

Letter to the editor: Friend says 'farewell' to Gillespie

Written by Davy Moseley
Monday, 24 January 2011 10:46 -

[Editor's Note: After losing Taylor Gillespie on Jan. 9, 2011, another LHS graduate, Aggie, Christian and all-around good guy - Maxwell Gilbert - wrote a letter to his friend, that he wished to share with his loved ones and our readers. Thank you Max.]

Mr. Gillespie,

I can, in no way, believe that I'm writing you this letter. This was a gut shot, old buddy. The kind where your breath runs low, your senses numb, and your grip on reality falters. I still can't quite believe it.

Losing you naturally caused me to think back through our past, and in doing so I remembered that, ironically enough, you and I started with a letter. I wrote you a letter when I was a senior in high school and you were just a newly minted fish, ready to begin his journey through four years of tests, sports, and uncontrolled hormones. I encouraged you, in that letter, to take the school by storm; to be larger than life. I did that, one, because I knew you looked up to me, and two, because I saw something in you that I knew even then was special.

Little did I know.

In high school, I was king. I was the big fish, and you were still just a little one, trying to learn how to tread water. But in college, or maybe even before then, something changed. I felt myself fade a little, slowly making my way into the fold, just another member of the Aggie flock – an easy thing to do in a sea of 40,000 people. But not you. You did at college what I'd challenged you to do in high school – you took the place by storm. Your light, the one that you lit in high school, ignited in college, and you sir - you, not me - became larger than life.

I never got a chance to tell you that in this life, but if I had, I would've told you that I was impressed by all that you'd accomplished; that I was proud of you; that every time I heard of a new accolade, or read something you'd written, or even when I saw some goofy picture you'd posted on Facebook, my day got better; in short, I would've told you that you had become one of the few extraordinary people that I've ever had the pleasure of knowing, and I looked up to you.

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Everyone looked up to you.

I began to think about all the reasons why. Allow me to attempt to articulate them, a feat that I can't possibly hope to do justice to, and that I only pray I won't botch royally (oh, and since you were all about the medieval, epic things of this world, I tried to describe you in those terms):

You were a bard. A playwright. A wordsmith. You crafted stories that entertained all who were willing to lend an ear, each one infused with your quirky sense of humor and laced with the down-home personableness that could charm even the surliest of souls.

You were a minstrel. An entertainer. You were a jokester and a stooge, witty and slapstick all at the same time, and you were a constant reminder that the best medicine in life is laughter.

You were a ray of light. Your ear-to-ear, never halfhearted smile and lighthearted outlook on life were infectious, and, although I haven't been told as much, I know without question that the people lucky enough to call you "friend" were far happier in your presence than out of it.

You were a warrior. A Spartan. A proud member of the Fightin' Texas Aggie Corps of Cadets, and a Ross Volunteer. Rough, tough, real stuff, hoo-rah!

You were a healer. An emollient. A salve for the wounded soul. You were a shoulder to cry on for the brokenhearted, an encouraging word to the unsure, and a sounding board to the anxious. You were, in modern terms, a really, really good friend.

You were a Man of Faith. A Spiritual Warrior. A Son of Thunder. Perhaps the most enduring quality about you was the stalwart boldness and unwavering passions with which you pursued your convictions, even in the midst of man's scrutiny and Satan's temptations. To know you was to know your faith and your God, and what better witness can we possibly hope for than that? Your mansion and treasure are great, my friend. Of that, I have no doubt. And I'm sure the citizens of

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Heaven are smiling a little bigger with you as a part of their family.

You were, in the words of St. Paul, “all things to all people,” or, in the words of Danny Devito, a true Renaissance Man.

You were the kind of man that any woman would be proud to take home to their mother and that any man would be proud to be even half as good as.

You were, in a word, epic.

And so it's with tears clouding my vision and with great reluctance in my heart that I say “good-bye”. And with those words, I bury a small piece of my heart, a piece that will forever lay dormant, never to be filled with fondness for another. That piece I'll hold for you, until we meet again.

Well, I suppose I've said enough, then. I know it must be agonizing trying to ignore the majesty of your new surroundings. Just do me a favor, will you, and pick out a good table (one with lots of expensive-looking food) and save me a seat. Oh, and you might want to pull up some chairs – I think there are some people here that are going to want to see you.

See you on the other side, old buddy.

Max