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President's Message: Adios, Kemo Sabe - By David E. Moore

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Saturday, September 30th, 2017

When I first started this article, our son Jacob was leaving home in three days, headed off to Rhodes College in Memphis. I know we all think that our own children are terrific, but Jacob is a great kid by anyone's standards.

He has never given me or his mom even a second of trouble. He is smarter than I ever hoped to be. He is grounded, humble, and has a solid moral compass. Jacob's more compassionate and empathetic than anyone I have ever seen at his age, and maybe more so than anyone I have ever seen at any age. A leader of others, he was voted Class President each of his four years of high school. When he graduated, he was voted Most Likely to Succeed by his classmates. A wonderful son.

I had been endeavoring to do three things in the weeks, and finally the days, leading up to his leaving the nest. I don't know why as parents we go into panic mode on the cusp of our children leaving, why we think we need to teach them something at the eleventh hour. Pam and I had always tried to get him ready for his departure from home, but there I was in the final days exhorting him to be careful out there, to listen to that little voice in the back of his head when it tells him something is not right. When I found myself repeatedly singing lines from Cat Stevens' "Wild World" to him, I knew I had gone way overboard on my first goal, by trying to squeeze in all the last-second wisdom and advice that I could.

Pretty much from the get-go, I gave up on goal number two, which was trying to keep Pamela from crying incessantly. I knew she was trying to keep a stiff upper lip, but every time she washed his clothes, fixed his favorite foods, glanced at a family picture, or . . . well, I moved on to simply trying to console her and let her cry as much as she wanted.

My third goal was to keep my own emotions in order. I thought I was doing a pretty good job of it until Jake came home one night from visiting my mom and dad just a couple of nights prior to leaving for college.

A bit of background is necessary. When Jacob was little, he loved nothing in this world more than going to Grandmother and Granddaddy's house. There they would play with him incessantly, and play-acting was the dominant pastime. A couple of years later, when little brother Micah was old enough to join in, their favorite make-believe time was with Jacob in the role of Sherlock Holmes and Micah cast as Mr. Watson. They would spend hours, invariably solving some great mystery to save the damsel in distress (Grandmother) from some evildoer (the standard role for Granddaddy).



[3]

But, before Micah, Jacob was the Lone Ranger. Grandmother was usually . . . you guessed it, the damsel in distress, but with a name: Happy Cowgirl. Granddaddy, in pre-villain mode, was Tonto. They played for hours, and hours, and hours. Jacob in his cowboy hat, riding his stick horse Silver from room to room. Grandmother in a shawl and bonnet. Granddaddy with a dual feather headdress from some Halloween outfit from my brothers' and my younger days. They would ride the range, from room to room, waging battle against hordes of imagined bad guys.

One Fall Friday evening, Dad and I took three-year-old Jacob along with us to watch a high school playoff football game. During the pregame warmups, I spied our local Texas Ranger a couple of rows over. I took Jacob and my dad over to him and I said: "Jacob, I want you to meet Ranger Ronnie. He is a real Texas Ranger." Jacob stuck his hand out, enthusiastically shook Ronnie's hand and said in a serious tone: "Nice to meet you, Ranger Ronnie. I'm Jacob, the Lone Ranger, and this is my granddaddy, Tonto."

Fast forward about 14 years. It's two days until he heads off for college, and Jacob comes in the door from consuming his favorite meal at my parents' which consists of just about anything and Granddaddy's special cornbread to go with it. He comes through the door, Silver the stick-horse in hand, and a couple of notes.

My mom's note was simple:

We had fun didn't we? I will love you forever, Happy Cowgirl

[4]

My dad's note was longer and on special stationary. At the top of the page is a picture of the Lone Ranger and Tonto, back-to-back, guns drawn, undoubtedly in a life or death struggle against an unseen enemy who has them surrounded.

Dear Kemo Sabe,

For eighteen (plus) years we have had each other's back . . . Silver is no longer silver, but only faded through the years. Our faithful sidekick, Happy Cowgirl, was along with us on most of our trails.

Although our trails are separated by some miles, we shall be back to back in devoted spirit.

I love you, Kemo Sabe. If you are confronted by bad guys in Memphis, just remember that Happy Cowgirl and I will mount Silver—or as I call him now, Old Gray—and can be there in a few—that's days.

Your forever, amigo!!!

Tonto

[5]

Already teary-eyed as he walked through the door with his old pal Silver, but trying to maintain composure as I read the note, I fell apart. Jacob and I, both crying, just stood there and hugged each other. Well, as I get around to finishing this, it's been three weeks, and we all miss him terribly. As expected, he is doing great (taking a practice court class, which may be his favorite).

I have realized what my friends with children who were older than Jacob always told me?it flies by. So very true! The family dynamics and moments that we take for granted don't remain the same.

As hard-working lawyers who love what we do, sometimes we lose sight of that. We spend too much time at the office working on Joe's and Jane's cases and not enough time with the ones who mean the most, our families. Trust me on this one! Take time now, while you can, and shower the people you love with love . . .

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