

I NHÂN VẬT

# CUNG HOÀNG KIM

NATIONAL AMERICAN MISS 2012-2013

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW FOR BÚT TRE



" ..Khi bạn nói, bạn có thể dùng các nhân âm, tốc độ, cũng với lòng nhiệt tình hay sự lạnh nhạt để bày tỏ bản thân. Khi bạn lắng nghe người khác nói, bạn luôn có thể cảm nhận được cái thông điệp tiềm ẩn trong lời nói mà ít khi được bộc lộ trên trang giấy. Ngoài ra, là một kỹ giả, việc phỏng vấn người khác có tầm quan trọng lớn lao đối với sự nghiệp của mình. Cho nên khi mình phỏng vấn người khác trực tiếp, mình có thể dễ dàng xác định rằng người đó có đang lừa dối hoặc bịa đặt hay không..."



INTERVIEW BY MAI LUC  
PHOTOS BY FULE PHOTOGRAPHY

**MAI LỤC (ML):** What was your platform? If you were not required to have a platform, what cause are you most passionate about and how will you promote it during your reign?

**CUNG HOÀNG KIM (CHK):** I have always been passionate about helping Vietnam War Veterans. Veterans are usually forgotten or left behind and I think that's a shame because these men and women sacrificed everything to protect us and our country. In August 2012, I held a charity concert to raise money for wounded soldiers and their families. Nothing was more heartwarming than receiving the veterans' letters of thanks and knowing I was able to change their lives. It was especially inspiring to know that some of the veterans used the money to start their own small businesses and become self-sufficient. I plan on having another charity concert this upcoming year to raise more money.

**ML:** What are the top three things you want to accomplish as National American Miss?

**CHK:** I aspire to motivate others to persevere and never stop chasing their dreams. We are all too great for small dreams, so once a goal is set, we should stop at nothing to achieve it.

My parents have always stressed the importance in being intelligent and open-minded. As National American Miss, I want to inspire girls to be proud of their intelligence and to not shy away from certain fields, including the arts, literature,

### CÓ BA TÂM NGUYỆN NÀO MÀ BẠN MONG MUỐN THỰC HIỆN KHI ĐĂNG QUANG NATIONAL AMERICAN MISS?

Trước tiên, mình muốn trở thành động lực thúc đẩy mọi người đừng bao giờ ngừng mơ ước và theo đuổi khát vọng của chính mình. Tất cả chúng ta đều được sinh ra quá vĩ đại cho những giấc mơ nhỏ bé, cho nên một khi mục đích đã được đặt ra, mỗi cá nhân không được phép dừng lại trước bất cứ rào cản nào.

Ba mẹ của mình luôn nhấn mạnh tầm quan trọng của sự thông minh và sẵn sàng tiếp thu cái mới. Khi đã là National American Miss, mình muốn thúc dục tất cả bạn gái hãy tự hào về sự thông minh của chính mình và đừng dè dặt bước chân vào những lĩnh vực như nghệ thuật, văn học, kỹ thuật và chính trị. Mình luôn cảm thấy rất thích thú khi khám phá được những tác giả văn học mới và những chương trình truyền hình như House M.D. Vì vậy, mình muốn chứng tỏ cho các bạn gái thấy rằng con gái chúng ta không phải sinh ra để làm đẹp - chúng ta sinh ra là để tạo nên những thay đổi đơn giản vì chúng ta đủ thông minh và năng lực để thực hiện bất cứ thứ gì chúng ta muốn.

Về nguyện vọng cuối cùng, mình đã vận động quyên góp được hàng ngàn mỹ kim cho các gia đình thương binh liệt sĩ Vietnam trong những năm gần đây và mình dự định sẽ tiếp tục vận động nhiều hơn nữa trong năm tới. Ngoài ra, mình vẫn làm việc với các tổ chức khác nhau, bao gồm tổ chức Queen For A Day. Trong thời gian mình đăng quang, mình sẽ dành nhiều thời gian cho các cuộc vận động gây quỹ cho cả hai cộng đồng Mỹ Việt.

engineering, political science. I have always loved discovering new literary authors and watching shows like House M.D., so I want to show girls we are not just here to be pretty – we are here to make a difference because we're intelligent and capable of achieving everything we set our minds to.

I have raised thousands of dollars for Vietnam veterans' families and I plan to raise more next year, in addition to continually work with several organizations, including Queen For A Day. I will spend time during my reign organizing another charity fundraiser to serve both the American and Vietnamese communities.

**ML: NAM's tagline is "Growing Confidence". As a journalism major and working experience as an anchor for your university, you already exude confidence. How did NAM cultivate confidence in you?**

CHK: When I first started National American Miss at the tender age of 14, I was rather shy and introverted. I had good stage presence, but wasn't too comfortable striking up conversation with people I didn't already know. National American Miss has given me a way to hone and sharpen lifelong skills such as public speaking, interviewing, and being poised onstage. Throughout the years in my quest for the national crown and being a state queen who can make a difference, I became a young woman and with that, came great confidence.

