

January 20, 2020

To whom it may concern,

It is with great honor that I am writing to support the naming of the bridge as a memorial to fallen combat hero, Sgt. Tyler Juden. We lost Tyler on September 12, of 2009 during a combat mission in Turan, Afghanistan. Tyler was on his second deployment defending the country and people that he loved. From all accounts, Tyler was a model paratrooper, infantryman, and sniper. He was a leader of men and a protector of all. This is the Sgt. Tyler Juden that I have heard and read about.

I was not in combat with Tyler, but the accounts of his heroism shared by those with whom he did serve were never a surprise to me. Frankly, I don't remember a time in my life without Tyler. He was a lover of life, his faith, his family, his friends, and his town. Tyler and I spent countless hours together playing sports, hunting, fishing, and enjoying each other's company. He was the absolute best friend that I could have asked for, and I miss him every day. He was always there to listen, lend advice, and make me laugh. His fun-loving spirit and infectious personality filled my life with joy. Still, eleven years after his death, I see the footprints that he left on my heart. My son, Tyler, has grown up hearing bedtime stories about the adventures his dad and "Big" Tyler (Juden) used to have. Although he is no longer here on Earth, Tyler lives on in my heart and, undoubtedly, in the hearts of all who loved him.

Aside from being one of the most important parts of my life, Tyler absolutely loved Arkansas City and Cowley County as a whole. He proudly attended Ark City public schools from kindergarten through his graduation from ACHS in 2004. Tyler was an Ark City Bulldog through and through, donning purple and gold as an athlete throughout high school. After graduation, Tyler chose to stay home - furthering his education at Cowley County Community College.

Tyler was honored to call Ark City his hometown; however, the pride that Tyler felt for Ark City was not a one-way street. The patrons of this small town were and still are proud of their hometown hero. Naming this bridge after Sgt. Tyler Juden will serve as a constant reminder of the sacrifice that servicemen and women make each and every day as well as memorialize all the veterans that have lost their lives for this great country. Finally, it would bring a smile to my face as I pass over the bridge that he and I had passed over together so many times before.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Mitch Pontious
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