

**“Glad are the hearts we offer to thee! True is the spirit of loyalty.  
Keen are our minds in the search for truth. Here in these halls in the days of our youth!  
College, Lady Doak, College – Lady Doak!”**

My roots – Lady Doak College! I began strong at Lady Doak in my youth, and my keen search for truth is still alive and ongoing. They say, “*Once a Doakian, always a Doakian.*” That is true in every fibre of my being. Life values and knowledge were not just taught but woven seamlessly inside and outside the curriculum so that learning became a natural, everyday part of living. These lessons are invaluable; they are etched permanently into one’s soul. They cannot be unlearned.

At Lady Doak, even the simplest moments became lessons. They were not confined to the classrooms. They could happen right at the gates, where *Security Anna* stood watch like a hawk, his large mustache almost a symbol of authority, teaching us punctuality and the professionalism of wearing and owning our ID cards. To this day, I still keep, cherish, and even flaunt my ID card wherever I go, as if carrying a piece of my identity and pride.

My first encounter with the Department of English was not entirely pleasant. Being the last student admitted to my batch in 2012, I waited for days, making countless trips to the college to know if I had secured a seat. My desire to study at Lady Doak was so strong that I refused to apply anywhere else in Madurai. Though my board exam scores were high, they didn’t quite meet the strict merit cutoff set by the government. But Lady Doak College never shuts its doors on those willing to learn. It was Dr. Mercy Pushpalatha, the then Principal, who personally looked at my marksheet and admitted me as the very last student of that batch.

Even before officially becoming a Doakian, I received my first life lesson from Ms. Dew Lawrent, Professor of English. She told me: “*Keep your options open: learn it today!*” That simple yet profound advice still travels with me, guiding me on my journey from being the “last student” to becoming a “global educator.”

From then on, I worked steadily with small goals, determined to prove myself worthy of the chance I had been given. I remember the first of many opportunities to step into recognition: my performance as “Tiny Tim” in the adaptation of Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, staged during the College Day celebration. I had no experience in theatre or acting, it was purely the faith of my seniors and teachers who saw something in me and tapped the hidden artist within.

Later, I became one of the proud first actors of DOTS, “*Daughters of the Stage*”, a dream nurtured by Dr. Beatrice Ann D’Couto. Together we staged *The Sound of Music*, and from there theatre became inseparable from my growth. It was this foundation that later gave me the confidence to direct Christopher Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* as a faculty member at The American College in 2020. The production was a huge success, and in that moment, I gratefully remembered the tiny role first offered to me at Lady Doak back in 2012.

Of all the life-changing moments at Lady Doak, my most cherished remains the chance to serve as an office bearer - the Aided Secretary of the Student Council. The democratic system that

allowed us to nominate and elect our representatives filled me with an unknown courage. With the trust my professors placed in me, I contested and won. That surreal moment - of being chosen to serve my peers, is one I still celebrate in my memories. Together, with the tireless efforts of our Student Council and the unwavering support of Dr. Nirmala Rebecca (the then Dean of Student Services) and our Principal and Secretary, Dr. Mercy Pushpalatha, we successfully launched the intercollegiate meet *Suvaduga*—whose legacy continues even today. That experience carved in me the confidence and clarity to lead anywhere life takes me.

Lady Doak College gave me more than just education; it gave me a family. Professors became mentors, confidantes, and guides. I remember countless sessions with Dr. Vijayarani, who honed the speaker in me. I cherish the warmth of Dr. Beatrice Ann D’Couto, who became a friend and moulded the theatre artist in me. I hold close the wisdom of Ms. Dew Lawrent, who stitched life lessons into my everyday fabric. I am grateful to Dr. Suka Joshua and Dr. Geetha Kanagaraj, my best friends, confidantes and supporters until today. Once a Doakian, always a Doakian. I remain tied to the college and celebrate its legacy. A legacy of moral righteousness, hard work, humility, and the constant pursuit of knowledge - values that will stay with me until the very end.

Lady Doak taught me to give back. That became my compass in life. Little did I know that the college, my teachers and the learning experience equipped me to meet the global audience and its needs. Today, as a global educator from India, I share knowledge with learners and educators across the world - Russia, Ukraine, the United States, Mexico, Venezuela, Germany, Cuba, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and beyond. In my current role, I support internationally trained professionals - engineers, doctors, legal counsels, nurses, educators, historians, data scientists, homemakers, women reentering the workforce, and young graduates—helping them find success in their careers.

What sets me apart, I believe, is not just what I know but *how* I approach learning and teaching - with empathy, a holistic vision, discipline in practice, righteousness, precision, and attention to detail. These are not just skills; they are roots, deeply grounded in Lady Doak College. My mentors there shaped me into a humanitarian, one who carries her values and identity wherever she goes.

Today, I am part of a bigger, proud institution that stands tall with an amazing concept of *“Loving Students to Success”* at Austin Community College, Texas, U.S. - where leadership is approached from bottom to top, and *“loving students to success”* is the motto. It means meeting students where they are and equipping them with basic needs like housing, food, finances, and much more, so they can come to college and continue their education. In simple words, service-something I had already experienced at Lady Doak College, in the small acts of kindness my professors showed their students to help them achieve their dreams. *“Yes,” “Courage,” “Compassion,”* and *“Joy”* are our mantras, and there are only two titles for every staff member: Teacher Facilitator. I can relate to this well because I am a Doakian who experienced these at Lady Doak College, long time ago.

**To all young women:** starting strong is essential, and the best place to begin is Lady Doak College: a safe haven for all your youthful vulnerabilities, a place to explore the full extent of your potential, and a foundation from which to step into the world with courage, confidence, joy, and compassion.