

Celebrity Hero Essay: Misty Copeland

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The celebrity hero I chose to write about is Misty Copeland. I chose her because she inspires myself and many others. Misty is an inspiration because she proves to us that no matter your background or where you come from, your gender or your race, it does not mean your dreams cannot become reality.

Misty Copeland's childhood is not a childhood we would want. She wasn't born into wealth, she was born into poverty. Misty was the fourth child of six children in her family and was raised in San Pedro, California, by her mother and various stepfathers. Her family's financial situation was tight throughout her childhood. At one point, when she was 13, her family moved into a single motel room, where Misty and her siblings had to sleep on the floor. At this time, one of her teachers suggested she attend a dance class at the nearby Boys' and Girls' Club. The dance teacher at the club told her that she had never seen a more natural dancer. Misty had a lot of work to do if she wanted to be a professional, as she was starting a decade later than almost all professional ballerinas. She didn't care though; she fell in love with ballet because it gave her the structure and order that she was missing in her life. Misty Copeland was truly a natural, as she was on Pointe in two months; normally taking dancer's years before they are allowed on Pointe shoes.

The challenges that Misty faced didn't end once she graduated high school, and even once she made it into the American Ballet Theater. Misty was accepted into the ABT's Studio Company at age 17, after graduating high school, in September of 2000. Almost two years later, in April of 2001, she was able to join the American Ballet Company as one of the members of

the corps de ballet. It wasn't until August of 2007, that Misty became the American Ballet Theater's second African American female soloist ever, and the first in the last two decades. Finally, in June of 2015, Misty became the American Ballet Theater's first African American principal dancer in ABT's 75 year history.

Misty has been featured in many different social media outlets. Shows such as The Today Show, 60 Minutes, CBS Sunday Morning as well as publications such as People Magazine, Vogue, and Essence. Misty, in May of 2012, was inducted into the Boys' & Girls Club' National Hall of Fame, where she received the "Breakthrough Award." Misty, in 2014, was appointed by President Obama to be on the President's Council on Fitness Sports, and Nutrition.

Misty remembers where she came from, so she has a passion for giving back. She has a special spot in her heart for the Boys & Girls club. She is a great supporter, and participant, in the "Great Futures Start Here" PSA. She works with children at the local clubs in New York City Area, and has also gone to other less fortunate countries in order to teach children ballet, and how dance can be an outlet in their life.

Many are inspired by Misty since she shows us no matter your background, race, gender, or your view, you can still do what you want. Misty doesn't want this, people watching ballet, to be a fad. She wants them to realize that classical ballet is beautiful, and can change a child's life into something incredible. Misty wants us to be strong, be fearless, and be beautiful. To believe anything is possible.