

## **Talathia "Tae" McKenzie –**



Behind the frail exterior of a wheelchair bound Talathia "Tae" McKenzie is a resilient soul of a warrior who finds the strength to overcome overwhelming obstacles. A professional model, despite dysfunctional limbs, Tae wants to change the way how the glamour industry perceives beauty.

Born and raised in Charlotte, NC, Tae was an emerging name in the world of modelling, had her own catering service, and was a wedding consultant, when she was diagnosed with a rare form of epilepsy that causes strokes in 2011. During her second stroke Tae had a fatal fall, hitting her head. She lost 80 per cent of her memory and almost turned into complete vegetable. It took her months to learn to walk, talk, read, and write - even how to count basic numbers and learn the alphabet all over again.

These were challenging times for young Tae! However the fighter in her refused to resign to her fate. Determined, she spent countless of hours in physical therapy. She would refuse help from any one to get onto an exercise machine or help her go up the stairs in her two-story home.

Although illness changed her life dramatically, Tae still insisted on living it to the fullest. Her passion for modeling opened new avenues for her when some of her modeling pictures were picked up online, eventually leading to her being crowned 2016 USA Miss Heels for Wheels, a pageant for women in wheelchairs.

Tae knows that not all who suffer from physical disabilities are as gritty and adventurous as her and to help them overcome their inhibitions, she now runs a foundation named MFSE Foundation Inc. for people who have suffered from strokes and epilepsy. She also organizes annual walks for her foundation every 2nd Saturday of August in Freedom Park North Carolina. Her firm also works towards promoting professional models on wheelchair and those with other disabilities

Tae's biggest dream is to be able to break boundaries, break the mold, and change society's perception of what is defined as beautiful!