

May 31,2020

Dear Sam,

Congratulations on escaping from hi school in one piece. It's hard to believe you're 18 and its 2020. It seems like only yesterday was March 7, 2002 and your Mom and Dad and Phoenix and Tai were living on Vinedale and your Dad called to tell us our first grandchild, a whopper at over 8 lbs, had come kicking and screaming into the world. Grandma and I were thrilled that our first was a grandson and we came to see you soon after you got home. My mother was 92 and Janet's dad was 82 and her mom was 81 and I was afraid something could happen to one of them before mom got to see her first great grandchild and Mac and Mary, their 2nd, Josh being their first. So, on Mothers' Day weekend in May, Grandma and I came back up to see you and brought your 3 great grands along, and they were thrilled, too!

Receiving your diploma from your Dad is cool, and being the only member of the class of 2020 on stage at the time because of Covid-19 makes it doubly unique, which means you'll always remember it. Sam, honestly, I don't remember how I felt or what was going through my mind when I graduated in 1964. It was a much different world then; things seemed so much simpler than they do now. I guess our biggest worry was the Cold War with Russia and what could happen.

The Cuban Missile Crisis was in October, 1962 when I was a junior. I don't know if you've ever heard of it. John Kennedy was president and we discovered thru aerial surveillance that Russia, whose leader was Nikita Khrushchev, who had said to Kennedy, or maybe it was to Richard Nixon when he was Ike's (Dwight Eisenhower) VP, "we will bury you" (which many anti-communist claimed was a military threat but which wasn't, it was him saying that in time, socialism and communism would replace capitalism as the world's economic system, which to an extent, it has) had started placing missiles in Cuba, which had undergone a revolution in 1958 in which Fidel Castro overthrew the pro-US government and became a communist dictator, which scared the US to death. We took Russia's putting missiles less than 100 miles from Fla as a serious threat, and it was. Tensions between the US and Cuba had been exacerbated in 1961, when a bunch of Cuban formerly rich people who had fled to the US when Castro took over and confiscated their sugar plantations, luxurious homes and businesses, talked Kennedy into the US backing an invasion at what was called the Bay of Pigs to take Cuba back from Castro. The invasion was poorly planned and executed and failed miserably and the dissident Cuban exile invaders were captured and imprisoned. Some may have been executed. Your great grandfather Tweed was a Marine major stationed in Norfolk, Va (Grandma was in high school in Virginia Beach) and remembers their being on alert in the event the initial assault on the beach at the Bay of Pigs was successful and the Marines were called on to fly support missions, which they never were since it was a fiasco. Kennedy denied the US was backing the attempted invasion and overthrow of Castro but when evidence came out to the contrary, he was caught in a lie and the US got egg all over its face. Of course, this pissed off Castro and probably caused him to turn to Russia for support.

When we discovered the Russian missiles, armed with nuclear warheads, in Cuba, Kennedy used our Navy to blockade more missile carrying Russian ships from reaching Cuba and demanded that they remove the missiles already set up and ready to launch, giving a deadline for their removal. I don't

remember the details of exactly what happened, but for a week or so, it was extremely tense and we were bracing for possible nuclear war. I remember being afraid that Charlotte would be a target because it had a missile manufacturing plant. I was dating a girl named Amy Griscom and, I'm serious, thought about asking her to marry me because I didn't want to die a virgin and I thought it was morally wrong to have sex before marriage and knew she probably did too and wouldn't want to lose her virginity before marriage, but fortunately for Amy, me and America, Russia removed the missiles and nuclear conflagration was averted. I wasn't thinking about what would have happened if Amy had agreed to marry me, we had eloped, the missile crisis ended, and here we were, a couple of married hi school juniors with their future cemented. What a situation that would have been for both of us and our families. You never know what might happen if you don't use your head and think things through. (Amy was a nice girl, very smart, a good writer. I don't know where she went to college or what she did afterwards, but I know she died young, from what I never heard, a ways away, maybe in California. Sad for a life, any life, but especially such a promising one, to end so young. Always remember, none of us are promised tomorrow.)

Another major event happened my senior year; President Kennedy was assassinated in November, 1963 about 11:00 AM in Dallas, around noon in Charlotte. I guess it was announced over the PA system in my last class before lunch. No one knew who did it, whether it was planned by Russia or Cuba, whether it could be a prelude to an attack on our country or something else catastrophic. I don't remember exactly what was going thru my head, but I guess I was scared and needed a reassuring voice to talk to, so I used the pay phone outside the cafeteria to call my Dad. I don't remember how long we talked or what he said but he was the one person on earth I turned to when the world seemed to be flying out of orbit. Always remember, you can trust your parents to help you make sense of and help you thru anything, any time, regardless of how earth shattering the circumstances may seem.

