



# Maya Simone Brantley

## *Rooted In Resilience*

**M**aya Simone Brantley's life has been shaped by constant movement. Growing up in a military family, she has lived in Hawaii, Texas, Virginia, and even South Korea, each place shaping her adaptability, resilience, and understanding of home.

Born in Virginia, Maya considers it her anchor. "I made my first friends there, and I always came back after holidays and breaks," she shares. Despite the challenges of moving, Virginia remained a place of familiarity and connection.

Frequent relocations made friendships fleeting, forcing Maya to navigate the difficulty of constant goodbyes. "It was hard knowing I'd eventually leave," she says. But the experience also made her more discerning about relationships, valuing authenticity and trust. Growing up in a military household instilled independence, discipline, and responsibility. As one of the younger students in her grade, she often felt underestimated but proved her maturity through life experiences. "I've had to be responsible from a young age," she notes.

Her upbringing naturally led her to join ROTC as a freshman at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, where she is pursuing a degree in Kinesiology. Inspired by her mother, Catherine, a Howard University alumna and Colonel in the JAG (Judge Advocate General's) Corps, Maya saw ROTC as a path that aligned with her values and ambitions. "My mom's been my rock," she says. "Her advice means the world to me."

College has brought new challenges, from balancing academics to finding community. Coming from predominantly white private schools, she didn't expect to form such strong friendships at A&T. "I've made friends here that I never thought I would," she says. "Being around people who accept me for who I am has been eye-opening."

Leadership is also becoming a defining aspect of her journey. Through ROTC, she recently joined the community service committee, learning to take initiative and make an impact. "It's a work in progress, but I'm growing as a leader," she says.

Looking ahead, Maya is determined to serve in the military while pursuing her doctorate in physical therapy. Her ultimate goal? Becoming a physical therapist for a professional sports team. "It's a lot to work through, but I'm determined," she affirms.

In five years, she envisions herself as a PT school graduate, serving as a military physical therapist and advancing toward her dream career. Her journey, marked by resilience and perseverance, reflects her commitment to growth and staying true to herself.

Her advice? "Enjoy the ride, take experiences as they come, and never stop striving for what you want. Life is what you make of it."

*By: Kyla Cooke*