

julianna falso relationships



AS TOLD TO BY MEGAN WUBAS & ADDY GREAGER

"Coming to Whitney was hard for me because I was going into high school without very close friends who could help guide me. I ALMOST DIDN'T WANT TO GO TO SCHOOL for that reason. In the beginning of the year, I felt like an outsider because I knew some people, but I wasn't very close with them.

The hardest thing with being separated from my friends was experiencing the really good things in life; we had talked about doing [those things] together and

doing those things WITHOUT THEM was very hard.

I have learned to be very GRATEFUL FOR EVERY MOMENT you have with people, especially in different stages of life. Maybe it was MEANT FOR ME to go to school here to meet the people I have, because they really strengthen me.

I think knowing that having the friends I have today has made coming to Whitney really worth it, and I am very grateful to have those people."

francesca hennager managing grief



AS TOLD TO BY GIGI NAVARRO & KAITLYN SAUNDERS

"My grandmother was very feisty. She had such a large personality for someone so short. She was passionate about the ones she loved and was very funny, even at the worst of times. I remember CRYING AT HER HOUSE WHEN WE ALL FIRST FOUND OUT ABOUT HER CANCER, and she kept making jokes about it, trying to cheer us up. She was reassuring us that everything would be okay. She was ALWAYS THERE FOR ME and we had many traditions with her.

Every Christmas Eve, we would go over to their house and open presents, and she would come over for all the holidays, like Thanksgiving, and spend time with us. [My grief] has been a really rocky experience; IT COMES IN WAVES. I remember when I first heard the news, I was devastated, then I'd be fine for a few hours, and then it would just hit me. I would be okay, then I'd be

SITTING IN CLASS IN TEARS. Or I'd be laying in my bed, thinking I'd be getting better with it, only to wake up crying. There were times I'd think of her for days on end, then there were days where there would be other things on my mind.

I've definitely been a lot more afraid of developing cancer like she did. I've been aware of the dangers of it and have grown more aware since she died. I DON'T FEEL LIKE I'VE FULLY RECOVERED after her death. I've thought about her pretty much every day since September. I remember when she was dealing with cancer, she couldn't be alone; someone always had to be in the house with her. I would go over and be with her, and she'd call it babysitting. We didn't do too much; [we'd] just sit on the couch and watch Disney movies. I WOULD GIVE ANYTHING TO DO THAT AGAIN."

samara frank racial discrimination



AS TOLD TO BY LYLA GUNDERSON & MELEAH CHAVEZ HOIGUIN

"I have to constantly watch and make sure I'm 'speaking well.' If I get upset, I can't just be upset. I have to try harder to keep my cool all of the time because I'LL BE LABELED AS AN 'ANGRY BLACK WOMAN.'"

What really propelled me to want to go into activism was actually my freshman year when the murder of George Floyd happened. I was almost blind to the fact that those things still happen and thinking, 'What if this happens to me?' but more importantly, 'WHAT IF IT HAPPENS TO ONE OF MY SIBLINGS?'

Being a person of color in an area where you don't feel represented created a lot of fear. The fact that this still happens baffles me, but I want to be a part of something that can CHANGE IT.

There was this one time when I was talking to my friends during Black History Month, where two kids came up behind me, and one just held up a fist on one knee and the other one was filming. I was like 'IS THIS A JOKE TO YOU? IS MY EXISTENCE A JOKE TO YOU? AND IS ANYTHING THAT THE BLACK COMMUNITY HAS BEEN WORKING TOWARDS A JOKE IN YOUR EYES?' And if that's the case, how do you view me as a

person?' I feel like I'm constantly on edge, making sure if I say something, it's in an approachable tone, because God knows what could happen if not.

A lot of the time, it feels defeating. I feel like I can't say things that other people could say. It feels very isolating. It's an inward feeling like, 'WHY IS ME SAYING SOMETHING NOT ENOUGH?'

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