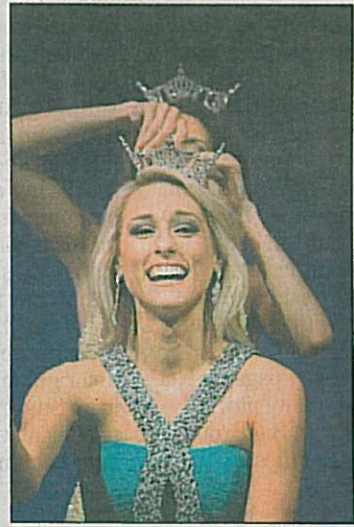




# Crowning ACHIEVEMENT



Jacquie Brown reacts as she's crowned Miss Washington 2010.

John Huson Photography



Photos by ZACHARY KAUFMAN/The Columbian

Miss Washington 2010 Jacquie Brown of Vancouver fastens her tiara during a homecoming celebration.

## Miss Washington, from Vancouver, knows firsthand the value of youth mentoring

By ERIN MIDDLEWOOD  
Columbian staff writer

The stress mounted as Jacquie Brown, Miss Greater Vancouver, prepared for the Miss Washington pageant.

Then her 1991 Honda Civic broke down. Not sure what to do, and preoccupied with the July pageant, she decided to ignore the car until things calmed down.

Just as well. She won the pageant, and now drives a shiny blue GMC Terrain, donated by a Renton auto dealership for her use during her reign.

It's been 20 years since Miss Washington hailed from Clark County. Brown, a 22-year-old Vancouver native, broke the long drought with persistence. She competed in six pageants before winning the title in July.

She said overcoming a downbeat mindset was the trick.

"I was my own worst critic," Brown said on a recent Saturday. She sat at a Hazel Dell coffee shop for an interview on her way to a homecoming party in her honor. Decked out in a hot pink sheath and heels, she stuck out amidst the casual coffee drinkers.

"Every girl is insecure in her own way," she said. "I took a year off, and it clicked. It's not about who has the best dress, the best wardrobe, the best makeup. It's about exuding happiness and confidence."

Of course, a good dress doesn't hurt. She clinched the evening gown contest



A crowd gathers during a homecoming celebration for Miss Washington, Jacquie Brown of Vancouver.

wearing a blue sparkly number she found marked down from \$400 to \$100.

### Preparations

Now that the crown rests on her head, she's working toward the Miss America pageant in January. She's taking a year off school — she had been attending Clark College — to prepare. She moved to Puyallup, where she's living with Peggy Miller, the state pageant director. Miller and other volunteers will coach her on interviewing, walking the stage in a swimsuit or evening gown, and singing, Brown's talent for the

pageant.

A gym has provided a membership so she can train for the swimsuit competition, a category she won at the state pageant.

"Swimsuit is won from the neck up," Brown said. "It's your confidence. I've always been thin, but I haven't always been confident."

Brown said she's not one to starve herself. She enjoys the occasional Burgerville Tillamook Cheeseburger. ("I'm a Vancouver girl," she said.)

"I could eat anything I want and not gain

# Miss Washington:

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weight, but I feel better when I eat certain foods," she said. So she sticks to turkey, chicken and fresh vegetables.

Appearances are not what motivate Brown to compete in Miss America, however.

"This organization is not about beauty. It's about the whole package," Brown said.

She said contestants should not be dismissed as "beauty queens."

"We're active in our community. We're students. We work. We represent today's modern young woman trying to achieve their goals to gain an education and to get into the professions we always dreamed of," she said. "We are the girl next door trying to make a difference."

She wants to advance her pageant platform of encouraging youth mentoring. She has been involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters and Lunch Buddies.

"I know I wouldn't be here today if it weren't for the mentors in my life," she said.

## Role models

At 16, she filed for emancipation from her mother. Her mom never responded to the petition, so the court dismissed it.

But Brown had already moved out. Brown lived with a friend, an aunt and a grandfather-figure until setting off for Puyallup this summer. Her mother's ex-boyfriend, Dave Jacobus, is the man she calls "Dad." He recalls her as energetic and outgoing as a youngster. Brown worked for his business, Jacobus CARSTAR, an auto body shop, for a time.

"I'm her No. 1 fan," Jacobus said. "She's my hero now."

He's among the adults Brown looked to for guidance. She also drew support from Summit View Church, where she participated in the youth program. She later became a youth mentor there

herself.

She worked a variety of jobs through high school to cover her expenses, but she carved out time for musical theater.

"I had to have some escape," she said. "My escape was singing and dancing on stage."

A photography teacher at Evergreen High School encouraged her to compete in local pageants as a way to win scholarship money for college.

At 17, she entered the Miss Greater Vancouver contest and was third runner-up.

"I was discouraged, but I could see how devoted the volunteers were," she said. So she kept competing.

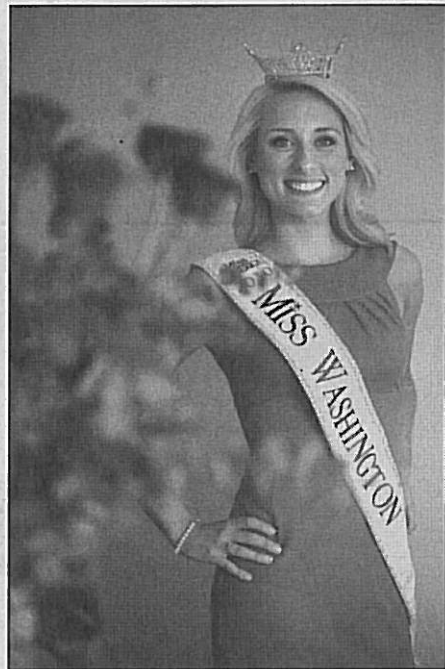
Whatever happens at the Miss America pageant in January, she hopes it will open doors for her.

Brown plans to obtain a degree in communications and become a broadcast journalist.

"I want to do so much with my life," she said.

**"This organization is not about beauty. It's about the whole package."**

**Jacquie Brown**  
Miss Washington



ZACHARY KAUFMAN/The Columbian

**Jacquie Brown competed in six pageants before winning the title of Miss Washington 2010.**