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The Library, To Me:

I can still remember the pneumatic crushing sound that the jaws of life were making as they cut a pathway large enough for my mangled body to be extracted, and the paralyzing fear that washed over me as I heard the surgeon tell my loved ones that I would never again be among those who are capable of walking. It was that day that a seed was planted deep within me. A seed that would grow into something strong, something capable of overcoming obstacles, and taking that first step that I was never supposed to take. It was when I realized how fragile and precious life is that I made a promise to myself: I would never again be satisfied without chasing my dreams, and I would never adhere to the standards that others have set for me. I would walk again, this time as a geologist and not a just a roughneck. The strength that once was vital for me to overcome the doctors' prognosis has since aided in my success as a first gen/ low-income student; but looking back, another, invaluable resource has also played a crucial role in my achievements and has given me the ability to succeed. It was the Library at he University of Arizona. Overlooked by so many, the library has been my key into the world of knowledge and achieving my dreams.

I had no idea what it would take to be successful in college.

After about five years of intensive rehabilitation and recovery, packed with surgery after surgery, my doctor finally released me to return to school. College is something that I had done in my past, right after high school, but I did not stay long. This is due to the indecision of a career path and the inability to understand what opportunities a university could offer. Being born to a hard working, yet uneducated family, work ethic was something that I understood very well. In fact, it had been essential in my recovery, but I knew that one thing I could not expect from my support base, was any academic advise.

I was terrified that I would not be able to cut it in college. I knew that I was smack dab in the middle of an ocean of unfamiliar and confusing things. When I looked around, all I saw was advanced, flashing devices in the hands of, what seemed like, everyone else but me. As an unconventional, poor student, I knew that, again, I was at a disadvantage. Things had never seemed to be as easy for me as they were for everyone else. This was nothing new to me, and it only strengthened my resolve: I would not let my circumstances defeat me. I would succeed. I just had to figure out how.

The answer: The LIBRARY. Here I could compete on the same technological level as everyone else. Of course, I couldn't just jump on the Internet with my Iphone, or just take a few minutes, wherever I was, to write a paper and conduct research, but with extra effort, and time spent in the library, I knew I could reach out and grab my dreams by the bootstraps. No longer did I have to feel so unequipped. Everything I needed was at my fingertips!

With this newly discovered access to the library on campus, I was able to achieve things that I had never dreamed possible. I have used the computers there to apply and be accepted to the prestigious and highly competitive Ronald E. McNair

Achievement Program. As a McNair Scholar I have been able to study under and work with some of the best geologists in the world. I have been able to conduct two summers of research, prepare award-winning presentations, make and communicate with important contacts in my field of research, and even discover a program that has paid for all of my tuition, fees and books! As a whole, I have transformed from a terrified outsider to a true geoscientist. Without access to the library, none of this would have ever been possible. I just would not have had the resources. That is what the University of Arizona Library has been for me: An undeniably invaluable resource that without it, my academic career and my life would be completely different, and I am so grateful for the opportunities that I have found there.