MEMORIAL SPEECH

WRITTEN FOR

MARIAN COLEMAN

Hello everyone. Today we are here to celebrate the significant life of our good friend and my colleague, Marie Hawkins. Each one of us holds on to precious memories and moments we shared with Marie, and as we think of her impact on our lives and our community for the past \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years, I want to make sure we are all smiling-on our faces and in our hearts. Marie has always been such an inspiration to us that I am thrilled to have a few moments to tell you what she meant to me. Although I knew her professionally and so much of our experience was through that connection, I could go on and on recalling the wonderful times we had together outside of school as well… but I won’t!! I want to also learn new things about Marie through **YOUR** eyes too.

Albert Einstein said, “Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile.” I have to say that although I doubt that Einstein’s path ever crossed with Marie’s, he would have been inspired to say that again had the two actually met. Marie was devoted to her students and committed to the success of each young person that crossed her path and they and their families loved her too. She served throughout the Iowa City school system in many capacities and at each vantage point she attained strengthened her impact on more than one generation of school children. She was an excellent, incredible, and caring teacher working in Special Education at Weber Elementary School. She served as my assistant director of summer programs for more than 1,000 students. Her positive and caring approach on our community’s youth was obvious as Marie collaborated tirelessly with me to develop over forty enrichment classes for elementary and special education students… and if all of **THAT** wasn’t enough, Marie also shared her insights and commitment to our youth by supervising the 6th grade boost program, organizing the junior high remedial program, and overseeing the summer school program for Iowa City… and that alone encompassed seven schools!! The person that coined the phrase, “Give me the child when he is seven years old and I will show you the man” didn’t know Marie Hawkins!!! She worked her magic with love and intuition and her inspiration has contributed immeasurably to the educational transformation of the students and families of Iowa City. I am incredibly thankful for all that Marie has done for all of us, and I am even more grateful that she was acknowledged with the Milken Award for Outstanding Teacher. What an honor **THAT** was!! But the best part of receiving that award was that she never did all that she did for recognition…. she did it because she wanted to make sure our youth knows their value. She was determined that every child have a sense of confidence and self worth. She knew that a little pride goes a long way to building a foundation for living a life worthwhile.

Marie was devoted to her career and her students but there was so much more to our friendship. Everything she did was approached with joy and fun and she knew that everything was better when shared. We used to love to attend football games… and what cheerleading skills she had!! (**Mention how she would get animated at certain points or plays in the game**). Her favorite part was when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I’m sure most of you would agree that she was an incredible cook, and not that I want to go off on a tangent or “overstay my welcome” up here, but I bet if I even just named a few of her greatest dishes, it would drive most of you to distraction!!! Like… how about her \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? I can just smell her \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ taking over this room!! And have any of you tasted better \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? She was amazing!! Of course football was great and her cooking was awe-inspiring, but there was something else…. boy, did we **LOVE** shopping!!! All we had to do was go over to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**Name Marie’s favorite shop or mall**) and let her loose in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ department and it was **OVER!!** I think she may have been watching those football players because I truly believe she was ready to tackle if the need arose!! (**Mention something funny that would happen during a shopping spree and wait for the laugh**)

Marie lived a life with all of her heart and all of her soul committed to the well being of others. She was there for us and now her wonderful deeds and commitment to her family, friends and neighbors lives on in all of us. A philosopher once said, “Life can only be understood backwards but it must be lived forwards.” Marie Hawkins lived her life for all of us. She left us a precious gift and that is the lessons, wisdom and joy she shared so freely. She will be greatly missed, but I am confident that if ever any one of us needs a dose of Marie Hawkins, all we have to do is gather together and continue to celebrate her wonderful life.

Thank you all.