

ATTENTION: Hardship Approval Board

SUBJECT: Letter to the board in support of Ashworth Vestal's hardship hearing

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this letter in the hope that the hardship for my son Ashworth Vestal is approved. The hardship we are requesting is not for selfish reasons, it is for a selfless reasons. My son is willing to leave his current school and friends to attend School in Oregon to spend time with his Grandfather and Grandmother in addition to helping out were ever he can. He is a great kid with a big heart who has had more than his share of hardship in his life.

The reason for the hardship request is so Ashworth can attend school in our family's hometown for over 40 years, and spend time with his grandfather who was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. In talking with my father's doctors, they said he could have up to 12months of life left assuming he takes the required treatments and that his body responds to the treatments. In talking with my father in the hospital, he was very emotional about his wish of having all of his grandchildren around during this time, however long it might be.

The other reason for the request is not only will Ashworth be around to spend time with my father; he will also be able to assist my brother and nephew in taking care of my father, mother, and the property. Since the recent brain surgery, my father requires a care provider to complete daily tasks. Since my mother is on full disability due to her health complications and unable to provide my father with the daily care he needs, the responsibility falls on my brother since I current reside in the state of Georgia. The issue is that my brother himself is a disabled retired veteran and not able to provide the care needed for my mother and father, and maintain the property and houses. Although I believe he can conduct the tasks required for my father's wellbeing, he physically is not able to conduct the requirements associated with keeping both of houses up (my brother put a house up on the property to help care for my parents around 8 years ago). Having Ashworth present will give him another set of hands to ensure not only is my father cared for, but also that the property and houses are maintained as well.

Finally, I understand that everyone has tragedy in their life, but I would like to explain the tragedy that Ashworth has experienced in his. Ashworth has only been able to see his grandfather and grandmother every couple of years. Ashworth's mother passed away when he was 7 years old. As a single parent and Military Officer, it was difficult to try and arrange trips for Ash and myself to go Oregon when he was young. His other grandfather passed away before he was born so although the relationship has been distant, it is the only relationship he has had with a Grandfather. Not only has Ashworth lost his mother, he also lost his brother and sister shortly after his Mother died because they were forced to go live with their dad since I was only their Step Dad. Ash has strong understanding of the importance of family, the bond of those relationships, and the pain associated with the unexpected loss of those relationships. These is why he wants to be able to spend as much time as he can with his Grandfather, and create memories and a bond that will stay with him for the rest of his life.

Ashworth does enjoy participating in high school sports which is why the need for the hardship exists. He wants to be able to still participate in athletics while he attends Elmira. His current High School has a great sports program which he is willing to walk away from in order to spend time with Grandfather and Grandmother. However, he doesn't want to walk away from Varsity Sports for a year because of this decision. Ash is a good football player and wrestler, and hopes to participate at the College level one day. I say this because I want to be transparent and honest with the board. He is not a game changer for a team, but he is a good lineman that will most likely earn a starting position at Elmira since he started last year on a team in Georgia that played in a more competitive league. His hope and mine is that this hardship is approved, and he is allowed to participate in athletics while he attends Elmira. I want to be clear in explaining that from an athletic standpoint, Ashworth would be much better off staying at the school he currently attends. This hardship request has absolutely nothing to do with moving Ash to team/school that will further allow him to make a name for himself.

As Ash's father, it is a difficult decision to send him to Oregon, but I clearly believe this is the best decision for Ashworth and our family since I am currently not in a position to move back to Oregon in the immediate future. I can't think of anyone that I would rather have Ashworth spend time with besides my father and brother. My brother and I were raised on strong traditional Christian values and I know that Ashworth will be good hands while he is there. My father is a good man, and I want Ashworth to have a chance to learn from him, and create a relationship that will be remembered for a lifetime.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Don Vestal
LTC (Retired)
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