My name is Claudia and I am writing this essay about my grandmother, Joanne Flowers. While my grandmother isn't a black celebrity and maybe hasn't made *revolutionary* contributions to STEAM for black people compared to Mae Jemison or Neil DeGrasse Tyson, she's in our family's history related to the many STEAM jobs and positions she's held, and has been a very strong influence to how I think of myself, as a young black girl, whenever I'm struggling in math or can't figure out a solution during an engineering activity.

Sometimes it sort of feels like there's a weight under you when you're black, and especially when you're female. Like, someone is always looking at you and waiting for you to mess up, but particularly in STEAM. A lot of those people who choose to discriminate seem to have a belief buried in the back of their minds that, as black people, we can't do science, we don't know how to do math, art is above us, technology is in another world, and engineering, well, they only seem to think we can do that when we're slaves building their countless amount of racially unjust landmarks.

My grandmother, however, is one to kick these stereotypes in the butt. She started working as a medical technician while she was in college, moving on and becoming a detergent chemist, an environmental health scientist and an epidemiologist. She studied and earned a master of public health and a PhD in environmental epidemiology. She had a dream of being a pilot and then went to enlist in the army, becoming an officer in the navy. Now, my grandmommy works as a pastor in Harrison, Arkansas, which has been known as the most racist town in America. she has a very 'I can do whatever I put my mind to' attitude, though, and it seems like she doesn't let anything stop her. I wish I could have that mindset more in my daily life, but it's harder to in this day and age when it's easier to let yourself become someone that isn't you and not speak your mind much.