

114: Kaylyn Murphy: Confidence and Integrity

Gavin Kelly

Hey everybody, you're listening to Beyond 1894. This is the official podcast of Louisiana Tech University. I'm Gavin Kelly from the Office of University Communications. Our guest for this episode is Kaylyn Murphy. She is Miss Louisiana Tech University 2024. Kaylyn, thank you for being here with us today. It's become sort of a tradition we've had the past, I think, at least two Miss Louisiana Techs on the podcast, sort of in that December, January, time of year, which is kind of right at the tail end of your stint as Miss Louisiana Tech. So that way we kind of give you a lot to talk about, because you've had almost a year now with the crown, so I'm sure that's been a lot for you. Tell me a little bit about what the past year has been like, just in so many words,

Kaylyn Murphy

a once in a lifetime opportunity. For sure, it was definitely unexpected. So I was finishing up my undergrad, and sure enough, it was not planned for me to win this at all. I did not think I had my midterm presentation do the same night of the pageant, and all my friends were texting me saying, No way you're on stage right now. Projects due at midnight. But since that night, I have done so much on campus. I've met a lot of people, made a lot of friends, the organization itself, like, as far as Miss Louisiana goes, is amazing, so it's just been a whirlwind of new things and new opportunities. Yeah,

Gavin Kelly

absolutely. We'll get into a little bit about, you know, sort of the pageant, and a little bit more about your tenure. Let's kind of take it back to, you know, your journey as a student. Tell us about kind of where you're from, and I know you're you have an architecture degree, and you graduated earlier this may tell us about where you're from, and kind of how you decided that that was the sort of academic path you wanted to

Kaylyn Murphy

take. So I'm from Amy, Louisiana, which is about three and a half hours from here, down south. I always loved Legos and building with things, and when it came about my junior year of high school, I visited a firm from a family friend back home, and after touring their office, I just knew that architecture was something that I wanted to do. My sister actually came to tech. Her name is Cameron Murphy. She graduated two years before me, and she she was here, and I came for time out for tech. And after that, I just knew that I wanted to come here, and it's just been great since then. It's always felt like home.

Gavin Kelly

Yeah, that's I've said this before on the podcast to multiple guests, because they all kind of say the same thing, even, you know, faculty and staff, they kind of talk about reasons they like tech and reason reasons they like the feel of Rustin is feels like almost verbatim. It's always that phrase, right? It feels kind of homey. It feels like home. So that's good to hear. Since you've graduated, you're still here in

school, because you have the crown, and you kind of need to keep that up as part of your your your stint as Miss tech. But talk about kind of what your plans are with this architecture degree.

Kaylyn Murphy

So I've always wanted to do residential architecture. I've always loved working with families and building their dreams. And you know, they tell you, I want this many bedrooms. I want my house look like this. And then you just take that, put it on paper and make it come to life for them. That's kind of the best experience about residential is you get to work with the people and the clients, and it's less codes and more things along the commercial side you get to avoid. But I have always said I would work for myself eventually. Right now, depending on if I finish after winter quarter, if I stay through spring, which most likely I'll stay thru spring just to enjoy my last year of college, I will probably work at a firm which Rustin has grown fond to my heart. So I'm thinking about staying up here to get a year or two under my belt, and then after that, if I have all the knowledge I need to work for myself, I'll go back home maybe, or move. My parents had haven't decided if they want to stay in Amy or if they want to move, so I'm kind of waiting to see where I kind of end up. But residential is the plan. Okay, good deal. Good luck with

Gavin Kelly

that, by the way. Thank you. So talk to me about, I guess pageant life is the best way to put it. So have you always been a quote, unquote pageant girl, or was Miss tech the Miss tech pageant kind of the beginnings of something for you? Um,

Kaylyn Murphy

a little bit of both. Miss Tech was kind of like my Miss Universe, essentially, it was the only thing, like when I set a goal, it was the only one I ever thought about. I never thought I would go to miss Louisiana or Miss America and keep going, but I competed in fairs and festivals back home, so I have some like junior league. I guess you could call it experience with pageants. My sister did the Miss tech pageant. I've always been in the realm of things, but never full on pageant girl, I guess you would say so. Miss Tech was my first big thing, at least a giant title, and my first Miss America side of things. So it was a new experience, but something I. Never expected either. So it's been really great.

