

About my brother- by Will's "Sis" ~ Brianna Washburn

The other night, as I was lying in bed, missing Will like always, I decided to go through our texts just to read "love you sis" a couple more times. I found a message from a couple months ago he sent me one night while I was away at school. He said "Hey sis, I just wanted to say I miss you so much and I hate when you don't come home for a long time because I hate feeling like the only child. Love you." And then there was a message that he sent after I texted him "happy birthday"- it stated "thank you. Can't wait to see you. Thank you for doing everything you do for me and being the best sister. I can't wait till my birthday next year when I can take you on drives and play my own music finally. Love you Sis." Both of these messages brought the biggest smile to my face, but also the biggest tears to my eyes. He was never afraid to call me Sis, or say he missed and loved me no matter who was around. He'd share our craziest memories with everyone. These messages are just a glimpse at the kind of brother he was.

I will start my story by sharing how special he was to me.

"There is no better friend than a brother, and there is no better brother than you." I came across this quote and could think of no better words to explain my relationship with my brother. Will was many things as we all are learning, but I want to tell you he was the perfect brother. He was kind, passionate, funny, genuine, dedicated, and so much more -that not only made him the special person he is, but an even better brother. We had your typical sibling relationship. We laughed, we fought, we smiled, we cried, but ours was more. Being 5 years apart, a lot of people were surprised at just how close we were and the bond we had, but to us, we wouldn't have wanted it any other way. Will recognized that I had experience in a lot of things in life he valued, therefore, I am honored to be the one he sought advice from. Whether it was his outfit of the day or how to go about typical 8th grade boy activities, I was proud to always give him my honest opinion.

As there are many things I'll always carry with me, the most important part to "us" was that we always had fun together. So many people have always told me, and even more recently, the love Will and I had for each other was so special and admirable. I will hold our relationship near and dear in my heart forever.

Mom and Dad, through my 19 years of life, you both have proven that your children are your world. I want to take this time now to appreciate that and share your relationship with Will. It was always a joke that Will was the favorite, and though I knew that was never truly the case, I have always and will always cherish your relationship with my brother. Over the past week, we have heard countless stories of how Will has impacted so many hearts and lives. But what needs

to be recognized is that he was who he was because of you two. There are traits and qualities of both of you that shine in Will. Your strength, your compassion, your love, and your leadership, to just name a few. I know Will showed his appreciation for you two daily, and I want to follow behind him now. You both meant the absolute world to him. Every night before Will went to bed, regardless of his mood, he told each of us he loves us. Let's be sure to remember he is still doing that every single night. The rest of our lives are forever changed, but we will get through this together with Will right by our sides.

And now to my dearest brother. Will, I'll start by just simply telling you I'll forever love you. You were my best friend for 15 years. We had a relationship and bond that so many siblings dream of. I was told for years how much you adored me and you thought I was the "cool" sister. I kind of always just laughed it off. These last few years with you, I really started recognizing and cherishing that adoration, as I will forever.

There were countless times where we would argue and fight, but hard feelings never lasted too long. I will forever miss driving you down back roads, making you chase the baseball I overthrew, sharing our deepest secrets, sneaking downstairs at 1am to raid the pantry, and everything else we got to do together in your short 15 years. I am extremely honored to be your sister. You have always made me so proud, and even though you may never have known, I bragged about you to everyone and anyone that would listen.

The impact and legacy you left on -not only me, but this earth, makes me proud to say I want to be more like you: Love like you, share like you, smile like you, and live like you.

Lastly, I want to share this message, titled "**when tomorrow starts without me,**" for all of us to hold in our hearts when we think of my brother.

When tomorrow starts without me, please try to understand. That an angel came and called my name and took me by the hand. The angel said my place was ready, in heaven far above, and that I'd have to leave behind all those I dearly love. But when I walked through heavens gates I felt so much at home for god looked down, smiled at me, and told me welcome home. So, when tomorrow starts without me don't think we are far apart, for every time you think of me I'm right there in your heart.