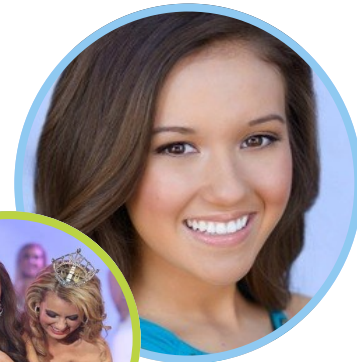


Catching up with...

Tess Mandoli

Miss Missouri's Outstanding Teen 2013



LOCAL TITLE: Miss Metro St. Louis' Outstanding Teen

TALENT: Classical Piano - Schubert's Impromptu #2 in E Minor

PLATFORM: National Diversity Alliance

YEARS COMPETED: 2

MAOT AWARDS: Preliminary Lifestyle & Fitness Winner and 3rd Runner Up to Miss America's Outstanding Teen

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO NOW? I just finished my senior year of high school and will be majoring in Political Science and Musical Theatre at Washington University next year. I have continued my platform work with the National Diversity Alliance, an organization I founded in 2013, as well as my philanthropy work, volunteering as a tutor for kids at City Academy in North St. Louis every week and serving as Co-President of my school's community service committee. Recently, I played the role of Princess Fiona in the STAGES St. Louis production of Shrek The Musical and have been involved in several other school and community theatre productions.

HOW HAS YOUR PARTICIPATION IN MMOT HELPED TO GET YOU WHERE YOU ARE TODAY? I can honestly say that if I hadn't been a contestant, regardless of my placement at the actual pageant, I would not be the same person today. I owe who I am today to the preparation for competition, especially for interview, and the many role models I was consistently surrounded by. The independence and strong will that I took away from being involved in the organization have especially come in handy lately, as I've been busy with college interviews!

WHAT WAS THE BEST PART OF YOUR MAOT EXPERIENCE? Although stressful, the week of MAOT was one of the most fun experiences of my life. I can't count the number of times I laughed so hard I cried - the girls I met really became my sisters. I was also surprised to win a national preliminary fitness award, especially after the tragedy that was my fitness routine at state. It was proof that hard work really does pay off!

IF YOU COULD GIVE ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO THIS YEAR'S CONTESTANTS, WHAT WOULD IT BE? Prepare to compete, not to win. This advice might seem counterproductive, but ultimately, it is the experience that reaps rewards, not a placement in Top 5. This is something that took me a few years to realize, but changed my entire perspective once I did. Store it in the back of your head for now, and realize its value on your own time.

BEST TIP FOR TALENT?

Practice makes perfect. I cannot emphasize this enough!

BEST BEAUTY TIP?

Be sure to get your beauty sleep! It will keep you healthy, body and mind.

BEST TIP TO PREPARE FOR INTERVIEW?

Prepare for interview like you're preparing for a test: study yourself, your platform and the world around you. Good interviews don't come out of the blue. They are well earned.

BEST TIP FOR FITNESS?

As long as you're a titleholder, be prepared to do a push-up any time and anywhere!

Prep like a winner...

FAVORITE HEALTHY SNACK: Luna Bars

FAVORITE BEAUTY PRODUCT: Coconut oil

PAGEANT WEEK ESSENTIAL: Hand warmers! As a pianist, it is essential that I keep my hands and fingers warmed up before talent.

WISH I WOULD HAVE... Stressed less and trusted myself more. The only thing you can control is your preparation. Once the competition starts, the outcome is out of your hands, so you have to just let go and trust yourself.

