



WILLIAM POWELL MESSAGE OF HOPE AWARD RECIPIENT

Essay Question: "Create a message of hope - in the form of an essay, poem or short story - to a young adult with cancer or impacted by cancer through a parent's diagnosis or death."

The image of a bona fide man is one of dedication, intelligence, service, and magnificence. Many people look for that one person to pattern themselves after, but for me the choice was easy. I have met many people in my 17 years, who have influenced me in various ways, but not one of these people has influenced me more than my father, William Powell Jr.

The very first time I saw my father cry, was right before he found out he had brain cancer. He was dizzy and off balance, and was hardly able to walk. He was sitting on the couch, frustrated because he couldn't understand why he couldn't perform his normal tasks. I asked him what was wrong and he said, "I can't do anything", as he put his face in his hands. I then volunteered to perform his tasks for him. This is one of the most painful memories because that is really when I found out that my father was mortal. I realized there was going to come a time when my father wasn't going to be around to get the trash when I forgot, give me tips before going into a job interview, or give me money when I unwisely spent my own. Through this instance I learned from my father that I need to know how to be independent. A leader is important, but also knows how to call on people for help, and lives a purpose driven life through service to others.

As my father went through his battle with cancer in the summer of 2004 his condition started to deteriorate. First he lost the ability to walk on his own, and it went downhill from there. He lost his coordination and his speech became slurred. While my mother went to work, I was the person who had to take care of him. I had to make sure he got all of his meals. I had to help him get up and walk around the house so he could get some exercise. I also had to help him to the bathroom. It was hard work trying to take care of my father, but I would do it again in a heartbeat. As I took care of my father I became closer to him in that my love for him was expressed. I'm glad I had the opportunity to show my father how much I loved him. I know he appreciated what my mother and I did for him, and he loved us even more for it. Although my father won't get to see me graduate from college or see me get married and have children, I know his spirit will always lie with me. I am constantly encouraged by the fact that I will one day see him again in heaven. I highly anticipate that day.

I am grateful that I had the opportunity to know my father, and that he had a positive impact on my life.