**ML: NAM has a diverse pool of candidates who compete each year; however, there is a small number of Asians, particularly Vietnamese young women, who actually enter the competition. How would you promote NAM and motivate others to enter? (Cuộc thi National American Miss hằng năm có số lượng thí sinh đông đảo và đến từ nhiều chủng tộc khác nhau. Tuy vậy, thí sinh người Á Đông, cụ thể là con gái Việt Nam, tham dự cuộc thi này. Vậy bạn sẽ ủng hộ cuộc thi NAM và động viên những bạn khác tham dự như thế nào?)**

CHK: It's no secret: public speaking and being highly extroverted is not a trait Asian and Vietnamese people possess naturally. In various Vietnamese

pageants, the Vietnamese contestants are given their interview questions for hours, if not days, in advance – giving them time to think about and plan their answers. In American pageants, you must be intelligent, think quickly on your feet, and be able to craft an answer on the spot because you will never be given your interview questions in advance.

American pageants want to see what comes to your mind first, your true emotions and feelings, instead of hearing a rehearsed and planned response. If any Vietnamese young women are interested in competing in National American Miss, I would encourage them to read more books, study and practice interview questions with a family member or a friend to get well acquainted with being able to deliver eloquent and meaningful answers from the heart. *(Theo mình nghĩ thì người Việt Nam nói riêng, và Á Đông nói chung, ít khi được biết đến với tài hùng biện hùng hồn hay khả năng nói năng luyện thuyên một cách tự nhiên. Và trong các cuộc thi hoa hậu người Việt, các thí sinh Việt Nam của chúng ta được cho biết câu hỏi phỏng vấn trước nhiều giờ, thậm chí nhiều ngày để suy nghĩ và chuẩn bị cho câu trả lời cuộc mình. Còn trong cuộc thi hoa hậu của Mỹ, thí sinh cần phải thông minh và nhanh trí để trả lời ngay lập tức vì họ không được cho biết câu hỏi để chuẩn bị. Lý do là vì người Mỹ muốn biết ý nghĩ đầu tiên của thí sinh đó, cùng với những cảm xúc chân thật nhất, thay vì phải lắng nghe những câu vấn đáp được diễn tập sẵn. Nếu các bạn nữ người Việt có quan tâm về tham dự cuộc thi này, mình sẽ động viên các bạn đó đọc nhiều sách, học và luyện tập các câu hỏi phỏng vấn với gia đình hoặc bạn bè để trở nên nhuần nhuyễn trong cách diễn đạt những câu trả lời có ý nghĩa từ chính trái tim của mình.)*

**ML: There are hundreds of candidates competing in each age category. How did you capture the judges' attention? What do you think made you stand out amongst the numerous candidates?**

CHK: Winning and holding a pageant title is first and foremost a job, and secondly, an honor. The judges are looking for a young woman who will represent the pageant and its beliefs to the highest ability. By telling the judges my future goal and what I have done in

order to attain that goal, I was able to illustrate I am taking the steps necessary to reach my goal. In addition to being successful, volunteering and serving my American and Vietnamese communities with more than 5,000 hours of community service made me stand out as well.

**ML: Out of the categories you were judged on, which one did you think you did the best (personal introduction, formal wear, interview, or community involvement)? If you had a chance to redo one of the categories, which one would you do and how would you have approached it differently (Obviously you did well in all these categories, but we just want to know how you critique yourself).**

CHK: Of course I believe I excelled in all areas of competition, but I definitely shined in my personal interview. Interview is always my favorite phase of competition because I get the opportunity to show the judges who I am – my personality, goals and aspirations, and how I have opened doors for others through my charity concert. For this particular pageant, I definitely wouldn't redo anything – I'm not saying that because I won, but because I truly believe this is the best I've ever competed. I wouldn't change a thing.

**ML: Some critics say these events are designed to favor the girls who have entered many similar competitions. These girls know how to perform for the judges to win the prize because of their "experience" in the pageant circuit. These girls compete in every category to get them in front of the judges, making them more memorable, which results in a win. What is your rebuttal for these critics who don't believe a girl with no experience will ever win? (Nhiều người phê bình rằng các sự kiện này được thiết kế để ưu tiên các cô gái đã từng trải qua các cuộc thi tương tự. Những cô gái này biết được cách trình bày và trình diễn để dễ dàng thắng giải do có nhiều kinh nghiệm tích lũy được. Cho nên nhiều người không tin rằng một cô gái có thể thắng nếu không có kinh nghiệm đó. Bạn bác bỏ ý kiến này như thế nào?)**

