

March 5, 2008

Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Larry Walston, and I live at 1829 Cardinal Parkway in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. I have been an independent financial advisor for 22 years.

I have been married to GM2 Jared Krutke's mother Jackie for 10 years. Since I knew her for three years prior to our marriage, I knew Jared for 12 years prior to his death.

Shortly after our marriage, Jared came to live with us to complete his high school education at Sheboygan County Christian High School.

As Jared's stepfather, I sought to meet the day-to-day needs Jared had from a father without trying to replace his father. As challenging as this can be in many situations, it never was with Jared because of the type of young man he was. He was respectful, happy, optimistic, enthusiastic, and communicative. He also developed during those years a spiritual foundation and a moral base from which he did not waver. Jared by nature was never a man who was critical of or judgmental toward other people, but when he accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior he became even more caring toward others, knowing he was saved from his own sins by the very grace of God.

He met his wife Nicole during that time while living in our home, and I was always amazed by his certainty that this young woman was the love of his life. His faithfulness and devotion to her started, I believe, the very day he met her. I did then, and I always will, find this to be a rare and amazing trait...an example for us all.

During Jared's years in our home he was always busy with school, with work, with church activities, and as is usually the case, it was difficult to get a great deal of time with him. But I observed him, and I really admired the man he was becoming.

Ironically, it was after he joined the Navy that Jared and I became the closest, and had the deepest conversations. When he was training at Great Lakes, many times it was my privilege to drive down there and pick him up to bring him home for the weekend, and on those drives we had many discussions about many important things. He was developing commitments...to God, to Nicole, to his country, to his friends...commitments that would strengthen through the rest of his life.

When Jared first went out for six months on a ship, he and I began an email correspondence that became in fact a continuation of our conversations in the car trips. He often asked me for advice

and prayers in being faithful to God even in the face of temptation and criticism. It was, I now realize, one of the most wonderful ministries God has ever given me. I treasure those daily messages from him in my heart, and wish I had printed every one.

On March 14th, I arrived home at a little after 9 p.m. from choir practice at church. Shortly after that the phone rang. It was Nicole, telling us that Jared had been shot and it did not look good. Jackie and I prayed as we had never prayed before, asking God not to take Jared.

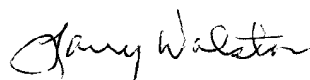
But it was not God's will, and she called us back a little later telling us he was gone. It was too late at night to call anyone else, so we sat on the loveseat together all night, holding each other and praying and crying. I cannot begin to describe the heart pain so I will not try. But mine included trying to imagine Jackie's pain...the love of my life hurting so badly, and me helpless to do anything but hold her and pray for her.

When morning came we had to tell Jasmine that her brother was gone. Then I had to call my son Justin, who lived with his mom, but who was so very close to Jared, and did so many things with Jared. It hurts just to remember telling those two precious children such awful news, and the pain they suffered, especially that day.

The rest of the calls that morning kind of blur in my memory, other than that I dreaded every one of them, because every call dredged up my own pain all over again.

At some point we realized that although Jared's death was unjust, we would not focus on his death, but on his life, and on the example he set for all of us. We cannot have him back, but we can try to keep his legacy alive...and that legacy is his faithfulness and commitment to his Savior, Jesus Christ, to his wife and daughter, to his family, and to his country. We knew that is what Jared would want us to do.

After Jared's death I received far too many calls and cards and visits and hugs to count, but what struck me about all of them was the pain and sorrow they all were feeling at never seeing or talking to Jared again...not just pain because I was hurting, but pain of their own. They, too, had lost one who was truly a treasure, a gift of God.



Larry Walston