There are only a few people in this world that I can say have significantly impacted my life, and upon entering Mrs. Joyce’s classroom for the first day of my sophomore year, I had no idea that she’d become the most important one. 2015 was the hardest year of my life yet after ending my boxing career when I thought boxing was all I had. It was tough to try and figure out my future after losing that part of myself and realizing I wasn’t going to be the professional boxer I had always thought I would. I had no back-up plan until I handed in a writing assignment to Mrs. Joyce and she told me what a great writer I was, and that I should consider writing as a career. After that, I dived into writing and let myself drown in it.

Mrs. Joyce taught me that my dreams will always be worth chasing, no matter how impossible or even intimidating they may seem; I am absolutely capable of achieving them. When I began writing for the Citizen’s Voice, she was the first to grab a newspaper to read it and expressed how proud she was of me. Mrs. Joyce was always honest with my work, and pushed me to be the best that I could be. She inspired me to think outside the box, and to not play it safe with my writing, and to this day, I still take that advice. She asked me if I had figured out what I wanted to do with my life when junior year came around, and I told her that I wanted to be a television news reporter, perhaps on CNN one day. As a response, she smiled and told me to go for it instead of ridiculing that dream like many others did at the time. When I submitted an article to the Tom Bigler Journalism Conference that year, she came along and when I won first place in the Opinion/ Editorial category, she turned to me with a proud smile on her face, and said, “I knew you’d win.” She always believed in me, and that’s one of the greatest things a teacher can do for their students.

Mrs. Joyce is a small woman, but her love for teaching lessons that can apply both in the classroom and out, is enormous and has touched me greatly. I will remember all that she has taught me and surely, will carry it with me for the rest of my life. She was sadly moved to G.A.R after the district laid off some teachers, but she'll always be my favorite teacher because when I felt like nothing in the world made sense anymore, not even myself, she helped me find something that did; my writing. I’m lucky to have realized my passion at a young age, and that’s all because of her. I'm no longer afraid to chase my dreams. That’s the kind of impact Mrs. Joyce has had on my life.