

CARPE DIEM
knowing for whom the bell tolls

Crossroads. There are several times through our lives when we reach crossroads in the journey. Contrary to some beliefs, life is not a straight and narrow road we travel. Life is not a smooth and easy road. There are many crossroads. We often change directions and head down different roads in our journey through life. Sometimes the road becomes much smoother and scenic. Other times rough and unpleasant. That is what makes life such a worthwhile adventure. Nobody travels down the same road. There will be times when our road is an open highway with many others sharing the same path, and other times when the road seems like a dissolute, lonely dead end.

There will be intersections where others will pass through your life, some providing happy memories and others you will be happy to see fading in your rear-view mirror.

In this, *HER SENIOR YEAR*, we have reached one of the major intersections of life, where many who have traveled down the same road will be choosing between the off ramps and on ramps of life that will take them in many different directions.

But before we turn off and head down the new road, let's take a few moments to reflect on the road that we have been traveling. Let's put the brakes on and take a look back before we all wave and head down separate roads.

What is the point of *HER SENIOR YEAR*? What does it all mean? Do all these events that we have been through really mean any thing now that they are behind us? Are all these events merely entertaining stories, or are there lessons to be learned that we can take with us as we turn off this highway and head in so many other directions?

From class rings, to senior pictures and first day of school. From football games to homecoming rallies, to senior talent shows. From track meets to banquets, to becoming a jock dad. From spring break, to senior prom, to Baccalaureate, and finally on to graduation. These events are much more than just something to fill our calendars with. These events were a lot more than just explosive fireworks that quickly faded away to make room for the next explosive event.

HER SENIOR YEAR is a lot more than a chronological essay. I believe that the events we shared in *HER SENIOR YEAR* says a lot about who we are as a student, a parent and as a society.

I have certainly learned a lot about my daughter through the events that she has participated in. I have learned a lot about myself as a father through the events of the past four years. And I think we all have learned a lot about what kind of people we have become through the events of this, *HER SENIOR YEAR*.

Be it my daughter, myself, or we as a people, these events teach us one of the most important lessons we must learn in order to survive.

It is a word that seems to have taken a back seat in our society, but I'm not fooled. Again, the evening news is notorious for sensationalizing the dark side of our character, even though it only reflects a small percentage of what makes us the real society that we are.

Whether you want to talk about ecology, politics, human rights, families, religion, education, or anything else, the solution will always depend on this one simple word:

INVOLVED

One of my favorite writings that I like to think captures what I believe life should be all about was written by John Donne in 1624:

ANY MAN'S DEATH DIMINISHES ME,
BECAUSE I AM INVOLVED IN MANKIND.

THEREFORE,

NEVER SEND TO KNOW FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS,
IT TOLLS FOR THEE.

We can talk all day about the problems of the world, and produce volumes of reports and essays explaining in great depth what needs to be done in order to make our world a better place to live. But we will never reach solutions to any of our problems until we become involved.

Is my daughter ready to leave the nest because she is a great athlete? No. Is she ready to take on the demands of college because she is so smart? No. Is she ready to pursue her dreams because she wrote a nice skit for the senior talent show? Not likely.

My daughter is ready to leave the nest and pursue her own interests because she has learned to become involved.

Was she successful at everything she did? No. Did she reach all the goals she set out to?

Certainly not. Does any of this really matter? Not really.

What matters is that she was involved. What matters is that she had the confidence to try new things and get involved in the many opportunities that her school provided her.

Am I a great father because I found the time to play taxi man for all these events? No. Am I a great father because I cut back on many of the things I wanted so that I could afford some of the things she needed? No.

I am a great father simply because I got involved in my daughter's life.

The events of *HER SENIOR YEAR* is a lot more than a chronological collection of cute little stories. We can all learn from these events that success is never measured by how many goals are achieved or how much wealth is accumulated. A person's demise is not measured by the number of failures or lack of material possessions. The quality of a person must always be measured by how much they have become involved in the world that they have been given.

My daughter will be successful because she has learned the joys and the heartaches of becoming involved.

I have become a great father because I have learned that becoming an involved parent should never constitute an image of sacrificing.

And I can't help but think that the world will become a better place to live because most of us are much too involved with each other's lives to have much time for the evening news. The roads we travel may not all be headed in the same direction, but as long as we remain involved, we should all pretty much end up crossing the same finish line.

My daughter has a sweatshirt from one of her favorite movies, *Dead Poets Society*. It reads, 'CARPE DIEM', which means, seize the day. We will all make this a better world if we learn to seize each day and become INVOLVED.

Carpe Diem to us all.