

Ryan McCarthy Holmes' Legacy

"Life is good."

Ryan McCarthy Holmes was known for saying this. It fully expressed his attitude about life and living. Tragically, his life was ended all too soon. Yet his philosophy and generous spirit lives on, through a scholarship being created in his name by former classmates and family through the Miami County Community Foundation.

"Ryan had such a giving heart and he had faith in people, even when sometimes they didn't have faith in themselves," said scholarship founder and former classmate Tanya (Ferguson) Hagy.

The idea to keep his memory and zest for life alive came to Hagy while she was talking with her best friend Sara (Poole) Wood. As the friends were mourning their childhood friend, Wood suggested the idea of starting a scholarship in his name. Hagy knew instantly that this would be the perfect way to honor his memory.

"I can only pray that Ryan would be happy to be remembered in a way that encourages kids to be involved in their communities and helps them further their education," Hagy remarked.

Ryan's father, Lee "Homer" Holmes agreed, saying, "Ryan would have been very honored, and would have thought that it shouldn't have been named after him. He was the type of person who wouldn't think he was good enough to have a scholarship named after him. But in the long run, he would have been very proud that he played some part in helping students further their education."

Education was important to Ryan, who enjoyed his career working as a teacher and coach at Bloomington North, Triton Central, Westfield High School and Center Grove High School. He was also very involved in the community. He and his wife Stephanie would coordinate yearly gift drives at Christmas for families with children undergoing treatment at Riley Hospital for Children. He and Stephanie were also very involved in fundraising for Breast Cancer Research.

"Ryan was always a giver," Holmes said, "and he never expected anything in return. He always wanted the other person to feel important, happy and relaxed. He wanted to do whatever it took to make people he met feel good about themselves, and walk away smiling."

Hagy agreed, "Ryan was the kind of person who made you feel good just by being around him. He had a charm about him, a way of making people comfortable, and he inspired everyone he met to never give up on their goals and dreams."

Hagy is determined to meet the goal of creating a scholarship fund to celebrate that attitude. Ryan's sister, Kelli (Holmes) Wilson and his widow Stephanie serve on the committee and help with fundraising. They held a golf outing to help raise funds for the scholarship on July 15. It was a terrific event!

Ryan's scholarship will recognize outstanding achievement of Peru High School graduates in the spring of 2009. If the committee raises enough funds, they would like to offer the scholarship to all the schools where Ryan taught and coached as well.

