

# Heidi Washington-Akers

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To Whom It May Concern,

I was born in Coffeyville, KS in 1978. My mother was young and going off to college and her mother would be my primary caregiver, or as I called her, Mom for most of my life. She was fiercely protective and unfathomably loving. She was my greatest champion and staunchest supporter. She taught me everything that a parent should teach. How to be a good person. How to care for others. How to be a good citizen and how to use your voice. She taught me by example on how to achieve your dreams no matter how long it takes you and she taught me to fight for things that are right.

Charlotte Sanford raised 3 children and helped to raise 4 grandchildren. She showed us that no matter what is thrown our way, we can and we will overcome it. There was nothing she couldn't do, including drive. She just needed a little help. It saddens & angers me to see that we are still having conversations about if a disabled person is fit to raise children. There shouldn't be a conversation. We should be presuming competence, just like we do with able bodied people.

I missed out on NOTHING by having a blind parent. I gained a unique perspective on a whole lot of things because she was blind.

Sincerely yours,

Heidi Washington-Akers, daughter of Stephanie Sanford, grand-daughter of Charlotte Sanford

P.S. You've received testimony from our entire family at this point.