

Miss Florida Citrus

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The 2017 Miss Florida Citrus is University of Florida's own Paige Todd.

Paige Todd is a junior at the University of Florida, double majoring in Telecommunications and Economics. She is also a Resident Assistant for the Department of Housing and Residence Education, a Florida Cicerone and a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority.

Outside of the university, Todd's main involvement is with a non-profit organization called Guardian Ad Litem – which also happens to be her platform in pageantry. With this organization, Todd is assigned as a Guardian Ad Litem to foster children.

Todd told me about one of the families she works with. "My first case are twin boys who aren't even two years old yet. I go chill with them in the foster care home they are placed in, make sure they're doing okay, make sure they're healthy, make sure they're safe. Then I also write reports and represent them in court when their mother's parental rights are being tried."

Todd's pageant coach Hannah Frei said this platform was perfect for Paige. "Paige has been living her platform for a long time with Guardian Ad Litem. This is something very near and dear to her heart. It's something that is already a big part of her life. So, it was a natural fit for her platform."

This spring, Todd competed in the Miss University of Florida pageant and unfortunately did not place. However, she did win the Miss Congeniality award. She mentioned that her friend made a comment about Miss Congeniality and Miss America being exclusive and could not overlap. "I thought that didn't make any sense," Todd said, "so I wanted to try again and prove to myself and to other people that Miss Congeniality could also be the queen."



*Photo by Kayla Tuckerman*

After failing to place in the Miss University of Florida competition, Todd found another preliminary competition for Miss Florida in Winter Haven, the competition was Miss Florida Citrus.

Todd spent all her free time before the competition researching the Florida Citrus industry. “I went into Miss Florida Citrus with zero expectations,” Todd explained, “but my experience from Miss University of Florida really helped me with Miss Florida Citrus.”



*Photo by Brenda Eubanks Burnette*

Fellow Gators and Resident Assistants Emalyn Deak and Kaitlyn Adams supported Todd at the Miss University of Florida Competition. Deak spoke to Todd's genuine nature and said Todd would be a great representative of Florida if she were to win the state competition.

Todd's coach, Hannah Frei, said "It's a whole different game once you get to the state level." Adams talked about how poised Todd is and said she believes Paige would be a wonderful representation of Florida.

Todd said her biggest takeaway was learning every experience has its ups and downs. "Everything you do in life is going to have a negative aspect to it. But you have to focus on the big picture. It's focusing on the pros that is really going to progress us in our society and give us our fulfillment in life.

Paige Todd will compete for the title of Miss Florida this summer from July 27 to August 1 in Lakeland. Tickets are available for purchase online.