

Congratulations

*Erin Doherty
Zachary Rickman
Noah Reed*



...preserve sound judgment
and discernment,
do not let them
out of your sight;
they will be
life for you...

Proverbs 3:21-22



Graduates



Dear Graduates,

Today we honor and celebrate our graduating seniors. Even though I am just catching the tail end of our seniors' high school years, they have been such an encouragement to me, and I know they have impacted the lives of people around them. From what I have heard and what I have seen, our seniors have made Christ a priority in their lives, especially throughout their time in the youth group. It is evident that they have been brought up to know the love of Christ.

Seniors, I hope you know how proud we are of you and how much you are loved. You are almost there! In just a few short moments your high school careers will be over. It's an exciting feeling, isn't it? You will soon trade in your backpack and books for a cap and gown, walk across a stage and on to your next big adventure in life. My hope is that wherever you go on that adventure you will remember where you came from. Remember your family, remember your church home, and remember Jesus. Also, don't forget to go hug your mama and thank her for everything she has done for you!

"And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God." - Philippians 1:9-11 (ESV)

In Him,

Reid Stafford





Erin Doherty

Erin,

Wasn't it only yesterday when you were sitting on Mrs. Donna's desk, eating jelly beans and getting ready for MDO? Where have the years gone?!

You have been such a joy, and I've always been proud to call you daughter. I'm not even all that mad anymore that you robbed me of a whole year with you.... :) You always set your standards high and have worked hard to meet them. Whether it was the back stroke on swim team, placing in the Spelling Bee, making all A

Honor Roll, Jr. Honor Society, Science National Honor Society, and basically completing 3 years of school in this one past school year with a 4.7% GPA, you have done them all with diligence, honor, and grace.

But more than all of that, I am most proud of your kind heart and your regard for others. You have a reputation among your friends as being the peacemaker and a trustworthy confidant. You are respected by all of your teachers, and many have commented to me on how you show concern for others, and handle conflict with a high level of maturity. Navigating through the school years is not always easy, but you sure made it look that way!

I am SO excited at what lies ahead of you Erin; the sky is the limit for you! You have never let adversity and hardships hold you back, and you excel in spite of them. Your hard work has certainly paid off, beginning with your automatic acceptance into UTSA! I know your plan is to transfer to UT after one year, but regardless of where you end up, my prayer is that you take the following with you:

Deuteronomy 31:8

Proverbs 2

Jerimiah 29:11

Isaiah 40:29-31

Romans 8:38-39

Psalms 27:14, and of course, the one that I go to daily,

Proverbs 3:5-6

Study these, believe these, live these and carry them in your heart!

God is Good, All the Time, and All the Time, God is Good!

I love you,

Mom



Zachary Rickman

Zachary, it was obvious from the get go that you were going to be a force to be reckoned with. You decided to arrive early and, as became your way, difficult. You always kept things very interesting and nothing was going to be easy. The hardest thing we had to deal with was almost losing you at seven weeks. It was with all those prayers that you started a very godly path. You have never strayed and your faith has always been a priority to you. Your usual way of doing things is of the cart before the horse variety. Someday we hope you slow down a little and enjoy what is around for you to see.

You manage to light up any room you walk into. You have so much energy and look forward to tackling whatever the task at hand is, unless it's cleaning your room. You are a champion for all your friends and are always willing to put them before your own needs, even when it means losing the race so your friend wouldn't have to run the last lap alone. You aren't afraid to try something new, but are quick to decide if it isn't for you.

We love to see the bond that you have with Jake strengthen as you get older. It was very strong when it was just the two of you. As things go, when you two started school and made different friends, your priorities shifted. Now the two of you have come full circle and are starting to spend more time together and realize you have some common interests other than video games and Mom's birthday cake. You are being very sneaky about it, and we know you wouldn't want us to know, but you are even enjoying spending time with your little sister. Being in the middle isn't so bad.

Zachary, the last eighteen years have been a whirlwind with you in them, and we wouldn't have had it any other way. You have grown into a respectable and responsible young man that makes your family proud. We are excited for you to find out what is next. No matter what, don't let Mom's tears hold you back. Good luck and remember we love you. Don't forget to call your momma; you know she worries.

Love,
Momma and Dad, Jake and Claire



Noah Reed

In 1989, a Steve Martin film, called *Parenthood*, came to the cinema. Not yet married, I said to myself, “One day when I get married, I want a little boy just like the one in the movie.” A boy who is fun-loving, a bit mischievous (didn’t know you would be a lot mischievous), and one who takes his time going through all the stages of childhood. Wow, God answers prayer. Fast forward 9 years, to August 14, 1998. You almost didn’t make it to this time side of life. If it hadn’t been for your grandmother, you would be in heaven/paradise right now. As I have mentioned many times,

she is the one who made me go to the hospital when I was pregnant with you and not feeling well. We found out that you were losing oxygen and an emergency C section was performed. You were the most handsome baby in ICU. You looked like a football player lying next to the other babies.

