**PERSONAL STATEMENT OF CHERYL MOORE CARRASCO**

**“You will never amount to anything!” Those were the words that echoed in my ears as I plunged into the NCLEX exam in May of 2009. My stepfather died holding my hand in a hospital bed in 1994. After his death, I was more determined to not let his words dictate my life and my desire to succeed. I chose to bury the memories that haunted me and instead, let my mother’s positive influence and encouragement be my guide in achieving my goals.**

**I knew the day would come when I would have to write this essay. I thought that I could get by without delving into background and past experiences. I realize, however, that a discussion about my aspirations and dreams of attending nursing school is not possible without a reflection of my past.**

**When I was seven years old, my mother, sister and I left Spain to seek a better life in America. I had known my father, an American soldier, for a brief period when we lived on an army barracks on the outskirts of Rota, Spain. My parents met while my father was stationed there. They were married, and my sister and I were born within the next two years. Christmas Eve of 1979 was the last time I saw my father.**

**Though we left behind most of our personal possessions, we carried with us the cultural values that would profoundly influence our life choices. After arriving in the United States, my mother worked hard as caregiver and provider, the latter being a role not common for Spanish women. Her goal was to give my sister and me the best education and opportunity possible, which she hoped would enable us to seek careers outside the home.**

**My mother’s selflessness and sacrifice was always her guide. In her eyes, a stable home was incomplete without a father figure. This view, along with her desire to provide us with all necessary tools to succeed in life, led to her second marriage. My sister and I were torn between the negative views of my stepfather and the supportive desires of my mother for higher education. Though my stepfather’s words and actions served only to discourage, my mother’s struggles throughout her life against cultural institutions of a patriarchal society, served only to increase my desire to accomplish my goals.**

**My own background and struggles have instilled an awareness of the difficulties women and children face even today. My experiences and my mother’s influence led to my decision to pursue a degree in nursing. My ultimate ambition is to be able to contribute to society and have a positive impact on the educational rights and health issues of women and children in today’s world.**

**I look forward to utilizing the tools I acquire in nursing school to advance the public interest of all individuals, especially those of women and children. An advanced degree in nursing will enable me to play a more proactive role in shaping public policy, educating and guiding them through the legal process. The specialized knowledge I will gain through advanced education will make me a better advocate for these causes and others.**