Well back to my statement that things were, or at least seemed, simpler back in those days, regardless of how chaotic the world happened to be. I was a decent but not great student. I'm sure I wasn't in the top 10, maybe not even in the top 20, academically. I was not an avid reader, nor a much better than average writer, and, though I took the top math classes, I grasped just enough to make C's maybe a B occasionally. I took French from Mrs Shinn, a well nourished eastern Tennessean whose twang made understanding the nuances of French pronunciation *tres difficile* (Francais for very difficult). So, Harvard, Yale and Princeton were not knocking on my door. I really had no idea about where I wanted to go to college, what I wanted to major in or what I hoped to do for a living. Bill, 4 years older, had gone to NC State and majored in textile chemistry, mainly because a guy named JD Pool, a neighbor, and father of Joe, Bill's age and good friend, worked in textiles and got Bill a job when he was in high school at the company where Mr. Pool worked. NC had a lot of textile mills, which moved to the south from New England, where it had migrated to from England in the old days, after the civil war because of cheap labor. Labor unions, which fought for better working conditions and higher wages, represented most blue collar workers in all industries in the north, but had not made their way to the south. Most every town in North and South Carolina had a mill, some of which made yarn and thread out of cotton or wool and others that weaved them into cloth.

When he graduated from State, Bill went to work for a company in the NC mountains for a year that made wool blankets and pull over jackets. For Christmas my freshman year in college, he gave me a beautiful red one (Davidson's colors are red and black). Then he got drafted and joined the Army and elected to go to OCS, officers' candidate school, after basic training. When he finished OCS he was a 2nd Lieutenant rather than a private. In the military, the lowest rank, private in the Army and Marines, seaman in the Navy, are called enlisted and that goes up thru various sergeant ranks in the Army and Marines, the highest being Sgt-Major, and various ranks of petty officers in the Navy, the top being a Chief Petty Officer. Above the enlisted men are the officers, 2nd Lt in the Army and Marines, ensign in the Navy. Bill was assigned to the Army's chemical corps and volunteered to go to jump school where he learned to parachute. He was sent to Vietnam for a year and was the executive officer for a company (in the Army, there are 8-10 men in a squad, 3-4 squads in a platoon, and 3-4 platoons in a company-a platoon leader is usually a 2nd Lt and the company commander a captain with a Lt as his assistant, or executive officer) in Cam Ranh Bay, the largest military base in Vietnam. His company had nothing to do with chemicals, it repaired heavy equipment, jeeps, trucks, maybe tanks and artillery pieces. In the Army, just because you're assigned to a certain branch (the chemical corps is a branch, as is the infantry, artillery, armour [tanks], quartermaster [supplies], intelligence [trying to figure out what the enemy's up to, etc] doesn't mean you won't get assigned to something else. Bill was good mechanically. He, with me as his assistant, worked on A-Model Fords, 1929-1931, when we were teenagers (Bill has a '31 coupe in his garage which Dad bought for him when he was 18 or 19 and which I drove to high school my junior and senior years and Harry his last 2 years-it hasn't run in over 40 years), so he probably mentioned his experience with cars on some form and maybe that's why he got put in equipment maintenance and repairs, though as company exec, he was like a boss over the enlisted men who actually worked on the vehicles. Cam Ranh Bay was huge, where ships bringing supplies would dock and planes bringing in men would land. It was too heavily fortified to be attacked by the Vietcong, the enemy, on foot but it got shelled occasionally. The only time Bill went out into the field where combat was going on was when he, just for the adventure of it, I think, flew in a helicopter which was delivering paychecks to the guys in the field. When he told me about that, I thought that sounded pretty dumb. Where would they cash a check and what would they spend their money on. Oh well, the Army has its ways.

Bill loved the Army and may have made a career of it except for two things; jerks and alcohol. Bill doesn't drink-he never has, except maybe for a little wine but a lot of alcohol gets drunk in the military, even, maybe especially so in Vietnam, where a lot of drugs, mainly, I think, marijuana were used to. The captain who was company commander and Bill's boss was a big drinker and a jerk to boot. He didn't much like Bill because he wouldn't go get drunk with him. One night, Bill got a call from one of his men in the enlisted mens' barracks (enlisted men and officers don't live or, usually, even eat together) telling him the captain was there, drunk, with a prostitute, and Bill had to go get him and bring him back to the officers' quarters, take his boots off and put him to bed. And the captain was such a jerk, maybe jealous of Bill because the men respected Bill more than him, that he gave Bill some, if not bad, at least to not as good fitness reports (superior officers write up periodic "fitness reports", actually job evaluations on their subordinate officers under their command) as Bill deserved. Those fitness reports go in your file and I'm sure have an effect on your promotions and ultimately, your career. So, though he enjoyed the Army, Bill decided to get out when his 2-2.5 years were up. But, one good thing about his Army career is

that he met his wife Sylvia in Sunday School at the church he was attending in Anniston, Alabama where she was teaching school, while he was stationed at Ft. McClellan, headquarters for the chemical corps, named for Gen George McClellan, a Union civil war general who Lincoln fired as the Union's top general for incompetence, and who, unsuccessfully tried to get the Democratic nomination to run against Lincoln's reelection in 1864.

