

I am writing you to ask for your support of bill SB5 -- to establish a portion of HWY 69 in Overland Park, KS to be named the 2 LT Justin Lee Sisson Memorial Highway.

My wife, Heather, and I were fortunate to have known Justin from the time he was a baby until he became a young man. Justin was everything a parent hopes for in a son...handsome, smart, caring, outgoing, goal oriented, and a natural born leader. While we all know people with some combination of those traits, it's rare to find someone with all of them... and a humility that naturally draws people to them. That was Justin.

Justin lived a normal suburban life for most of his first 18 years – many of those years as an Overland Park resident. He lived a life that typically transitions from high school into college, a first job, marriage, kids, etc. But Justin chose a different path.

While Justin did attend college at Florida State, he did so with a clear sense of his final destination. He wanted to become an officer in the army, to be an army ranger – to be the best, to serve his country, to sacrifice for others so we could enjoy the freedoms and peace of mind that makes this country special. And, he did just that... becoming a ranger, a 2nd Lieutenant and leader of a unit in Afghanistan.

Unfortunately, for his family, friends, and the community, Justin paid the ultimate price while leading his unit on a patrol in June 2013.

In the year and a half since Justin's passing, I often think of him (and his parents and our friends, Kevin and Phyllis) and the sacrifice he made and marvel at how someone so young could be so willing to give so much of himself. I think of the courage it had to take to get up each day in a land in which you don't know who your enemy is and how they might try to harm you. I think of the care and concern Justin undoubtedly had for his men – as evidenced by their words of admiration and love after his loss. I think of what it means to have honor and to make a difference in the world today.

And while I'm not an expert in the decision process you will go through, I know that Justin's sacrifice (and that of his family) is the most significant that can be made. I know that the values that he stood for and represented through his words and his actions are worthy of honoring and being reminded of each day. I know that the ultimate tribute to Justin and his family would be to keep his legacy alive in the community in which he was raised – a community that he loved. I know that his sacrifice can never be repaid, but it can and should be publicly recognized.

As you make your decision, I hope you will remember the words of John F. Kennedy....

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”

Thank you for your consideration.

Dave and Heather Mihanovic