

**INTERVIEW WITH
MALLORY HAGAN**



MISS AMERICA 2013

RJC: Obviously, with your new title, everyone in the world now knows you are gorgeous and talented. What I have also noticed, though, in reading these stories about you is that people often comment on your kindness and sweetness. How have you maintained that warmth and goodness in a super-competitive environment?

MH: Being Miss America (or Miss NY or Miss NYC) is about sharing your gifts and talents with others—not about winning. The Miss America Organization makes available an incredible amount of scholarships to the 12,000 women who compete nation-wide... most of whom never “win.” If you allow yourself to be changed by the competitive environment for the worse, then you have forgotten what it means to be a part of this organization.

RJC: Everyone also now knows that you are a talented dancer and singer. If they didn't know about your singing talent before, they certainly did after you performed the National Anthem at the Barclay Center. Was it a hard decision for you—or you and your advisors—to go with the tap number over singing for your featured talent?

MH: Not at all. My mother owns a competitive dance studio, Make Your Move, in my hometown of Opelika, AL. I have been dancing my entire life! Tap has always been the best way for me to showcase my personality. Plus...I have horrible singing stage fright!

RJC: How did your time in show choir affect the development of your self-image? And how did spending time as a counselor for Show Choir Camps of America impact your confidence in your ability to lead and mentor?

MH: My time in show choir definitely taught me how to work in cohesion with others. Many of my leadership roles in high school allowed me that opportunity, but none quite like being a part of Impressions and Ovations. Students in show choir have an incredibly close-knit bond and I found that I felt most “at home” in our choral room. Being a counselor at SCA was the most amazing experience

for me. The week I spent in Ohio allowed me the opportunity to grow and change with the other counselors around me. It was one of the best weeks of my life!

RJC: It seems that most common Google searches about you involve your bathing suit. People have probably talked about your body and your “transformation” enough to last you five lifetimes, but do you have any advice you would give to teenage girls about their relationship with their own bodies? Is there a way to keep the dialogue focused on health and fitness over physical perfection?

MH: My advice is to make a list of five accomplishments that make you proud of who you are. Carry this list in your wallet or purse. When you are feeling down on yourself or your body, take a look! Remind yourself of the many attributes you have that do not rely on physical looks or “beauty.” In addition, make an effort to set fitness related goals each morning... i.e. “Today I will do 30



pushups throughout the course of the day.” By accomplishing each daily goal, you instill a sense of pride in each small step toward fitness.

The dialogue remains around health and fitness when we stop self-deprecating and start encouraging ourselves (and one another) to make healthy life choices... not just “lose weight.” It's going to take all of us...working together! Physical perfection is impossible, but living a healthy and balanced lifestyle is something everyone can achieve. 

An advertisement for Stage Accents Show Choir Costumes. It features a woman in a light blue, sleeveless, V-neck dress with a silver belt, standing and smiling. The background is a dark, textured grey. The text "Stage ACCENTS" is written in a large, white, serif font, with "Stage" in a red, cursive font above it. Below that, "SHOW CHOIR COSTUMES" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Underneath, the tagline "We make you look good!" is written in a red, cursive font. At the bottom, there is a call to action: "Click here to discover our full line of high quality dresses and vests".

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