



Amina Bayou

Tibra Spotlight, February 2003
by Nihil Sharkasi

Amina never sees herself as a woman succeeding in a man's world, but simply as a success.

"About the time when I was in 9th grade, the Libyan men started playing soccer every Sunday morning. I showed up with my father and brother and was told that was a man's sport and no women were allowed. My father said that I had played since I was about 4 years old and that I was going to play. So they picked teams... Of course, I was chosen last. The game started and I think I ended up taking out a couple of guys and scoring a couple of goals. I was always one of the first chosen from then on and was asked to come back every week... I also think that experience got some of the men to let their young girls participate in soccer."



Amina & parents

Amina Bayou has attacked every obstacle in her life with the same skill, confidence and success as in that soccer game. The daughter of a Libyan father and a Polish-American mother, Amina sees herself as one to "break the ice" in her Washington, D.C. Libyan community. As a collegiate athlete, she's shown leadership wherever she goes. Through her accomplishments in athletics, academics, and business, Amina never sees herself as a woman succeeding in a man's world, but simply as a success. And she says she owes her attitude and success to her family and community values.

Amina was born October 8, 1979, in Tucson, Arizona, where her parents had met as students. After spending a year in Benghazi, Amina grew up in Northern Virginia, "I have grown up with the Libyan community in the Washington area and I consider the community to be family as well." Her father organized weekly gatherings for the Libyan community around Washington, D.C., as well as Sunday soccer games for the men.

Like a true Libyan, Amina's passion for soccer showed at an early age. And she wasn't shy about joining the match. In high school, she played basketball, cross-country, and, of course, soccer. Her high school varsity soccer team won the Commonwealth of Virginia Championship. Some might have called her a tomboy, but her athleticism paid off. She received a scholarship to play soccer at Longwood College (now Longwood University).

Name: Amina Bayou

Date of Birth : October 8, 1979

Place of Birth: Tucson, Arizona

Mother: Jean Bayou, Upstate New York

Father: Yousef Bayou, Benghazi

Occupation: Senior Account Executive,
Airborne Express

Residence: Boston, Massachusetts

"My entire family has pushed me to become the best person that I can possibly be."



On the field with Longwood Lancers

Her father encouraged her to follow her passion for sports to Longwood College in rural Virginia, though it meant that she would have to leave home. Amina met the challenges of being away from home head on. She filled her time with school, soccer and volunteer work. Amina's college years were a balancing act; she says, "The busier you are, the better you do." Amina competed for four years with the Longwood Lancers, and lead the soccer team as Captain in her senior year. Playing varsity soccer taught Amina leadership and self-motivation, skills she's used well in college and beyond. Again, Amina

thanks her family for helping her juggle the various demands on her time. "They have shown me how to always have balance in my life between family, health, and spiritual growth. My entire family has pushed me to become the best person that I can possibly be by helping me realize what makes me happy and then encouraging me to be that person and live that dream."

Missing the Libyan community at home, Amina co-founded Longwood College's Islamic Association. Amina says she takes after her father in her enthusiasm and motivation. The most important Libyan value, to her, is family and the importance of caring for and maintaining community.

In her freshman year, Amina joined Alpha Delta Pi (ADP) sorority. With her sorority sisters, she supported The Ronald McDonald House, a place where families with sick children can stay and receive care. Each semester, the ADP house



Dancing to her grandparents

volunteered to help the families with chores and care for the children.



Amina, Aziza & Ali

Amina has carried her sense of service even after school. Already a big sister to Ali, 21, and Aziza, 18, she has recently joined the Big Sisters of America program. Now she is happy to be volunteering, "for the right reasons," and not for college applications. After her work at Ronald McDonald House, Amina was eager to volunteer where she could make a bigger difference by working more closely with a child. She can't wait "to be a kid again" as she spends time with her 10-year-old "Little Sister," Rachele. Amina's mother, Jean, is the one who always pushed her to give back to the community and taught her how important and rewarding that is. "She is my best friend and a very incredible lady."

In her first year at Longwood, she received the Freshman Leadership and Achievement Award, given to five freshmen every year. In her last year, she was named Marketing Senior of the Year by the School of Business and Economics Advisory Board. Also in her senior year, Amina was awarded a scholarship, and chosen as one of only twenty-five college seniors from across the United States to attend the Direct Marketing Association Convention, to learn about different aspects of marketing from top executives in the field. Each summer in between, Amina interned with Sun Microsystems in Boston. She fell in love with Bean Town and moved there after receiving her Business Administration degree in 2001 with a major in Marketing.



Marketing Senior of the Year

Amina's streak of success continued in her job as a Senior Account Executive for Airborne Express. She was promoted to her current position after only 13 months. She has exceeded her quota in every quarter since joining the company. Also, she won second place in a national sales competition within the company; her prize was to attend the National Sales Meeting for Managers and Executives. She is busy proving herself, with the goal of further promotion, larger accounts, and becoming a district or national account manager. When the time is right, Amina says she will return to school to get an MBA degree.

"This is not a man's world... I have the equal opportunity to achieve anything that a man can achieve. "

On her drive to succeed, she says, "I was raised to believe that this is not a man's world and that I have the equal opportunity to achieve anything that a man can achieve. And most importantly that I should always set sky high goals regardless of my gender." For three years, she helped in organizing the annual Women's Leadership Conference, hosting presentations and career building activities by successful women in different fields. In her own career, Amina tries not to overcompensate as a woman, but use her whole personality to be successful. She says, rather than act like men to achieve success, women should find



Crushing the Alpine rapids on a backpacking trip

strength in their own character. For example, valuing intuition, perceptiveness, and communication over aggression.

Family has always been central in Amina's life, and with their support and encouragement she reaches where she aims. "I remember asking my father about 'the glass ceiling' when reading about it in business books in high school. He said that only I could create a glass ceiling and it wouldn't be there if I didn't think it was. I have lived my entire life in that frame of mind."

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