Gavin Kelly

Okay, yeah, so let's, let's dive a little bit more into the unexpected part of it. Walk us through, I know it's been almost a year at this point, but walk us through, you know that Miss tech pageant where you won and kind of your first initial feelings after, because I'm sure it took a while for it to really to hit you, for it to settle in that you'd won,

Kaylyn Murphy

yeah, so the first night, well, I'll say I probably got home after the pageant about midnight. So my family came up, we ate, and then they all left and I went home. My sister stayed with me, but after unpacking all the dresses and taking the crown off, and, like, just I had a minute to, like, stop, and I was like, Did this really happen? Like, it kind of all took a minute to set in, and I don't think until I went to my first event, or, like, first thing I did, like, where I got to wear the crown, I think that's when it set in, because I'll even catch myself now walking somewhere, and people, like, will be staring out the side of their eye,

and I'm like, is something like, wrong? Like, why are they looking at me? And then I forget I have this giant sparkly thing on my head, so it's still something that I'm not used to, is even though it's been a year, but from the moment that it happened, it was kind of like shock, like you didn't know, and then it's like, Oh, it's coming to an end already, so it's just from start to finish. It's been crazy to just to know that you miss tech, but it just, it hits me every day I put the crown on. Yeah,

Gavin Kelly

yeah. It's like, it's like a switch, I guess. And you know, if you're listening, Caleb was out on campus with us yesterday taking portraits for the photos that go with this podcast episode. And you know, you insisted that this wasn't common, but multiple people approached you during our photo shoot, and we're talking about and ask questions about Miss tech, and somebody took a photo just of you standing out in the plaza. So I guess, like, the recognition and being noticed is probably like new in the sense of, but again, the crown is probably a beacon for that, huh? Yeah, I

Kaylyn Murphy

so I come from a small town, and my parents own a business. So it's like, a lot of people know who I am. A lot of the people I went to school with go to church with me. So I'm always used to running into people I know. So when I came to rust and it was like, I can go to the store my PJs and nobody would know, even though I don't do that, yeah, but it was like, it was weird to notice that people didn't notice you as much, but then you put the crown on, it's like everybody stares at you. They're like, Who is that? And so it definitely catches people's eye and attention. So you always gotta make sure you're put together an on point. If you go out with the crown on, well,

Gavin Kelly

it's not even on your head right now, if, if you're listening, it's in a it's in a box on the table where we're where we're speaking. And I do keep glancing over at it because it's a crown in a box. It's hard not to look at. But very, very professional, very on point. So yeah, talk to me a little bit more about your year. Kind of highlight some of the community involvement, things you've done, some of the events, maybe you've been to representing Louisiana Tech. Talk to me about, kind of what you enjoyed about those. And then talk to me too, about why it's important to sort of keep the idea that you're representing Tech with you whenever you are representing tech. So

Kaylyn Murphy

Miss Annie, my director, one thing she instilled in me is that you're a student first. So every time I put the crown on, I know that I'm going to something, I'm going somewhere, I'm representing the University. So it's always been easy for me to remember when the crowd and sash are on, you're at your job like you're you're on the clock, basically, and obviously a lot of people stare and look so, you know, like eyes are on you. So it's, it's very easy to notice you're in the spotlight and keep up the proper standard. I guess you could say that you're representing the University from the start, I would say I've rode in a bunch of parades. I even went home to a local fan festival and rode in that one. I got to sing for the presidential investiture, which is really cool, because that's something that doesn't come around every year. So that's like one significant thing to my year. I also got to do like the Easter egg hunt with a e Phillips and the quad. I got asked a bunch of things to just go and do like I asked. Got asked to judge a few pageants. None of them worked out to where I could, but I did get asked to do that on a like a

younger middle school level. The big thing, I guess, that the next queen will get to do also, is Miss Louisiana. That was something that I knew if I won, I had to go to but I didn't really know exactly what I was signing up for. And if you asked Chanley Patterson, the last Miss Tech, she's a friend of mine, when she was crowning me, she put the banner on, and as soon as she looked at me, I gave her a hug, and I said, What did I sign up for? And she says, Oh, you don't even know. So since the start, it's been crazy and fun and a bunch of new experiences and opportunities, but I've got to do a lot with the community of Ruston too, and people around here like, like I said, Phillips. And the one thing that I got to do as far as related to my platform, which is suicide awareness, was I partnered with the counseling service, and every year they hold an out of the darkness walk, and everyone gets together in the quad or Centennial Plaza, and you walk around campus to support suicide awareness. So that was one thing that I really wanted to do as far as, like my platform and my CSI,

Gavin Kelly

also you mentioned the Miss Louisiana pageant. Quick shout out to the current Miss Louisiana because she is a Tech student. Olivia, yeah. So congratulations. That was gonna be my next question was kind of, to talk about the Miss Louisiana pageant. Talk maybe to the sort of because I would imagine from the outside looking in, and from talking to our past couple of Miss Tech winners, it's kind of what they've echoed to that it's a very unique thing to be on the inside of a pageant system like that and that the you know, the girls you meet, and the girls are going to be competing with, you kind of all understand something that no one else can because they're not competing indirectly. So kind of talk about the relationships maybe you've built over the past couple years with people who kind of do the same thing

