

REFLECTIONS

FROM THE

QUEEN

"Miss USA 2011 is..... CALIFORNIA!" That was a phrase I had only dreamed about five years ago when I began this journey as the first runner-up in the 2007 MISS TEEN USA® pageant. Little did I know that I, a young woman raised in New Jersey, who left for California to pursue her dreams, was destined to become the 60th Miss USA. This has been an extraordinary and fulfilling year packed with countless memories. I will always look back on this year as one of personal growth that helped me discover just who Alyssa Campanella is.

Thank you to Mr. Donald Trump, Ms. Paula Shugart, our amazing charitable alliances, and fabulous sponsors. There are no words to express the gratitude I feel for this life-changing experience. From the minute I won this title, I felt adopted into a beautiful family – the Miss Universe Organization. They always wanted what was best for me, and for this, I am extremely indebted.

I cannot end my reign without a few mentions to those who deserve my sincere thanks.

Paula Shugart: You are a remarkable woman and the epitome of elegance and class. You were a loving guardian this past year. I am so appreciative to have had your guidance. I will miss our Sunday brunches, Mr. Peabody and Shadrack, and your husband Carl even though he is a Boston Bruins fan! Thank you for everything this past year.

Andrea Chafouleas: I have so many things to say to you and thank you for. I don't know how I would have gotten through this year without you. You kept my life so organized and always made me laugh. I love having a friend like you. Thank you so much for everything! Love, Squirrel.

Esther Swan: Thank you for always keeping me in line and for encouraging me to always do what I do best. I will find a way to ship you some of my fresh baked goodies that you love so much. You're the best. Love, Speedy.

Alisha Crutchfield: Because of you, my style has completely changed for the better! I love how we got to be daring. I will certainly call you if I ever need fashion advice!

MUO Staff: Emily P, Carlos, Tony, Jackie, Brenda, Andrea B, Tricia, Shawn, Jason, Larry, Hilary, Dena, Tom, Will, Josh, Karen, Annette, Emily C, Rachel, and Olivia: Every time I came into the office, I loved seeing all of your faces. Thank you for all you helped me accomplish this past year; I could not have done any of this without you all.

Leila: You are such a gorgeous young woman with so much ahead of you. You are an inspiration, not just in Angola, but all over the world. I am going to miss hearing fluent Portuguese coming from the room next to me. Most of all, I am really going to miss you.

Danielle: You have such a positive attitude and are always loved our sleepovers, our travels together, and our late nights. This is the beginning of a very long friendship. I am so proud and I know girls everywhere are looking up to you. Just don't forget what you'd put on a bagel. Love you seester!

Shanna Moakler & Alexis Swanstrom: I am so honored to call you my dearest and closest friends. I formed bonds with you that cannot be broken or replaced. Alexis, I can "communicate with you without words." Love you both.

Dana, Charlotte, Jerry, Jason, Travis, Erika, Parvati, Alicia Meagan, Raquel, John Baker: You are all family to me. You mean so much to me, and I don't know what I would have done without your never-ending support. I love each and every one of you.

Dad: For years you sat through countless dance recitals, dance competitions, and beauty pageants for Jess and me. You have always been so proud of us no matter what. Your unwavering support and love are constant reminders of our unique relationship. Thank you for being an extraordinary father. I love you.

Mom: You're the reason why I am standing here today, not just Miss USA, but as a confident and independent young woman. Whenever I need advice at 3 a.m. or help with a new dish I'm trying to cook, you are there. Who else on this planet could I spend all day watching movies with? There is not a more beautiful woman in this world than you so much.

Jess: I am a lucky girl to have a sister like you. Your determination and poise is beyond your years. You are my role model. I see before me a young woman with remarkable intelligence, exceptional beauty, and a wicked sense of humor. I cannot wait to see what is in store for you. Thanks for being there for me and supporting me.

Torrance: Words cannot describe how thankful I am for you. You were thrown into this whirlwind of pageantry when I embarked on this journey. You have remained so incredibly supportive and forgiving. I am so eternally grateful. You mean the world to me. I love you with all my heart, and I am so excited to see what future adventures lay ahead for us. We did it.

To the next Miss USA: Congratulations! You are about to embark on an extraordinary, life-changing journey. Only 60 women have ever won this unbelievable experience. My advice to you is to always remain humble, always be on time, and always remember where you came from. Best of luck throughout your reign!

Finally, it is bittersweet to reflect back on my past year. I am excited to see what is in store for my future. Thanks to the Miss Universe Organization and my experience as Miss USA 2011, the possibilities are endless.

For the last time as Miss USA, I am Alyssa Campanella.