of Law in Montgomery. I received my law degree in May, 2014. After law school, I reached out to Eagle Forum of Alabama chapter president Eunie Smith about

public policy positions available. She let me know that Eagle Forum of Alabama was searching for a new Executive Director. I knew right then that was where God wanted me to be.

**Eagle Forum gave me opportunity to go out in the public square as an advocate for conservative principles at a young age. For young women and college students there are few organizations willing to promote youth leadership in high school and continue to provide leadership opportunities for those in college and young professionals.**

Eagle Forum is the leading Conservative grass roots public policy organization in the nation. I am proud to be among an amazing group of Eagle Forum leaders.

**I hope you will attend Eagle Council and join an organization and network of leadership who are dedicated to liberty and family in America. This will be a truly amazing opportunity with outstanding leaders and speakers. If you want to start changing our nation for the better grab your family and friends make sure not to miss Eagle Council XLVI, September 14-17 in Washington, DC! Register today!**