CHK: That's not true in NAM's case. The optional competitions (casual wear, spokesmodel, talent, etc.) are judged by

a completely different panel of judges so these optional competitions don't have any bearing on the final results of the Queen and her court. On top of that, there have been many young women without any experience in pageants who have taken home the crown. For example, the reigning Miss USA has never done a pageant before and won on her first try. The judges are looking for a girl who is real, down-to-earth, and will make a difference in her community. *(Thật ra điều này không đúng trong cuộc thi National American Miss. Các phần thi tự chọn như trang phục thường nhật, tài năng, hùng biện, mỗi cuộc thi có ban giám khảo hoàn toàn khác nhau nên kết quả cuối cùng hoàn toàn độc lập và công bằng. Hơn nữa, để có rất nhiều bằng chứng của các cô gái đoạt vương miện mà không có một chút trải nghiệm nào trong quá khứ. Ví dụ như cô hoa hậu hiện tại của Hoa Kỳ (Miss USA) chưa bao giờ tham dự một cuộc thi nào cả mà đã thắng giải ngay trong lần đầu tiên. Ban giám khảo mong muốn tìm thấy một cô gái chân thực, thành tâm và có khả năng tạo nên thay đổi trong cộng đồng của cô ấy.)*

**ML: Will you be competing in any other competitions once your reign is over?**

CHK: I can't answer that right now. My dream finally came true with National American Miss, so I'm excited to focus on my year of reign – doing community service, traveling in America, and being a role model to younger girls.

**ML: Of all the duties and responsibilities that come with the title of NAM, what part of your job are you most looking forward to doing?**

CHK: Without a doubt, serving my community. Being National American Miss gives me power to affect change and make a difference in the lives of others. I can't wait to start planning and promoting my next charity concert in Dallas, Texas, meeting girls from across the country, encouraging them to dream big, and perhaps go back to New York City at one point during the year. I really miss the energy and hustle and bustle of Manhattan.

**ML: Entering competitions like NAM can be very expensive. There are entrance fees, travel and lodging (if it's not a local competition), not to mention**



**the expenses of your evening gowns, hair/make-up, accessories. What are some tips for girls who want to enter pageants similar to NAM in keeping costs down and getting sponsorships?**

CHK: I wouldn't have succeeded in pageants if it weren't for the help of my family and sponsors. If you're interested in competing in pageants, ask your local community officials, businesses you frequent, and family friends. The younger generation is our future, so it's important for people in the local community to let the young women and men know they are being supported.

**ML: Imagine 50 years from now and you're sitting in the living room with your granddaughter, sharing photos from your pageant experience. What insights would you share with her about the pageant? What were some of your favorite memories from that night? What advice would you give your granddaughter if she wanted to enter the competition?**

CHK: While pageants have provided me with skills to prepare me for my career in journalism (speaking, interviewing, etc.), pageants have also provided me with something so much more: a sense of family. I vividly remember the times my mom and I would sit down and work on my resume, how my sister and I would go shop for my wardrobe, and when my Dad and my brother would have fun driving us around the new cities we traveled to for my pageants. Downtown Disney with my siblings this Thanksgiving was truly magical.

Another great thing pageants have given me are my best friends and how we have become lifelong friends. One of my favorite memories from the day I won National American Miss was the overwhelming amount of support and congratulations I received from the audience and friends. Everyone in the hotel kept congratulating me and my

Facebook wall filled up with congratulatory posts pretty quickly. It was heartwarming to see how many people were supportive of my accomplishments.

The best advice I could give to my granddaughter is to be herself. Sometimes, girls try to be someone else, someone they think the judges want them to be, in order to win the crown, but the judges don't want that. Judges really want to see who you really are.

**ML: If you had to choose between only being able to speak to communicate or only write to communicate, which would you choose? Why?**

CHK: I would definitely choose speaking. When you speak, you have the ability to use inflection, speed, and enthusiasm (or lack of) to express yourself. When you listen to people talk, you can hear subtleties in their voice that you might not be able to pick up on paper. Also, as a journalist, interviewing people is crucial to my career, so when I interview people in person, I can tell if they're trying to deceive me or falsifying information, whereas if I was interviewing them through email, I wouldn't be able to tell.

**ML: The evening gown competition was 30% of your score. For the fashionistas out there, describe in detail what your dress looked like. If you could pick any evening gown to wear (ignoring costs), other than the one you wore, what would it look like/be?**

CHK: My evening gown was made of a white and ivory toned silk with heavy beading in a triangular shape on the bodice. The beads are a beautiful translucent white color or AB Swarovski crystals. One of my favorite parts about my gown, besides how well it flows onstage, is the single completely beaded strap that goes over my right shoulder. It drapes right over the cap of my shoulder and attaches to the back of my gown. I've dreamed of wearing a custom Sherri Hill gown for a long time and finally getting to wear one on the National American Miss national pageant stage was a dream come true. I can't imagine wearing another dress to NAM. If you'd like to see my gown, be sure to look at the photos! For the fashionistas out there, I also invite you to visit my fashion blog at [Colorandchic.com](http://Colorandchic.com) ■