



“One of my greatest desires for educators is that they realize the relevancy of teaching and learning in all of our lives. I want them to embrace the opportunity to impart a love of learning as a life-long treasure to every student, so that our children will see the entire world as their classroom and every nation as their neighbor.”

~Michelle S. Hayes

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Michelle was born into a family of educators. Of the ten uncles and aunts on her maternal side of the family, nine were educators—her mother a librarian. As a child, she felt *they* were teachers because they could not be anything else, and that *she* would have more options than their moments in time had given them. She would be anything but a teacher like everyone else.

As a child in Athens, Georgia, her adoration of schoolteachers, Sunday school teachers, and “home teachers” was always at a premium level. As a college student in the seventies, her greatest friendship was with her philosophy professor and mentor at the University of Georgia. Later, as the mother of school-age children, she had the opportunity to see the role of the educator from other vantage points: as a participant in numerous classrooms; as a year-long volunteer for the chorus; as a mini-course lecturer; as a collaborator with school principals; as the distributor of teacher-grants to eager recipients.

Through community-based organizations (e.g., PTAs; Apple Corps; Inc.; The Council of Intown Neighborhood Schools; The Atlanta Project) Michelle came to understand the administrative and political infrastructure which affects children *and* educators. She shared the platform with Former Governor Zell Miller when he launched his technology initiatives for the state of Georgia. She grew passionate in her belief that each of us has the responsibility of insuring that initiatives translate into richer learning environments for children, instead of political rhetoric; each of us shares in the responsibility of coping with the challenges facing public schools, instead of abandoning them; each of us is charged with the mission to procure engaging learning that is joyous for all children, instead of teaching that castrates their love of life and literacy.

These experiences, as well as the childcare she operated for eight years in her home, and her work as a program coordinator for a local, non-profit, child enrichment center, heightened her appreciation for her legacy as an educator, and eradicated the insecurity she once had about the responsibilities. When Michelle returned to college at age thirty-nine, the foremost thing in her mind was the need to find that which would allow her to combine her natural talents, life experiences, and ambitions in a way that would ensure the well-being of her family and benefit her community. She calls it *fulfilling the measure*; it became the focus of the arduous expedition that ripened her desire to become an educator.

Michelle’s suitability to this pursuit is augmented by her life experiences in theater as a performer and as a patron, appreciation for nature, effectiveness as a communicator, and enthusiasm toward being a connected learner. The knowledge that she acquired at Agnes Scott College through the teacher education program, as well as the completion of the master’s degree in instructional technology and curriculum design, and her commitment to scholarship, has enabled her to see herself as a facilitator for children on *their* journey to selfhood that we call education. She is a transformative leader who honors the importance of inspiring other educators toward extraordinary outcomes while building their own capacities for leadership. Michelle continues to harvest opportunities that provide the greatest challenges while allowing her to fulfill the measure to her family and benefit her global community.