

Attached you will find a long list of activities that Nichole Thompson is involved in. If you review the list, you will be sufficiently impressed. If you consider that Nichole works 20 hours a week at the law office of Steve Mortellini, in addition to 'the list', you will be somewhat amazed. Personally, I feel it's the quality of character that motivates 'the list', that makes Nichole Thompson a young lady of grace, strength and perseverance.

I have known Nichole since I started coaching the Cheering squad at Springfield High School, 4 years ago. Of all the letters I have written for 'my girls' over the years, this is probably the easiest and the hardest...

The easiest, because from the day I met her, I knew where I stood with Nichole. I knew her dedication, her enthusiasm and her desire for excellence were tools that I could utilize in helping to lead my team. I've watched her instructing and nurturing her SYC kids, the SHS JV team, as well as her own teammates. Pushing them just enough to reach their potential, (which they always have), but not so much that the fun disappears.

I learned early on not to be concerned about Nichole over-extending herself. Her commitments, whether to her team, her family or her community, were always taken seriously. She seemed to feed off of the energy of each commitment, making her able to keep up a pace that would exhaust most...

I've shared with her the ups and downs that go with the level of competition we've chosen for SHS. We have a saying and an attitude on our team, "This Year, No Fear." Nichole often leads the way. She's gutsy enough to tell our choreographer, "It's not good enough." She attempts stunts she's never tried before and has finally polished her twist cradle. When she isn't climbing, she helps others see how to grow and improve.

As a winner, she remembers what it's taken to reach that goal, and is mindful of the feelings of those who aren't sharing in that moment of glory. Nichole has never been a loser, but there have been times when things haven't gone the way she'd hoped for. In those times, she is dignified, supportive of her sometimes disappointed teammates, and genuinely congratulatory to those who had good fortune that day.

Why is this letter hard to write? Because I can't imagine coaching here at SHS without her and this letter signifies, it's time to move on. Her leadership and expertise in dance will be sorely missed. I'll miss the excited smile on her face when she high 5's the

others, when the team finally hits the 'Stunt from Hell'. I'll miss her confidence as she moves to the front of a dance formation and encourages the others to keep going.

Nichole leads by example. She expects no more from those around her, than she expects of herself. As you can tell from 'the list', her expectations are very high. That's another part of the reason this is the hardest letter for me to write.

As a coach for 21 years, it's a rare occurrence when I come across a person who causes me to re-evaluate my own expectations, not only for the team, but for myself. I had been contemplating retiring from coaching at the end of this year. After 21 years, that's a big decision. I knew I had to think things through thoroughly. The one thing that kept going through my mind was something that Nichole said after this year's Central League Competition. The exact words weren't important, but the meaning behind them was. I had let outside influences effect the way I handled my team. I had let someone else drain the pleasure and pride out of coaching. Nichole saw that, and with her words, challenged me to step up and be the coach that I know I can be.

That feeling is one that Nichole also instills in all of her SYC 'girls' as she coaches them. Most of the young ladies who come to my program from SYC are strong, confident, and ready for any challenge. I only hope as I head in to a new year, that I work up to Nichole's expectations. I know that she has certainly exceeded mine...

As you can tell, most of my experiences with Nichole are cheerleading related. It's amazing what you learn about a person when you coach them 4 days a week for 4 years. But I'm not just Nichole's coach, I'm her friend. And I know, if she continues to conducts the rest of her life, like she has so far, there will be no stopping this outstanding young woman. Any community with Nichole in it, will be better for there is no containing her capacity for understanding or her passion for involvement and excellence.

Sincerely,


Julie K. Milligan
Head Cheering Coach
Springfield High School

School-related Activities:

Class Officer

National Honor Society

SADD

After School Community Education

(works w/ children from Scenic & Sabold Elementary Schools)

Varsity Cheerleader (4 years, Captain 1 year)

Secretary Leo Lions

Head Photographer for the yearbook

Chorus

Varsity boys baseball manager

Varsity boys wrestling manager

JV boys soccer manager

Softball

School plays

Has written for the school newspaper

Awards/Special Honors/Achievements:

Takes Advanced Placement courses

In top 10% of her class

Who's Who Among American High School Students (4 times)

The Cougar Award (Demonstrates leadership qualities)

Nominated for the French Foreign Language Award

UCA Staff Application recipient

(Top seniors at summer camp, chosen to receive applications to
try-out to become a Universal Cheerleaders Association Staff Member.)

NCA All-American Cheerleader

(Performed at the Aloha Bowl in Honolulu, Hawaii, Xmas day '96)

Community Services:

Tutors students who need help

Coaches the Springfield Youth Club Jr. Competition Cheerleading team

Coached Our Lady of Perpetual Help JV Cheerleaders for the Catholic Youth Organization.

Volunteers at OLPH Field Day

Choreographs for the SHS JV Cheerleading squad

Volunteers time at Neuman College for St. Francis of Assisi nuns for their fair

Cleans highways with the Leo Lions Club

Visits Harley Manor Retirement Home during the Holidays