

12/3/2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to honor Congresswoman Meek's lifetime of service and to thank her for the impact she had on my life. I am Lieutenant Colonel Betty P. Myrthil, née Simbert and I am an Officer in the United States Army with over 20 years of honorable and distinguished service to this nation.

In 1997, I was a high school student at Miami Central Senior High with the aspiration and dream to attend one of the most prestigious schools in the world, the United States Military Academy at West Point. I didn't know anyone who attended West Point and I certainly never heard of any black women from Miami-Dade who attended West Point. However, in 1997 Congresswoman Meek gave me that opportunity and I became her first nominee to a Military Service Academy. Congresswoman Meek's nomination helped solidify my acceptance into West Point where I graduated with Bachelor of Science in Information Systems Engineering.

Congresswoman Meek's efforts not only helped me but also solidified a pipeline for students from the FL17/FL24 district to attend a Service Academy. Since 1997, nearly 30 students have been accepted to West Point from her district. This number does not take into account those nominated to the Air Force or Naval Academy.

As an Officer in the Army, I have served my country in various capacities around the world. One of my most notable assignments was serving as Diversity Admissions Officer at West Point where I was responsible for finding and recruiting the top African American, Hispanic, and Native American students from across the nation. During my tenure, my team and I were responsible for the admittance of the most African American and Hispanic candidates in West Point history. Most notably, the largest graduating class of African American women at West Point has been featured in every major news outlet. Because of the opportunity Congresswoman Meek afforded me, I can proudly say that over 2700 African American and Hispanic men and women have graduated from West Point and gone on to serve our nation in various capacities as Soldiers, doctors, lawyers, scholars, business owners, and etc.

Just like the parable of the mustard seed in Mark 30, Congresswoman Meek planted the tiniest of seed when she gave me that opportunity, after that seed was planted it grew into the largest plant in the garden. Thank you Congresswoman Meek for her life. Thank you for your faith in me. Thank you for labor. You've impacted so many lives and your legacy will live on. Rest now. Job well done. We salute you.

Sincerely,

Lieutenant Colonel Betty P. Myrthil  
United States Army