



IT'S MAGIC MONDAY: FEBRUARY 7, 2022!

This month, we honor a Woman of Mercy who is passionate, determined, and hard-working. Meet **Unissa Cruse-Ferguson '10** who says, "It's rewarding to see your life unfolding the way you imagined, even if it's slow, it's happening. I have all the patience in the world because I know without a doubt that I'm going to reach all my goals. I hope to inspire others to do the same. 'You're going to be somebody,' is what my late grandfather used to say. He was right. *I AM SOMEBODY*. And each day, I become somebody *BETTER*. Growth has no limitation, and neither do I!"

Name: Unissa Cruse-Ferguson '10

Post Mercy Education:

- B.A., Dance: Choreography and Performance, University of Maryland College Park, 2014
- B.S., Family Science: Children, Partner Relationships, and Conflict Resolution, University of Maryland College Park, 2014

Personal and Professional Achievements:

I am a professional dancer (hip-hop, jazz, modern) and actor (tv/film and commercials) living in Los Angeles, California. I am also building a modeling and voice acting portfolio and am beginning to create my own social media content. In 2019, I acted in two films, playing Juliet in *By Any Other Name* and Samantha in *Departures*. In 2016, I was chosen from among 200 dancers to perform on NBC's *Hairspray Live!* which starred Ariana Grande, Martin Short, Kristin Chenoweth, Jennifer Hudson, Sean Hayes, Harvey Fierstein, Rosie O'Donnell, Ricki Lake, and Derek Hough. I was proud to represent Baltimore in this production.

I previously worked as an investigator for the Public Defender Service in Washington, DC, as a stylist for a store based in Maryland, and as the co-artistic director of a non-profit youth organization in Washington, DC.

As an alumna of the Mercy Dance Troupe, I have enjoyed remaining connected to the school by serving as a guest teacher to dance students as well as a guest choreographer for the Troupe and Apprentice Dance Company.

Were there any Mercy faculty members who especially impacted your life? Why?

Ms. Mary-Margaret Kardian Latchford '64 taught me to be tough, but also warm. She was very passionate about Psychology and Sociology, which rubbed off on me and influenced many of the courses I took in college. I remember that one time, Ms. Latchford could tell I was having a rough day just by looking at me. She could tell I was struggling to hold it together. So, she pulled me to the side and said "It's ok. Sometimes we all need a good cry. Go home, and I'll see you tomorrow." That lesson stuck with me. **Ms. Maria Schaub McGuire '80, P'08** always inspired me to smile no matter what. I gave her my baby picture for a project and every time I visited, she told me that she still had it. It's the little things like this that warm my heart. **Ms. Vickie McGinty** always pushed me to work harder in Trigonometry and Statistics. I was grateful for all the tricks she taught me to solve an equation and how open she was to us computing through different methods, rather than just one way. **Ms. Sue Ann Ness** encouraged me to never give up. Chemistry and Physics were not easy, but she made them look easy and that made me want to put in the extra effort to ace her classes. At exam time, I nailed it!

Were there any classes you took at Mercy that stand out to you? Why?

Sociology, because it applies to every aspect of our lives and Dance History because I had never studied in-depth all the origins of something about which I was so passionate!

What is your favorite Mercy memory?

I have great memories from Mercy. My freshman year, I attended all the basketball games, and I had so much fun cheering on my friends! Spurred on by that experience, as a sophomore, I joined the Pep Squad. Stepping/stomp was new to me, but I loved it. When our class won Field Day, it was the best feeling to see amazing creativity unfold, especially after we put in so much time and hard work!