

Dear University of Alabama,

I am so honored that I have the privilege of telling you a little about the gift that Seth Panitch gave me while attending the University of Alabama. If I could think of one person that impacted my life immeasurably as an actor it would be Seth. He is indubitably deserving of the Burnum Distinguished Faculty Award. While attending Alabama, I held his class to a different standard. He demanded excellence, commitment, an open heart, and focused mind. I wanted to surpass his expectations and show him how passionate I was to fulfill my dreams. His training not only helped us as actors to explore our work, but also ourselves, and when he saw that glimmer of passion in you, he committed himself to helping you fulfill it in everyway.

Since attending Alabama, I attended 3 others schools (Georgia State, The New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts, as well as graduating from the Savannah College of Art and Design), and not a single one even touched the surface of what Seth taught me at Alabama. Sure, they understood basic theatre knowledge, but I found myself moving backwards at these institutions and clinging towards the knowledge I learned while under Seth's teaching (even sharing some of his techniques and exercises to other struggling students!).

During schooling with Seth, he would always be open and willing to listen to my concerns during office hours. I remember before I took the leap into the film industry, he said "Chelsea, the industry is telling you yes now, few people ever hear that affirmation, don't tell it to wait because it may not be there forever." Those words helped me sign with my first agent at 18, and I have been working professionally in the film industry ever since.

Six years later, his advice and words of wisdom are still instrumental in my life. Because of him, my career has spanned from a recurring role on Showtime's *Homeland* (Maddie), a variety of national commercials, including *Shoney's*, *Stanton Optical*, and *UPS*, three movies, including *What to Expect When You're Expecting*, a series recurring role on the Cinemax show, *Banshee* (Beaty), and multiple large movie final callbacks for lead roles (*Footloose*, *The Collection*, *Barely Lethal*) and series regular auditions on a constant basis. I attend the Golden Globe Awards each year for HBO and Cinemax, working promotions for *Banshee*.

I have worked as a professional actor for 6 years—and I never take for granted how lucky I am to say that. The more work I get, the more I return to my original training and process with Seth. It was really only when I began attending other schools that I saw how decrepit and hollow their programs are—and how great your students have it at Alabama. I feel now even more grateful to him. He trusted in my talent the minute I walked in freshman

grateful to him. He trusted in my talent the minute I walked in freshman year, and because of his dedication to me, I have wanted to make him proud ever since. When I book a new role, he is one of the first calls I want to make.

Trustees for the University of Alabama, if you ever were to give such a high award to anyone that represents Alabama's dedication to excellence and tenacious spirit for knowledge and empowered thinking-- look no further. You have had the pleasure of having him on board from the very beginning. He changes and inspires our lives. He alone made my Alabama experience immeasurable and has kept me a 'Roll Tide' fan even after leaving the school 5 years ago. But more than that— At the age of 18, he taught me how to respect my craft, work hard for what is important to me, and become a moral and honest human being. He guided my path to being the adult I am today and for that I am forever grateful.

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