



*Catherine Price*



*Rosalyn Rabet*



*Maciu Ramaqa*



*Nathan Ramos*



*Vincent Ramos*



*Peter Richardson*



*Zoe Riggs*



*Riggs Riker*



*Carina Rinehart*



*Andrew Ring*



*Lauryn Robinson*



*Ghislane Rodriguez*



*Daniel Rodriguez Vazquez*



*Revay Roofener*



*Danielle Sabell*



*Hugo Saldana*



*Farah Salek*



*Jose Salomon Quiroz*



*Ashley Sanchez*



*Claire Sayers*



# MARISSA *FERRIS*

*A girl and her service dog; a story of trails, resilience, and dreams.*



A prominent face (or, faces) in the halls of Rampart is **Marissa Ferris ('24)** and her service dog **Phoenix**. Ferris has not had an easy road in life, but has maintained a sense of purpose and drive despite every challenge.

On August 11th, 2016 life changed for Ferris. "I was on the way to my 5th grade back to school night and I was in a car accident. I had a stroke and a brain injury and now I have epilepsy. I stayed in the hospital for 3 months," said Ferris.

Ferris went through two brain surgeries, a spinal tap, two jaw surgeries, two femur surgeries, and others adding up to 14 total surgeries over the course of her 18 years on Earth.

"I was taken to the Penrose Hospital on Powers and Woodmen and they tried to do an MRI but they didn't do it right. So they decided to flight-for-life me to the Children's Hospital in Denver or else I was not going to make it," she said.

Doctors gave Ferris a 2% chance of survival, and if she did survive, they gave her little to no hope of ever being able to go back to school, talk, walk, sit up, eat, or drink. Through all of this, she showed resilience.

"No matter what life throws at me I can always come back stronger and show the world that nothing is going to break me. I learned it from my parents. They mean the world to me," said Ferris.

Ferris doesn't remember much from before and after her accident, but she does remember one quote that has stuck with her.

"My mom told me 'you're a Ferris and Ferris' don't give up'... I remember that from the very first time I started remembering things," said Ferris.

Ferris' life changed, again, but for the better, the day that she brought home her service dog, Phoenix.

"Phoenix is a balance and brace dog, stroke and seizure alert dog, and a guide for the blind because I'm

100% blind in my left eye. It took about a year and a half, on top of all the basic obedience, to get him certified," said Ferris.

Ferris' relationship with Phoenix began when he was just 8 weeks old and has been nothing but a bright spot since the day they met.

"Our relationship has been awesome. He knew that he was supposed to be helping me right away. It was crazy to see how much he bonded with me just in that first week," said Ferris.

There's a special reason for Phoenix's name. "I named him Phoenix because the Phoenix got burnt to ashes and rose up again and I feel like that resembles my story. I feel like I'm stronger than I was before," said Ferris.

Despite all of the support that Phoenix provides as a working service animal, he is a normal dog who enjoys being a part of the Ferris family.

"He's crazy and lives life to the fullest. He has 2 best friends on our street. He loves carrots and celery and bananas and he chews up his tennis balls right away. He sleeps with me with a pillow and a blanket on the bed," Ferris added.

Even though her past has been difficult, Ferris has high hopes for the future and has begun chasing her dreams as a dual-enrolled student at Pikes Peak College.

"I want to be an occupational therapist. I got inspired by my occupational therapist in the hospital and outpatient therapy," said Ferris.

Marissa's journey has not been an easy path but it has shown her ability to persevere and never give up.

Ferris hopes that she will be remembered "as a fighter, someone who never gave up, someone who always showed up for everything." *story by: mckenna cherry*



photos donated by: marissa ferris

*At this point...* "Live each day like it's your last."



**Kai Scarborough**



**Malaysia Schaffer**



**Madison Schill**



**Awin Schumacher**



**Titus Selvig**



**Arielle Sena**



**Jennifer Shafeik**



**Maliyah Shaffer**



**Shivani Sharma**



**Eithan Shay**