



MURIEL BOWSER

MAYOR

April 26, 2026

Selection Committee

Bryan Cameron Education Foundation

8939 S. Sepulveda Blvd, Suite 110, #772

Los Angeles, CA 90045

Dear Members of the Selection Committee:

As Mayor of Washington, DC, it is my honor to recommend Ms. Marleigh McKay for the Cameron Impact Scholarship. I have had the privilege of watching Marleigh grow as a leader, an advocate, and a citizen over several years, and I write with full confidence that she is precisely the kind of young person this scholarship was created to support.

I first became acquainted with Marleigh in 2021 at the rededication of Lafayette-Pointer Park, a ceremony that would not have taken place without her. In 2020, at just twelve years old and in the sixth grade, Marleigh testified before the DC City Council in support of restoring the historic name of the park in honor of Captain George Pointer, a formerly enslaved man whose family had owned the land for nearly 80 years before being displaced. She did not arrive at that hearing having been asked to speak. She arrived having done the research, written the letter, and earned her place at the table through the strength of her advocacy alone. Her testimony was clear, grounded, and delivered with a composure that would have been remarkable at any age. At the rededication ceremony the following year, she spoke again, this time before hundreds of residents, elected officials, and members of the media, about what it means for a community to finally see itself reflected in the spaces it inhabits. I was proud to stand beside her that day.

What distinguishes Marleigh is not simply what she has accomplished, but why she does it. Her civic engagement is not performative. It is rooted in a genuine belief that communities are stronger when every member of them feels seen and included. I have observed this firsthand not only at the park rededication, but in subsequent interactions at community events where she has consistently asked thoughtful, substantive questions about how the District can better serve young people. Most recently, I have seen her volunteer actively in local electoral efforts, supporting candidates committed to the values she cares most about. At an age when many young people are still forming their sense of civic identity, Marleigh is already living one.

I will also say this. At community events, I am sometimes accompanied by my young daughter. Without fail, Marleigh finds her, kneels down to her level, and makes sure she feels included in whatever is happening around her. It is a small thing, perhaps, but it is also entirely consistent with everything else I know about Marleigh McKay. She has a gift for making people feel seen, and she exercises it whether anyone is watching or not.

I have also had the opportunity to see Marleigh perform at the Kennedy Center, where her artistry reflects the same discipline and intentionality she brings to her public service work. She is a young woman of exceptional range.

Her record of community impact speaks for itself. She has devoted more than 420 hours to Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy. She created the HBCU Day curriculum, now taught annually to at our largest public middle school, and co-founded her high school's first HBCU College Tour, a five-day, seven-campus trip that led to a 10% increase in HBCU applications from her school. These are not the accomplishments of a student building a resume. They are the accomplishments of a young leader who identified gaps in access and opportunity and took personal responsibility for closing them.

The Cameron Impact Scholarship is awarded based on four pillars: leadership, community service, extracurricular excellence, and academic achievement. Marleigh McKay does not simply meet these criteria. She has embodied them, consistently and without fanfare, since a very young age.

It is my highest recommendation that she be selected as a Cameron Impact Scholar. Washington, DC has shaped Marleigh McKay, and I have no doubt that she will spend her life giving that back.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Muriel Bowser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, prominent loop for the letter 'B'.

Muriel Bowser
Mayor of Washington, DC