

VITA

Talayia N. Perkins was born on February 23, 1972 in Wilmington, Delaware to Marvin and Josephine Perkins. She grew-up in Middletown, Delaware and attended Middletown High School where she was active in student government, social clubs, marching band, and varsity sports. In 1989, Talayia was a German exchange student in Bayreuth, Germany for 3 months. While in Germany, she traveled to several cities and met other exchange students from Canada and the US. Her fondest memory was standing on the half destroyed Berlin wall. And, her most unsettling experience was a field trip to the site of a former Nazi concentration camp.

Talayia entered undergraduate school at Delaware State University in 1991 to major in biology education. That same year she met Dr. Fatma Helmy who encouraged her to pursue graduate studies. From Dr. Helmy, she gained her first laboratory research experience.

Following several research internship experiences, she attended VA Tech where she joined two great gentlemen (Jay H. Williams, PhD and Christopher Ward, PhD) in a muscle function laboratory. She will be forever grateful to both of them for their support and patience. From Jay and Chris, she has emulated their mechanical ability.

The emotional support given by Pedro M. Swann Jr. for nine years and eleven months has provided her with strength and a sense of humor. On December 23, 1996, Pedro and Talayia became engaged and will be married January 3, 1998.