

*Family  
A well-greased chain  
connected so tightly  
that we can pull any weight*

*A rope, knotted  
held so stiffly  
that we can hold on  
or yank it from great pressure*

*A strong tree  
whose branches stretch  
far and wide  
whose roots are  
down deep that  
we dig and search  
but never find all*

*The box of crayons  
lined neatly in rows  
so colorful and sparkling  
that we can paint and bring  
a dull world alive*

*A jewelry box  
filled with precious stones  
glistening against the velvet  
so that we always treasure them...*

My aunt wrote and shared this poem a while back, and indeed, it captures the essence of the Daniels/Allen family. My family is a chain that has remained a strong factor, closely linked together, and a rope that has pulled all of us from moments of tragedies to moments of triumphs. The family's history is truly an unsolved mystery, but passes on a rich and deep history. Like crayons in a box, we are all unique with special gifts and can turn an average family get together into a Broadway production. Most importantly, the love that radiates is a priceless and "powerful" bond between us.

"Here I come to save the day!" For most, the Mighty Mouse creed may seem a bit archaic, but that supermouse hit on a major concept. Think about it (if one can remember that far back). This mouse leaps in a flash and flies without hesitation or even knowing the full situation. My family is notorious for running to the rescue especially if they hear

that familiar college cry for help, "I NEED \_\_\_\_ DOLLARS; HELP!" In rushes the "Mighty Family." Whether it was for a phone bill, food, or a book, my mom has always come through. She is single parent now, yet my brother and I have never lacked for anything. When "Supermom" cannot save the day all alone, the family matriarch steps in who happens to be my grandmother, affectionately known as "Nana." Nana will make sure I get what I want (even if I do not need it, but is that not grandmothers for you?). My Aunt Shanya and Uncle Franklin also have risen to the occasion several times. Along with "Supermom," the "Green Lanterns" (my grandmother, aunt, and uncle) have saved me from the terrible monster--DEBT.

My family's powers do not just stop with defeating financial danger. Every now and then, the Dynamic Duo, "Mathwoman" (my aunt Shawana) and "Girlwriter" (my aunt Shammah) step in. Ever since any child in the family has written the first problem, "Math Woman" has been there to protect them from the dangerous woes of the basics to Calculus. Even now a weekend home quickly turns into a much needed tutorial session. Right by Mathwoman's side is her trusty sidekick, "Girlwriter." Microsoft should hire her as their spell-checker. I do not possess enough fingers and toes to count how many essays she has proofread and critiqued for me. When you master the Math and English, the rest is easy! You also cannot leave out the "Incredible Bulk" or better known as Ron, my brother. His strength has moved great boulders ( I mean suitcases) around the campus, to our hometown, and back. He is critical to my academics because basically a woman cannot function without her stuff--enough said. Finally, there is my other half, my cousin Shamieka, and together we form the "Wander Twins." She is able to take the form of ears and shoulders when I need someone to listen and to lean on. The

Daniels/Allen family are the "Just Us League" of super relatives who literally help me function many times.

North Carolina State University and the "Just Us League," believe it or not, share a connection. It was here that some of its members received some of their superhero training. You see the "Dynamic Duo" mentioned above both attended the university, and with me, the legacy continues. Years ago, while my aunt was matriculating in the computer science field at State, she invited her younger sister, "Girlwriter", to spend a weekend and visit the campus. Her little sister was mesmerized by all she saw and recognized the good all her powers could do on the campus, so she too, in 1991 made her residence on planet Wolfpack. She experienced intense but exciting training, and she decided that the torch must be passed. She invited the "Wander Twins" to visit the campus, and I knew then that it was the perfect place to begin my superhero destiny. The "Just Us League" made sure I received scholarships and excelled academically, and here I landed to begin my induction into the "Halls of Education." I am a younger member of the league, so frequent visits are made by the league to make sure I learn to use my super-student powers to save mankind( just recently the league all came to celebrate my 21st birthday). The Dynamic Duo and the rest encourage me to participate in many organizations on campus to get the full impact of my training and of course to look as normal as everyone else and protect my secret identity. NC State for my family is not just a university, but "our university." They tell me it will be time for me to pass the torch--I guess I will start working on my nine year old cousin!

When people search for heroes, they usually look for a famous person or some wish that truly some superhero will come zooming through the sky. Well, I have never had to look very far for my superheroes. I have been surrounded by them all my life.