

## *Personal Letter from the Executive Director*

*Dear Ladies,*

*Let me congratulate you for your interest in The Miss Maine's Outstanding Teen Pageant. This pageant is very dear to me because it represents an opportunity for you, the young ladies of Maine, not only to win scholarships and prizes but also to experience something that will hopefully imbue you with the desire to further your dreams and aspirations. Certainly there is much glamour and fun to be had in the pageant world. While it is great to become a pageant winner, it is far more important to learn how to be a winner in life. To do so requires courage, risk-taking, determination and good old hard work – qualities that the pageant experience will afford you.*

*As you read the information packet with all the requirements, rules, and demands of the pageant, you may easily become overwhelmed. I have approached many girls while recruiting who self-consciously stated that they were not “beauty queen types,” did not have the “right clothes,” were “too poor”, or “lacked talent.” I am here to dispel these feelings of inadequacies and to inspire you to believe in yourself. You must learn how to present the “best you” and develop confidence in yourself because no one is perfect. Remember, it is your uniqueness that will make you shine!*

*To help you understand how you can overcome some of the major obstacles in pageant competition, I want to touch upon certain issues:*

- *Lack of money for fees and wardrobe: This can be overcome by working after school, acquiring sponsors from local businesses, or holding fund-raisers. How about a car wash as a fund-raiser? Shop wisely! Miss Maine 2004, Ami Vice, bought her talent gown for Miss Maine and Miss America at a thrift store for \$9.00! She went on to win \$7500 at Miss Maine and \$9500 at the Miss America Pageant! You would be surprised at the number of people who are willing to help you if you show some determination and spunk!*
- *I have no talent: Yes, you do! Talent is inherent in all of us! You have to be creative and think outside of the box. Talent need not be the conventional ability to sing or dance. Years ago, a Miss America contestant demonstrated how to properly pack a suitcase for her talent! Jayne Jayroe (without any training) directed the orchestra at the national pageant and won both the talent preliminary and the title of Miss America!*
- *I have a disability: Disabilities should not deter you from the will to compete and win. Even Albert Einstein, one of the greatest scientists and thinkers of the world, had a learning disability. Two women in the Miss America system achieved success despite their handicaps. One was Miss Iowa 2001, Theresa Uchytel, who was born without a left hand yet went on to represent her state at the*

*Miss America Pageant. (By the way, she was also a national baton –twirling champion!) The other, Heather Whitestone, Miss America 1995, was profoundly deaf since infancy but was able to perform a ballet dance during the competition and later became a professional ballerina with the Alabama Ballet Company.*

*The above examples show how contestant winners have surmounted many problems. There can only be one crowned winner, but for those of you with hope in your heart and the will and the determination to succeed, your dream can become a reality.*

***BELIEVE IN YOURSELF, AND THE WORLD WILL FOLLOW!***

*Sincerely,*

*Audrey Findlen  
Executive Director  
Miss Maine Scholarship Pageant, Inc.*

*Deb Landry  
Miss Maine's Outstanding Teen Director*