Kaylyn Murphy

that you do. Yeah, so Miss Louisiana. I thought was gonna be like Miss Tech, a one night, you prelim kind of pageant thing. And it is not that at all. It is three days of competition, a week long of Miss Louisiana week. So you spend one whole week with 25 to 30 other girls that are from all over the state of Louisiana. So a lot of us try to get to go to the other prelims, so that when you win, you get to meet people and be a visiting queen, essentially. So there was probably a handful, I say there was probably half of my class that was at the Miss Tech pageant when I won, and they came up to me and took a picture and hugged me, introduced their self, and I was just like, I'm so bad with names, but it was good because it's a familiar face. Yeah. So then come Miss Louisiana week, you get a roommate. They usually try to pair you with somebody who's done it before, so that you're not like thrown to the wolves, and don't know what's happening, but so you're partnered with somebody in your room, and then all week long, they give you, they serve you breakfast, lunch and dinner. Some of it's catered from our the Miss Louisiana sponsors, and then some of it is like local businesses of Ruston who also sponsor the pageant. So you get fed, you get to travel, you get to go to the nursing home. Like there's a bunch of different things you do all week with these girls. So it's kind of like your My class is like the Miss Louisiana class of 2024 we will always be the class of 2024 so it's just the bond you grow with so many people throughout the week, because you ride on a bus everywhere, all over Monroe the whole time. So you get to sit by somebody different every day, talk to different people every day. And I met a lot of people through that. And even one of my close friends that I met, Leah, her sister's actually doing the Miss Tech pageant this year. So it's like connections that you get, and then you meet, like siblings and stuff. Mackenzie Scroggs, the last Miss Louisiana, her sister goes here now, and she stopped me on orientation one day. So it's, it's like a little family that you don't expect to just be ginormous, even

though there was only like 30 something of us. So it's, it's really neat and really cool to get to know so many people, but also the connections you get out of it. Yeah,

Gavin Kelly

and even, even when you have to pass the crown on those connections are still going to be there. Oh yeah, oh yeah. Very important. I would imagine Ashley this yesterday. I'm gonna ask you again, we're coming up on the next Miss tech pageant. It's gonna be January 14, right? Yes, I think when this episode comes out, it'll be just a few days away from that. So by the time people are listening to this, you'll be getting ready to pass the crown off. Is it more bitter or more sweet?

Kaylyn Murphy

I still say it's about 5050, I I'm excited that I got this opportunity, and I'm ready for someone else to get to experience all the things I did, but I'm also sad because I wish I could be mistake forever. And I think every miss tech will say that, and you'll hear me say that being Miss tech is special. Somebody told me that, and even in my farewell speech that I recorded, one of the biggest things is that the next Miss tech needs to know how special this title is, and you won't realize that until the end of your year, like you get to do so many things. It's it's an amazing opportunity. But everyone's going to tell you, being Miss tech is just so special, and you don't really realize it until the end of it, so that that 5050, is in effect. But I'd say it's it's a great year, and you make so many memories, and you love so much about it. But when you when the time comes in, January 14 is approaching fast, you're like time slowed down. You want more time? So it's 5050 I cried writing my farewell speech. I read it enough that I didn't cry when I recorded it, but I definitely 5050 every day I go back and forth. Yeah,

Gavin Kelly

and much like when you won, I'm sure when the next pageant is over, it's not gonna be immediate for you. Have to have, you have to go a few days knowing that, you know that the time has come for something. And you know, I'm sure you make peace with it, but it's much it's gonna be a delayed reaction. I think, like, kind of winning was, yeah,

Kaylyn Murphy

like, you didn't expect it, and then, yeah, definitely it's gonna take a toll for a few days.

Gavin Kelly

Well, I know that. You know, it's not lightly done, to put in a year of service, especially on top of school and everything else. What is just curious? What is your talent at these pageants? What's your what's your go to for talent portion?

