

To: Cindy Fischer, Office Assistant to Senator Melcher
Re: 2 Lt Justin Lee Sisson Memorial Highway

January 2015

I'm sure I can speak for many American's when I say that since the War on Terror began over a decade ago, I mentally knew that our soldiers were fighting for our freedoms and the freedoms of our allied nations. How could you not with numerous news articles on another suicide bombing or IED incident abroad? Unfortunately, after years of those stories we start to become numb to it all. But it was not until June 3rd, 2013 that that numbness went away and I truly emotionally grasped the impact the War was having on so many in our country.

I spent countless Christmas Eve's with Justin, attended numerous sporting/life events of his, and bantered back and forth on Facebook with Justin Lee about his Seminoles (his alma mater). But it was not until June 3rd, 2013 that I wished I had picked up the phone and called to hear his voice, or sent another care package to light up that smile of his, or just prayed for his protection one more time.

On June 3rd, 2013 I truly grasped the cost of the War on Terror. The cost to many others and myself was one of the best men I had I ever had the pleasure of meeting. A man who would put a total stranger before himself. A man who was born a natural leader. A man who loved his family...his country...so much that he gave up his ROTC scholarship to go overseas for no other reason than because he believed that in order to be the best Officer he could be he needed to know what it was like to be a private.

I am very aware nowadays that I am one of many who closely knew someone who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country. I'm sure many would agree with me that one of the hardest parts of losing someone of Justin's caliber is losing that opportunity for him to touch many more lives like he did in his short time here on earth. The memorial BV West placed on their grounds, as well as the possibility of the highway leading to and from BV West being in memory of Justin Lee, is one more way Justin can still touch other lives. When a fellow BV West student sees that sign on the highway they can know that one of their own gave the ultimate sacrifice for them. When a fellow Kansan who also lost a loved one in any War sees that sign they can know that Justin and their loved ones are now watching over us all. Protecting us, as they were called to do from day 1.

Justin was without a doubt "called" into the military as young man. The military ties ran deep within him and his family. And when he was "called" to Heaven on June 3rd, 2013 I have no doubt that he saluted whatever higher power he was greeted by at the pearly gates and asked, "What is my next calling?" As he was always ready for whatever lay ahead. He always did it with a smile (sometimes more of a grin). And always tried to show others what pure passion, determination, and dedication looked like. I believe a simple sign on a highway in Justin Lee's memory will be a symbol of the continued, passion, determination, and dedication that has been instilled in every one of us who had the opportunity to truly know Justin.

We would not be the home of the free because of brave without soldiers like Justin. Any and all symbols in memory of those who showed true bravery for our country should be raised high whenever the opportunity is presented. It's the least we can do for the soldiers and their mourning families.

Sincerely from a life long friend of 2LT Justin Lee Sisson,
Tressa Wasson