

"I am Paul Cuffee 2020"

To me, "I am Paul Cuffee 2020" means I am the student that I am today because Paul Cuffee helped me get there. As I was entering distance learning, the biggest goal for both teachers and students was to get the class of 2020 to successfully graduate. "I am Paul Cuffee 2020" is the hard work that I've tried to put in to graduate regardless of the circumstances I was living in. Every class is different. I am Paul Cuffee 2020 because of the students and teachers around me.

There are many parts to my identity. There are some parts that are important to me, but others that don't have my full attention. The fact that I am oblivious to certain parts of my identity makes sense to me because I'm only 17 years old, but it also agonizes me simply because I am a perfectionist. I am a perfectionist when it comes to my thoughts, my plans, my morals, my everything. When I don't do things the right way, it takes a toll on me. I am still working on this weird identity obsession, I just feel like everyone has had an effect in my life other than me. By that I mean, I never got the chance to do what I want because I never had peace. However, life isn't perfect so here I am. The part of my identity that I mostly have pride in are my morals. I give thanks to everyone in my life for that. I'd always watch and learn, but sometimes I'd watch, do, then learn. Observation is one of my best skills and morals when it comes to making certain decisions in my life. I grew up around many bad examples, observing helped me guide myself into the right direction and find certain ways of living that apply to my identity. This is why I continue to value my skill for observing my surroundings as a prime highlight of my identity.

Growing up, religion was an automatic stamp in my identity because as a child I had no say at all. However, religion wasn't a strict part of my life, it was just there. It was just there, but my parents enrolled me in a Catholic school at the age of 6. I don't know how to explain how lenient they were with religion, but I went to Catholic school and still remained a person that wasn't religious. Like I said, I observed everything in school, but not everything applied to me. I didn't really take in the morals of Catholicism because it just didn't float my boat. Till this day, I am not so religious. I've always connected religion with the government. My father taught me growing up that the government in a way abused religion to create sanity amongst citizens. Even though he was religious, he still strongly believed in this phenomenon and he was for it. However, I am not. Religion is a beautiful custom that many people value as a lifestyle, it should not be abused to gain power. Although I do not consider myself religious, religion is embedded in my culture. For that, I respect it.

For the longest time as a little kid, I thought I was attracted to girls. Primarily because girls were attracted to me, so I knew that I was unsure because my feelings were being guided by others. I never brought these thoughts to life because I was afraid my family wouldn't support me through my childhood confusion. Most importantly, I was afraid my family would think I am weird for feeling that way as such a young age. I was so confused that even my skill of observation threw me off. During that time, I'd always see guys with girls which was considered the "norm". I didn't want to be abnormal, but frankly I stopped caring at a certain point. Overtime, I started to realize that just because someone liked me, doesn't mean I should try and put the effort in to like them. I told myself that I shouldn't be attracted to girls because they are attracted to me, I should be attracted to someone because I like them. I do not know what my sexuality is yet. That day will come, hopefully.

As a member of Paul Cuffee 2020, I am a part of the diversity. I am different. I connect with others because of our similarities and differences. I am graduating during a very chaotic time and it is already starting to have an impact on me. I did not speak about my race or ethnicity because I don't know how. I have learned so much about race in high school, but for some reason, it is the saddest subject to me. At this time, history is being made and I am at a loss for words. However, I have also learned a lot about myself and my place in society. I know where I stand at the moment and I know the steps I need to take in order to succeed in the best way possible. I have grown as an individual at Cuffee. I share these parts of my identity with many of my peers. From the morals that I have picked up from Paul Cuffee, I am proud to say that I am a part of the class of 2020.