Dear LaVonne,

Congratulations on your graduation and best wishes for the future! I know this is not the celebration that you and your family envisioned, but do not let that diminish from your amazing accomplishments this year – the Hulsman Library Award and the Howard Dean Everett Scholarship. Wow - what a way to finish your academic career!

It has been a pleasure getting to know you over the past year! Last semester, LaVonne enrolled in my Native American film class and quickly established herself as a leader in the classroom. She is a bright and articulate young woman, who always came to class well-prepared and eager to participate in class discussion. Although our class discussions often focused on sensitive, and at times, controversial issues, LaVonne never shied away from these discussions and respectfully engaged in thoughtful, insightful conversations with her peers. I think what impresses me most about LaVonne is her ability to connect with others, especially young Native American students who are still fairly new to the college experience. Thank you for setting a positive classroom tone and example for the rest of the students, LaVonne!

You are an inspiration to so many other young Native American women and girls. With your many academic accomplishments, you are carving a path for more Native people to follow – especially your daughter who will be forever proud and grateful to her mother for her dedication and commitment to her family, education, and community.

I know that you are still deciding between law school and graduate school – and which path will better prepare you to help serve your tribal community and care for your family. Regardless of the path you choose, I am confident that you will succeed and do greater things than you ever imagined!

You are an amazing person, LaVonne! I hope you know how proud your family and friends are of you today – and every day! Keep reaching for the stars!

Warmest congratulations,
Sarah


Sarah Hernandez, PhD
Assistant Professor of Native American Literature

505.277.6347 | Department of English Language & Literatures | 1 University of New Mexico | MSC03 2170 | Albuquerque, NM 87131

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