For so many years I had always avoided it. I loathed it with my entire being. One day I stepped through a door not realizing it quietly locked itself shut. By the time I realized I didn’t have a key, I had to move forward and accept the dreaded thing, AP American history. My AP American teacher’s passion for historical events was contagious. In fact Mrs. Walter-Zimmerman’s (more commonly known as WZ) passion was so contagious it helped me to immerse myself in the material. I was so fascinated by the history she taught, because she was truly passionate about it. Her passion had ignited an unknown candle within me. I not only found an appreciation for history, I also found a mentor.

When I first stepped into WZ’s classroom, a pair of warm, welcoming eyes met my terrified, trembling ones. I knew nothing of her except her name. WZ knew nothing of me except my name, and that I had recently moved to Selinsgrove. The uncertainty of the situation had me petrified but the lack of knowledge wasn’t a bother to WZ. She still had an unexplained faith in me. She believed in a complete stranger that was insane enough to transfer into an AP class that was already eleven chapters into the textbook. WZ had more faith in me, a stranger, than I had in myself. She went out of her way to help me through the AP experience, taking time out of her schedule to review and help me improve my work. I found myself working hard to match the capacity that she saw in me, but more importantly I learned that I could teach myself anything. WZ wasn’t just a teacher anymore after that realization; she became a mentor to me. She gave me stability when a great deal of my stability was still residing two hours away in Northampton. She also gave me comfort and security. I didn’t have to anxiously worry about her belittling me when she was trying to constructively criticize me. Even now that her class has ended for me, she still supports everything I want to do. She’s consistently given me advice on colleges and her advice helps me through the stress I’ve suffered from college searching.

I couldn’t have possibly guessed that once I set foot inside her classroom that I would never want to leave, and I most definitely never thought WZ would become a major positive force in my life. I’ve always been doubtful of my capabilities but after getting to know the extraordinary Mrs. Walter-Zimmerman I’m confident in my abilities, and I’m confident in my choices. I also know that even when everything seems hopeless, there will always be someone there to support me through the negativity. And when I graduate from high school I can be comforted in the fact that WZ will support her future students, and teach them that passion is the key to learning, much like she taught me.