

Doré Young – Franklin

Inspiring. Tradition. Evolving. How do these three words describe the Rose Festival?

To inspire is to fill someone with the urge to do or feel something. Tradition is the movement and practice of customs over time. To evolve is to gradually develop into a more complex form. These three words are important, complicated, and ingrained in human society. They remind me of family, one of the most beautiful concepts known to man. Every family is unique, important, and valuable, but never perfect. Families are delicate. Every family is extraordinary.

My family inspires me. I come from musicians. I come from surfers. I come from those who love deeply. I come from survivors of the Khmer Rouge genocide. I come from a teen mom. My family inspires me to do better, to make their hardship worth every moment. My family inspires me to graduate college and to live my life to the fullest. I will always be grateful for this inspiration.

My family has traditions. Traditions that make us go to church every Sunday, go camping every Spring Break, and eat tacos every Thanksgiving. We have a tradition to go to the beach on the fourth of every July and to watch my mom's siblings open Christmas presents over Facetime for way too long every Christmas instead of enjoying our own. I believe some traditions are meant to be lost.

My family is always evolving. My family is becoming more understanding, more tolerant. My family is getting older and bigger. With four daughters and one on the way, my mom is overwhelmingly aware of our family's evolution. With marriages, divorces, remarriages, and way too many children, it is certainly growing more complex, almost exponentially.

The Rose Festival is a family too. A family that inspires Portlanders to be better, to make our city's hardships worth every moment. A festival that inspires Portland to live life to the fullest. The Rose Festival is a family with traditions and quirks that have been passed down over generations, a family with a culture worth maintaining. Traditions and quirks that sprouted from a thriving city, from the heart of the Pacific Northwest. The festival evolves to keep up with a city that is always changing and lift up those communities that make Portland Portland. It changes to represent the things our city cares about, like environmentalism and social justice because the

people are at the center of the Rose Festival. Kids like me are at the center of the Rose Festival. Teachers and families and small businesses are at the center of the Rose Festival because we are at the center of Portland.

I will never forget the Rose Festival. It inspires me to be a role model, to uphold its traditions, and help the world evolve as fast as our city. The Rose Festival comes from Portland and so do I. I want to join the Rose Festival family, so thank you for the opportunity to do so.