Bill and Sylvia got married when he got out of the Army and moved to Charlotte where he went to work in research and development for Celanese Corp, a huge maker of synthetic (not natural, made from chemicals) fibers, such as nylon, used in textiles in lieu of cotton and wool. He worked there for 4-5 years until, because of economic conditions, Celanese cut back and he got laid off. He then went to work with my Dad in his little wholesale household goods business, Imperial Mfg & Sales, which finally petered out when K-Mart started selling items at retail cheaper than Imperial could buy them from its suppliers. Then Bill, using the building Imperial had operated in, went into partnership with a guy who had the idea of buying and leasing teletype machines to merchants and credit agencies so they could check the credit of customers who wanted to buy from them on credit over the telephone lines. Then, when the internet came along, the businesses they were leasing the machines to could use the web to check credit and Bill and his partners were stuck with 100 or more useless machines. They then started supplying businesses with toner cartridges for their copy machines until larger stores like Office Max could undersell them, so Bill, no longer in partnership, began doing repair and service work on copiers, and finally, I think, giving up his last customers only within the last year. When he decided to study textile chemistry in college 60 years ago, he could never have imagined what twists and turns his career path would take. If he had stayed in the Army for 30 years and made colonel, he could have retired at 52 and drawn a good retirement, including medical care for life. When Grandma's Dad, Mac retired as a colonel in the Marines after 33 years, he was 55 and worked another 10 years as director of campus security at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. Each year after he retired from the Marines, even while he worked at Vanderbilt, he received his military retirement pay, getting a cost of living increase each year, so that when he died at 94, his retirement was close to \$100,000/year, in addition to having all of his medical care and prescription drugs provided. Instead of military retirement, except for what he has saved, Bill's sole retirement income is Social Security, about \$25,000/yr, which is what mine is. I'm sure Sylvia receives some, too, but not as much because she didn't work and pay in to SS as long as Bill, but she probably draws more than Grandma, who gets \$12,000/yr.

Now let me tell you about brother Harry, 2 years younger than me. Harry was always real skinny growing up and had flat feet, so while I was tagging along after Bill and his buddies playing sports, Harry was reading the World Book Encyclopedia, from A-Z, cover to cover. He was always trying to tell me about some thing or place he'd read about but I probably didn't pay much attention to that skinny little geek. He was a decent but not great student in hi school, but he excelled in music because he has a terrific voice. He went to UNC and, probably because of things he'd read and gotten excited about in World Book and National Geographic, majored in geography. He minored in partying and flunked out after his 2nd or 3rd year and moved back in with Dad and Mom for a year, working in the city planning department in Charlotte and directing the choir at our church, which Dad and Mom still sang in and which Bill and I would sing in on Sundays when we visited (I was in law school). That year in city planning

got him really interested in logistics, planning for urban development, transportation, etc, and he went back to Carolina, graduated, and stayed on and took the courses for a master's degree in urban planning, though he didn't write the required thesis and consequently didn't receive the degree. He got to know and conferred with some of his professors about career direction and decided he would try to get a job with the federal transportation department. They told him he would need to get some experience with a local or state government before trying the feds, but he told them he was going to Washington and apply for a job, which he did. Knowing no one in DC and without an appointment, Harry walked in the US Dept of Transportation, happened to be introduced to a helpful guy and got a job on the spot with the Federal Highway Administration (FHA).

After a few months orientation, they sent him to the Denver field office for 9 months and the Portland, OR office for 6. He was driving a VW bug and drove it all over the west on weekends, holidays and vacations, camping in most of the National Parks. His camping experiences and slides he made and showed us was one of the prime reasons I bought a conversion van in 1984 when your Dad was 12 and your Uncle Tommy was 16 and we drove over 9,000 miles in 23 days, visiting the following national parks or monuments; Bryce Canyon and Zion in Utah, Grand Canyon in Arizona, Death Valley in Nevada, Yosemite, Sequoia, Golden Gate, and Redwood in Cal, North Cascades in Wash, Glacier in Montana, Yellowstone and Grand Tetons in Wyoming, and Rocky Mtn in Co. Your Dad has probably told you about it but get him to tell you more. I bet he can name most every place where we stayed and where we ate most every meal. I still can remember most. Then Harry came back to DC and worked the remainder of his 30 years in the FHA. He worked his way up pretty high, giving briefings to Congressional committees, writing budgets, representing the Secretary of Transportation in meetings with state governors and other officials all over the country, and in many foreign countries. He was on the Texas-Mexican border discussing transportation border crossings on 9/11 and couldn't fly back to DC for several days. Like Mac Tweed, Harry receives a substantial retirement from the US government with COLA (cost of living adjustments) every year.

