

## **Moments: in honor of my son ~ by Bridget Washburn**

There are actions that create great moments, but GREATNESS is measured by much more than one moment. Will was GREAT. He was kind, compassionate, thoughtful, talented, loving, helpful and loved whole heartedly. His kindness has imprinted in our hearts and will never be forgotten.

There have been so many stories shared since we lost Will. Those have allowed us to see much more of who Will was outside our home. I've said this repeatedly- we THOUGHT we knew how he was special- but really had no idea. Thank you to all those who shared the stories, pictures, videos, and these moments of fun and kindness that we were unaware of.

He was a light - and I have learned a lot from him since he's left. He was never ashamed to hug. He was never embarrassed to love. He said "goodnight - I love you" every day without fail. He has taught me life is beyond the moments....

Life is more than a moment of success, more than a moment of anger, more than a moment of sorrow, and more than a moment of love. Life is about the reactions to these moments and how we chose to respond.

Will was not perfect. He made plenty of mistakes. But who he was in his core- that we all loved: that character, that smile, that desire to not let you be angry, that attention to your feelings, his affection, his love, ALL of that was beyond normal. God gave him this light to share with all of us. And he certainly did it in a way better than imagined.

Doing something kind is a wonderful thing; however, that moment of kindness doesn't make someone a "kind" person. It's when we see how that moment impacts those around us - and we repeat the act of kindness - that the it turns into something that becomes part of who you are. Will's thoughtfulness exuded in all he did. The stories are humbling, and we are surrounded by great people. The Hurricane, Winfield, Ironton, Huntington, Charleston, and greater surrounding areas have shown us more compassion and care than a person can imagine. You all have been tremendous. Will has touched so many and I miss him so very very much.

In 15 short years he evolved. He was this shy, reserved young child that was granted -by the grace of God -an ability to make everyone feel loved. He grew in years to be a confident and talented leader (which was so different than the little preschooler that he was). I firmly believe God had purpose in this tragedy. God was preparing his child to come home to do greater things than the human mind can imagine. I said this at his service, and I'll repeat it again.

This was God's plan -and as hard as it is to accept- It was no mistake. I continue to ask why HIM- and I'm sure that won't stop- But God was ready. If you had to pick a star- why not the brightest?

A friend sent this poem to our house the other day and I'd like to share just a piece of what it reads:

It is titled "will lend you a child".

I will lend you, for a little time, a child of mine he said.

For you to love the while he lives, and mourn for when he's dead.

It may be six or seven years, or twenty-two or three, but will you? --- till I call him back, ---  
—take care of him for me?

It was one of my greatest pleasures caring for this child of God's. Brian and I have told our kids - moments don't define you. Be mindful of your choices, they all have outcomes. One bad choice can change a life forever. But even with that, it doesn't have to define who you are. What helps define you = is how you react to that moment and react to that choice. That reaction means something- and becomes part of your character and who you are.

When you have a moment that's great, see how that was created. Take what caused that success and repeat it. Be kind. Be faith filled. And know it's ok to fail. We will all fail. - Let those failures be a part of who you are as well. I say all of this because = it all was Will. He was the repetition of these actions.

We have lost a great deal, but we have much that remains. We're so incredibly proud of our daughter and blessed to be a part of this sea of family and friends.

I leave you ALL with this: it is hard- and I'm sure it will continue to be hard. But, we are all God's children. I take great comfort in knowing that Will has touched more lives in his barely 15 years than many of do in our adult lives. He has left Brian and I with a new discovery –

his GREATNESS was beyond a moment. It will never be forgotten= because it was beyond measure.