Kaylyn Murphy

So I've always sang. I have a lot of hidden talents. I play piano and guitar, and I took gymnastics for 10 years, but when I did the Miss tech pageant the first time, which my first Miss America Pageant. Side of things I didn't realize, like you have interview and talent only saves questions. So talent was a new one for me. I'm just used to fairs and festivals, which is where you just model kind of so my sister, she sings, and it's always been something that has been a secret, hidden talent, but I've always let her have that side of things, because she was a music major, so no one really knew I could sing. So when it

came time, I was like, I guess I'll just sing. And she was like, It's good. It's gonna be good. I'll help you to be fine. So since then, I've never stopped singing for my talent and stuff, but it's been crazy because I've been asked to sing the national anthem for so many things now, and two years ago, people would have been like, you saying, I would have been like, yeah, secret, hidden talent. So what was

Gavin Kelly

your song of choice?

Kaylyn Murphy

I sang, I will survive. It's a little tough, but it's a crowd pleaser, and everybody knows it, and it's really fun too,

Gavin Kelly

kind of, that's the I would imagine. It's part of the trick with the talent is it has to be kind of something that people can kind of get into. You want to, you want to win over the people. Oh, yeah. But also has to be your best version of your best talent. Yeah. Have you met anybody that's that does kind of an interesting or weird talent over the years that you've been doing pageant stuff?

Kaylyn Murphy

Um, there's been a new thing with the like speed painting. Oh, so the, I'm pretty sure this last University of Arkansas, if not this year, Miss Arkansas. She is a speed painter, so that's been pretty cool. I've also seen like, baton twirlers and stuff like that. We also have one grace. She goes to school here. She's competing in the Miss tech pageant. She does that. But there's been a lot of singers, a lot of dancers, but every once in a while you'll get, like, speed painting or something like that. So there's, there's been a few that have jumped out at me that I was like, Oh, that's pretty cool.

Gavin Kelly

I was just curious, because it is interesting when somebody kind of goes beyond those kind of core four or five talents, which is, you know, not to say that that's not talented, genuinely, to do one of those four or five things. But I was just curious. So we're coming up, like I said, coming up on the next pageant. And I'm sure part of this is in your your farewell, your farewell speech, and that whenever you get a chance to put the crown on somebody else, you'll be able to talk to them one. Oh, yeah. But I've asked this of our last two ms techs when they've been on what is your sort of advice for the next Miss Louisiana Tech University?

Kaylyn Murphy

So my speech says to the next Miss tech to wear your crown with confidence and integrity, which the biggest thing to realize is, obviously I said earlier, a lot of eyes are on you. When you have the crown on your head, it is a job. So a lot of people are looking at you. You need to be in the best state you can be to represent the university. So everywhere you go, red, white and blue, Bulldog all the way and just know that you won the title for a reason, and that everywhere you go, there's a reason you're there. So confidence and integrity are the two biggest things. I'd say, your whole reign. No matter what you get to do, where you get to go, wear it with confidence and

Gavin Kelly

integrity. Very nice. And would that have been good advice to you a year ago? Like, would you have liked is that something like that you've kind of had to learn about yourself along the way, like, how you wear the crown in the sand?

Kaylyn Murphy

Yeah, definitely. The first time I went somewhere, it was like, Okay, now I realize what they say when people are looking at you. Eyes are on you. Everywhere you go, you're representing a university like it the title special, but there's so much that comes along with it. So, yeah. So

Gavin Kelly

what are you gonna miss the most about it?

Kaylyn Murphy

Ooh, just, I don't know when I originally, when I won. I was like, Okay, I don't want to overdo it. I don't want to walk out of my house every day with the crowd on my head, because, like, I am a student and, like, I don't know that was just something that it was hard for me to figure out how to balance it first, how to know when to wear it, when not to like, what's too much, what's not enough. And come down to it, you have roughly 365 days. You have one year to the next Miss tech wear that crown every single day, if you want to, because there will come a day when you can't wear it no more. So I don't know. It's just been crazy to. Try to adjust to all that. And I don't know, I just I wish I'd wore it more, and then sometimes, like, I wish I would have wore it less, and I don't know, just for the next Miss tech her whole year, be sure that if you question it, just go ahead and wear it. Yeah, because you can always not wear it the next day, but just wear it as much as you want, because your year is your year, and you want to look back and not regret anything or wish you missed out on anything.

Gavin Kelly

And also, like, like you said, you kind of don't have time to look back till it's all over exactly and swept up in it for a year, and then it's a year later that you're finally getting to look back and reflect on it. And I hope you've, you've done some reflecting here. I appreciate you making time for essay on the podcast, absolutely Congratulations again. I know we're at the tail end of it, but congrats on a win and a big, successful year. And I hope you're looking forward to the next pageant. I know you are and handing off the crown of somebody else. Again, bittersweet, but you've made the most of it, and I know that you'll instill a lot of confidence and advice into the next person so again. Thank you. Congratulations and thanks. Kaylyn, thank you. Go Dogs.

Gavin Kelly

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