



# Vick Varner of Fredericksburg Crowned Ms. Wheelchair VA 2019-2020



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**Fishersville, VA.** The Ms. Wheelchair VA Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Vicki Varner of Fredericksburg was crowned Ms. Wheelchair Virginia on Saturday, January 19<sup>th</sup> at Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center in Fishersville, VA. The program's theme "Celebrate Life" showcased the accomplishments of remarkable ladies of all ages who have overcome challenges and obstacles to achieve and accomplish great success.

As the current reigning titleholder, Vicki qualifies for entry in Ms. Wheelchair America. Vicki will compete against over 25 contestants from across the country for the title of Ms. Wheelchair America 2020. The event will take place in Little Rock, Arkansas July 1<sup>st</sup>-July 7<sup>th</sup> 2019. During this week-long program, contestants will participate in a leadership institute, mentoring events, and multiple judging sessions.

Vicki Varner lives in Fredericksburg, Virginia. She is currently enrolled in college as a fulltime student. Vicki is working towards her Bachelors of Science with a double major in Psychology and Communications. Her main goal after college is to work as a trauma counselor within a hospital for newly injured patients. Vicki uses a wheelchair due to injuries received in a car accident on Christmas Eve of 2015 resulting in a T12 complete spinal cord injury. Vicki enjoys working out, reading, playing with any and all dogs, and playing video games. She describes herself as passionate, authentic, strong, empathetic, and determined. Vicki's platform of advocacy is "Breaking down societal ablest beauty standards." and her motto of inspiration is "Never let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game."

The first day of Vicki's year-long reign began with Queen's Brunch. Vicki shared this with those in attendance. "This weekend was by far one of my greatest life experiences. Not only was I surrounded by strong empowering women from different rolls of life, but I got to grow with them as well. I formed many bonds that I will be forever grateful for. When I was crowned MWVA, I knew that my life would never be the same in the best way possible. With this opportunity I plan on changing the stigma around disabilities, advocating for more accessibility, and an overall more adaptive world. Disability rights are civil rights and I plan on educating the state on those rights."

Kennedy Rose of Marion was named first runner up and is Ms. Wheelchair Virginia Smyth County. No contestant goes home without a title! Hani Baloch of Reston has been named Ms. Wheelchair Virginia Fairfax County. Cathy Parr was named Ms. Wheelchair Virginia Falls Church. These empowering advocates will spend the next year as MWVA Regional Titleholders and will be ambassadors to their communities. They will help to promote our vision which is *to inspire and motivate Virginians as role models of courage and hope*. Together, all titleholders will educate and promote advocacy for individuals with disabilities.

**ABLEnow**, our Silver sponsor, allows for individuals with disabilities to save for today's needs or invest for tomorrow in a simple, affordable and tax-advantaged account that won't impact certain disability benefits.

**ABLEnow** accounts are made possible by the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act, which authorized states to establish tax-advantaged ABLE savings programs. As the Virginia-sponsored ABLE savings program, **ABLEnow** is administered by Virginia529. Virginia taxpayers are eligible for an annual state income tax deduction of up to \$2,000 per contributor for contributions to an **ABLEnow** account. **ABLEnow** is sponsoring the Ms. Wheelchair Virginia program with a \$1,000 that Vicki can use to share her platform of advocacy as she travels throughout the Commonwealth.

Ms. Wheelchair Virginia, a 501(c)3, is one of the largest Ms. Wheelchair state program in the country. Focusing on the accomplishments of Virginians with disabilities: the mission is to educate, advocate and raise awareness of the abilities and needs of the disability community; but more importantly, to inspire and motivate Virginians as role models of courage and hope.

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For more information, contact:

Emily McGrail, State Coordinator [mswheelchairva@yahoo.com](mailto:mswheelchairva@yahoo.com) (540) 838-5022 [www.mswheelchairva.com](http://www.mswheelchairva.com)