



April 2018

F. Celeste Branham
Vice President for Student and Community Services
Merrill Hall
224 Main Street
Farmington, Maine 04938

To whom it may concern,

I am most pleased to write on behalf of a University of Maine at Farmington senior student, Maurice 'Moe' Murray, with whom I have worked closely over the last two years. The personal traits of this young man, and the academic industriousness he displays, make it an easy task to recommend him highly and without reservation.

Moe Murray has not taken a traditional path to higher education. He overcame many extraordinary hardships and missteps in his early life that do not reveal the person he has become today. Moe is a first-generation, non-traditional student who has majored in rehabilitation services and most recently combined that interest with psychology, developing an individualized major with a focus on therapeutic treatments for individuals and families.

This student is one of the most dedicated to active, meaningful learning of the students with whom I have worked. Moe has consistently been committed to his academic work, showing an exceptional conscientiousness that has served him well in achieving Dean's List status and maintaining a nearly 3.7 grade point average. He is inquisitive and probes course material with intense focus. His goal to be an excellent, participatory student has been unwavering and success has followed suit.

Moe is well known on campus. He has a big, jovial personality that enables him to make friends easily, and he genuinely likes people. His high intelligence is obvious from the first encounter, and his seriousness of purpose is worn on his sleeve. Moe is an exceptional success story given the deprivation and disruption he experienced from the beginning of his life. He has now settled well into fatherhood and family life and has quite specific goals for the future, inclusive of graduate study and an internship working with incarcerated youth in the fall of 2018. His mind is set; his path is forward.

Maurice Murray might have continued down many paths that would not have led to a productive, rewarding life, but he chose differently and wisely. His transformation since his youth has been dramatic and enduring, building upon mistakes and adapting to more fruitful pursuits. In every dimension, Moe has opted for high achievement, a far cry from where he began. One cannot help but admire his will, persistence, intelligence, and conscientiousness. His goals are worthy, and his commitment abiding.

I offer my highest recommendation for Maurice Murray, with the greatest confidence in his future success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "F. Celeste Branham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "F".

F. Celeste Branham
Vice President for Student and Community Services
University of Maine at Farmington
Farmington, Maine

July 5, 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is one of the strongest support for Maurice Murray as he applies for a position of employment with your organization. I have known Maurice (Mo) for three years to date, have observed him in the academic and social settings, and maintain close contact with both Mo and his mentor/advisor at his most recent institution (University of Maine, Farmington). I am thoroughly confident that Mo will not only be successful but will excel as an intern and/or employee for your organization.

Mo has been highly successful as an individual, a student and a learner at the college level despite a variety of factors that would have ground many others down to inaction and failure. To be perfectly frank and forthcoming, as Mo will certainly be, his history of incarceration has caused others to make the mistake of (mis)assuming far too much about his character and capabilities. Maurice had a very challenging youth and it was only during his incarceration that he determined to follow a different path. The fact that he did so and has been very successful as a college student, a partner and new father, and a member of both campus and local communities bears witness to the strength and veracity of his choice to evolve and emerge into his best self. He developed himself as a learner and leader in making his world and others like himself better and wiser. Add to this reality at least one instance of homelessness (while in school and working) and the vast differences in the worlds he has inhabited, and Mo's success takes on the remarkable weight and status that I feel strongly it deserves.

During his time at Southern Maine Community College Mo consistently showed a drive to learn and a commitment to study/engage with materials and ideas that often far surpassed his peers. The importance he gave to not only completing an assignment, but also doing so to the best of his ability made him a positive standout to his faculty. His willingness to use his past as a lever to greater learning in an open and honest manner made others receive him as the community leader that he truly was. During the completion of his undergraduate degree at University of Maine, Farmington Mo's love of learning, commitment to his area of study and his determination to extract the most possible out of his courses and studies has remained high. He walked at graduation, a member of the honors program, holding a strong history of internships. He will come to your organization ready to question and even challenge, but above all he will absorb, learn, and analyze all that you offer. Mo is ready and more than capable to engage in the work of your organization and thrive/excel. He sees this next step of intellectual and professional work not only as valuable and engaging for his own development, but also crucial as he seeks to fashion his professional skills and identity to best work with adolescents like his past self. I predict that he will be successful in forming those connections; he is able to engage and maintain the attention of a room of youth who pride themselves on not paying attention or caring about anyone or anything.

I strongly recommend that you select Mo for this internship or permanent position. He is motivated and has a clear vision of how he sees his future and its need for the knowledge he can gain in working with you and your program. He is excited about the opportunity to think and learn with others who share his

passion and commitment. If I can answer any questions or provide additional information, please feel free to contact me. I welcome the opportunity to talk about Mo with you. You can reach me via email at hgurney@smccme.edu or via cell at 207-576-5629.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Holly Gurney". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop on the 'H' and a long tail on the 'y'.

Holly Gurney



March 22, 2018

ST. AMBROSE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
518 West Locust Street
Davenport, Iowa 52803

Subject: Letter of Recommendation for Maurice Murray

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great pleasure that I have the opportunity to share my commendations concerning Maurice Murray. These commendations are based upon the exceptional performance Moe exhibited while taking two mathematics courses I taught during the 2014 Fall and 2015 Spring semesters at Southern Maine Community College. After teaching these courses for many years, I was pleased to find that Moe had achieved the highest grade average of any student who has taken them. This is no small achievement. These courses were challenging and multi-disciplined, covering a wide range of mathematical skills. Many students perform exceptionally while covering some of these skills. It is rare that a student will perform exceptionally in all areas as Moe did. His work ethic is clearly driven by his passion to learn and understand thoroughly the material he is studying. On many occasions, I have witnessed him taking time to help his fellow classmates with challenging mathematical problems as well as with words of encouragement concerning life's issues. I was so impressed his conduct and performance that I recommended him on two occasions to the Southern Maine Community College Scholarship Foundation and the Dean of Students to be considered for the award of merit based scholarships.

If you have any questions concerning my observations of Moe's performance as it may pertain towards his future education, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jack B. Smith'. The signature is written over a faint, circular stamp or watermark.

Jack B. Smith
Department of Mathematics and Physics
Southern Maine Community College
Fort Road
South Portland, Maine, 04106
Office Tel: 207 216 5029
Email: jsmith2@smcc.edu