**AWARDS SPEECH**

**FOR**

**ANGELA CANNON**

Hello everyone! I want to thank you for this incredible award.... something that is really a **REward** ... recognition for a lifetime’s worth of hard work, persistence, and the perpetual indulgence of this person’s very tenacious, unwavering determination to make a difference. I stand before you as more than a recipient of this year’s Horizon Award for Woman to Watch. I’m here to acknowledge that we all have our own personal battlefields and impossible hills to climb... we can be our own most daunting paradox.... taking whatever comes our way on that “metaphoric chin,” yet still insisting on cracking the code and pursuing excellence ... in the face of all odds... and sometimes.... even though we would do **EXACTLY** what we do to achieve hard earned goals and redefine leadership, someone... or some people sit up, take notice, and shake our hands. Every day, as women “warriors” in this industry, we put on our armor... whether physically or metaphorically, and we fight the good fight... for those that preceded us.... and for our sisters, daughters, nieces, and neighbors.

Everyone starts somewhere, and it’s almost hard to imagine me, in that early set of metaphoric armor... red blazer, black bow tie, black skirt, and a considerable amount of gumption... I was just twenty-two years old and was on my way to conquering my first “hill.” I was a page at CBS Television City... working on shows and answering phones. (**If you want to make a joke, you can say**) fortunately, for me, it was a little less uncomfortable than Valley Forge (**or name another battlefield like the Battle of Atlanta**)... although the hours were long and grueling, some attitudes were, let’s be polite, slightly less than encouraging, and hearing the word, “**NO**” became a mantra, there **WAS** that commissary... (**or name another perk of being in that job and wait for the laugh**).

I survived those early years and much to the chagrin of my “**frenemies**,”every knock... every “**NO**,” every ding and ping aimed towards denting my determination and tenacity proved instead to polish me even more... and here we are. For the past twenty plus years, I lived by a credo that I hadn’t yet heard, but clearly rings true for so many of us.... “That which doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.” I often get asked about my career path and decisions, and my answer is simple..., when you’re inspired to **make a difference** and live and **ACT** beyond the job description... when you realize you have identified a mandate... to contribute to a purpose that is bigger than you might have ever imagined, what you do is **NOT** just a job.  It becomes a context and matrix for how to live a life with meaning... one that we would gladly do... even without the accolades. I’ve been privy to milestones that have sparked career transitions I didn’t even see coming.

* I was Employee #6 at a cable start-up called Gospel Music Channel - using my experience in research to create promotional strategies. I also formed the affiliate marketing department, supporting the network to gain 60Mill + subscribers
* I worked with a team to conceptualize and launch what is now known as Aspire - the network that celebrates black culture and urban lifestyle
* And now, we are running Up Faith & Family streaming service, surpassing goals but more importantly, transforming the world of streaming for a new, like minded audience.

I want to thank to Charley Humbard & Brad Siegel - founder and former vice chairman of Gospel Music Channel, for taking a chance on a random résumé, resulting in so many pivotal moments... tipping points that allowed me the opportunity to not only learn and grow, but to plant seeds of encouragement, support, inspiration, empowerment, that now can help open doors for others.  A lot of “sowing” still must be done, but foundations have been laid.

To my team, Tracey Tooks, Dre Barnes & DeEtta West, who are here tonight, along with the others that could not make it, thank you for all you do. We have overcome many obstacles, impossible deadlines, and have still been able to meet and exceed year end goals... and we are only at October!! I want to acknowledge you for being open to learning from me... I **KNOW** I **CERTAINLY** learn from you. I’m also inspired by my former team CDM, Hal Rosenberg, “debate partner” and ultimate cheerleader, Greg Madsen and Heather Symmes, Thank you!

Most importantly, I want to acknowledge the strength and the light that has unfailingly guided me. I come from a long line of inspiring, powerful women.  My grandmother, VIvian Farr, was one of the first black nurses in the city of Colorado Springs, Colorado.

My sister, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, who knows no limits, has a heart of gold and a laugh that brightens any day, and I are blessed to be the daughters of Vivian Farr... yes, my mom was named after her mom. Our mother, a career educator of 47 years, who has been awarded many fellowships that took her all around the world, was one of the few Black Public School Administrators in the state of Colorado. She has been an inspiration to many. I stand before you tonight as the product of those strong, curious, tenacious women that molded me. I am proud and humbled to be one of the few women in the streaming industry and one of just two black women that run a streaming service here in Atlanta.

Finally to my niece, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , I hope tonight, as you see all the other incredible, trailblazing WICT honorees, this entire room full of powerful women and men, and you see your Aunt receiving this recognition, that you realize what a gift God has given you to be a woman.... a **STRONG** woman that is not bound by glass ceilings, racial injustice or the word, “**NO**.” You are a Farr-Cannon woman that is fearfully and wonderfully made by God.  You are a world changer, an innovator and inspiration to me now and forever. You are the **FUTURE**... whatever you chose to do... wherever you make your mark... do it with excellence, purpose, and integrity.

I believe our steps are ordered by God.... life is a climb. We must touch each level, starting at the bottom and ascending to the top. Every step brings a lesson. Remember... there’s no such thing as failure... The Horizon Award Woman to Watch humbles me. I am deeply honored and will cherish this as I continue my climb for all of us. Thank you!!