You grew into an adorable, sweet, affectionate, laid back toddler. Sister Miles from Anderson St. Church of Christ in Sealy, Texas, warned us many times, “Those quiet ones turn out to be the baddest.” Wow, I’m glad she said that because we would have been blind sighted when at about the age of 4, your motor kicked in. You were still sweet, fun, and adorable but you became the poster child for ADHD. You kept me on my toes and kept us all laughing 24/7 with your natural, zany sense of humor. It was not long before I realized that you had the gift of listening and caring. Your elementary school friends told you everything. Even the most private and shocking details about their home life. You embraced each child with empathy. What a heart!

There are so many things that I love about you. I have mentioned many of them to you, so I would like to begin with a few qualities that I don’t mention often. Firstly, I love how much you love being at home. This is one of the qualities that will make you a good husband. My mother always told me, “Find a man who loves to be at home.” You and your dad have this in common. Your love for home makes me feel like maybe I’ve been a good mother. I also love how you can read me, although it is kind of eerie. Sometimes, I wish you did not pick-up on my thoughts and emotions so well. It’s hard to hide anything from you.

I respect and admire how you take an interest in your friends’ lives and spend time mentoring the younger kids in your school. You are an exceptional speaker and a gifted writer. I would love to see you do something professionally with your writing, one day. I have enjoyed seeing your faith grow and appreciate how you have moved into the place of being a leader. I appreciate how you have overcome obstacles yet manage to consistently maintain an A average. You work hard and have the gift of persistence. This is going to make you very successful, one day.

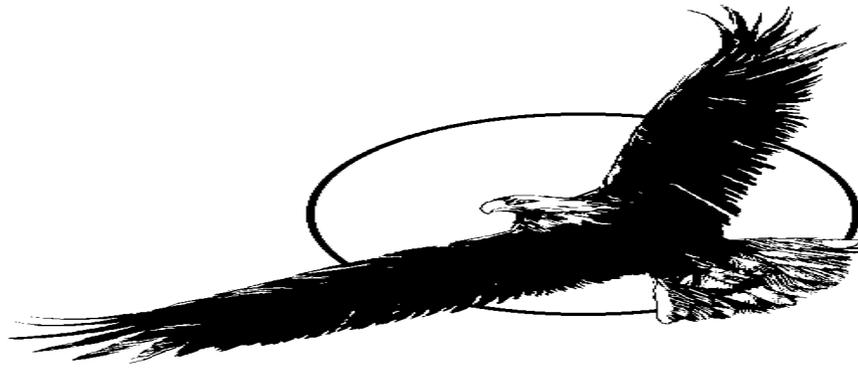
I love you, son. You are a joy! I respect you completely and you make me laugh harder than anyone I know.

Love,
Mom

I define “Joy” as the measure of satisfaction one has about something or someone when considering them. Noah, you are joy to me. I delight in your achievements, your ability to relate to people, and your style. You are your own man. You dance to your music. You set your own course. Your speaking and preaching skills are extraordinary, and your writing talent is something I wish I had. I have taken much pride in seeing you make high marks in the classroom, and being called back to preach at the Sunday morning LTC worship (2016). You (and your sister) are indeed a blessing from the Lord, as I have never had any sorrow. In my heart, there has been and continues to be only one wish for you, that you become a better man than me. At this stage in life, there is no question you have far surpassed me and show no signs of letting up. Moving into your college years I am excited to see you soar as you move firmly into adulthood.

God has gifted you with an amazing talent to speak well. I pray that as you journey on, that you also continue to hone this gift. There will be some challenges to face, some disappointments to endure. But, hang in there and know this, God is developing you into the man He wants you to be. For every challenge, there is reward, and God turns disappointment into triumph. As you have done, continue to keep God first in all that you do. Seek Him first and life will abound with joy that no one can tarnish.

Blessings and Love,
Dad



Isaiah 40:28-31 (NIV)

*Do you not know? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God, The Creator of the ends of
the earth.*

*He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no
one can fathom.*

*He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the
weak.*

*Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble
and fall;*

but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.

*They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not
grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.*

Please join us *Today* in a day of celebration following our 2nd morning worship as we honor our 2017 Seniors with:

Bible presentations by Elders
Catered Lunch
The Senior Video

A *Money Bowl* will be provided for those desiring to contribute. All moneys will be divided evenly among the seniors.