Sam, back to when I was in school. I said I was a good, not a great student. My Dad would have like to have gone to college but he didn't get a chance. Mom went one year and took secretarial type courses. Mac went 2 years to Mars Hill College near where he grew up in the NC mountains. When he was a Major in the Marines, they sent him to the University of Maryland for 2 years and he got his BS degree. Grandma was in junior hi there. When he returned from Vietnam as a "Bird" Colonel (he had gone as a Lt Colonel and was promoted while there to Bird, a nickname for a full colonel, so named for the insignia which resembles a bird's nest), he was sent for a year to the Navy (the Marines were started as a branch of the Navy and still have close ties-at Vanderbilt, Mac was head of the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps [ROTC], the first Marine to serve as its commandant) War College in Newport, Rhode Island for a year where he earned a master's degree in something, maybe international relations. In the last year, I've written several stories about my Mom and Dad which your Dad has a copy of on his computer. After Mac died 5-6 years ago, I wrote a long story about his life. I'm not sure your Dad has a copy of it but I have a printed copy. I hope you'll read them so you'll know a little something about your grandparents, how they grew up, what may have motivated them, the twists and turns their lives took, and how they raised my brothers and me and Grandma and Doug. There was never any question in our minds that our

parents expected us to get college educations, and I think that was probably true for most, or at least a lot of the kids we went to school with.

I'm not sure when I started thinking about college. I remember reading a series of books in about the 6th or 7th grade about a guy whose name, I think, was Chip something, who was a 3 sport hero in college and maybe that got me thinking about playing sports in college. In the 8th grade, we studied NC history and had to write a research paper about something in the state and I researched and wrote about the colleges and universities in NC so I learned a little about most of them. And I got interested in watching college football and basketball on TV. I remember loving to listen to the Mason Oil Scoreboard on the radio in late on Saturday afternoons when they would announce the college football scores, and I remember that Howard "Hop-a-long" Cassidy, named for a cowboy movie and TV hero, Hop-a-long Cassidy, who won the Heisman Trophy at Ohio State about 1954, when I was 8, was my football hero. Carolina won the national basketball championship against Kansas in 1957 in double overtime and I was a very happy 11 year old. I can still remember UNC's players and one Kansas player, 7' Wilt Chamberlain, who became a dominating big man in the NBA. After that, Dad took me to several games at the old Charlotte Coliseum to see the Tar Heels play. Sometimes on Saturday, they played a double header, with Belmont Abbey, a small Catholic college in Belmont, near Charlotte playing the first game and Carolina the second. The Abbey was coach by Al Maguire who later coached Marquette when it won the national championship. Carolina was coached by Frank Maguire, no kin to Al. The old Coliseum seated about 10,000 and had a large parking lot behind it. The first time Dad and I went to a game there was on a Saturday nite and he had never parked in a lot with that many cars. We didn't pay much attention to where we'd parked and after the game, we couldn't find the car and had to wait until most of the cars had left before we found it.

Besides Little League, I first played organized sports in the 8th grade at McClintock Jr Hi, which was 8th and 9th grade, with high school at East Mecklenburg being 10th-12th. In the 8th, I played JV football and basketball and varsity baseball; 9th, varsity football, basketball, and baseball, but switched to track after, as a pitcher on the baseball team, I loaded the bases and walked a run in and Coach Tom Ligon took me out, and I realized my baseball days were over and walked over to the adjoining track where a track meet was being held and, in my baseball uniform and cleats, won the 100 and 220 yd dash, the broad jump, the high jump, and placed in the shot put and discus. At East in the 10th, I played JV football and basketball and ran track (just one track team, no jv and varsity) and in the 11th and 12th, varsity football, basketball and track. And, of course, all of my coaches had gone to college, some having played; Dallas Cloer, my 9th grade basketball coach, played at Western Carolina (your Dad played them at Davidson) and my high school varsity football head coach, Don Hipps, played football at Wake Forest.

In the 9th grade, Tom Ligon, also the football coach, loved the football program at Lenoir-Rhyne, a small Lutheran college in Hickory, NC about 75 miles from Charlotte, and took our team to see them play a Saturday nite game. I still remember two of the player's names, small college All-Americans, wingback Marcus Midgette and (all of a sudden I can't remember the name of the name of the tailback of their single-wing offense, one of my heroes because that's the position I played-maybe his name will come to me before I finish writing, seems like his first name was Lee.) Much later, I discovered that Charlie

Sanders, an assistant line coach at Monroe when Tommy and your Dad played, was also an All American on that team.

Also in the 9th grade, a friend and football teammate, Martin Brackett's (who went to Davidson on a football scholarship with me, but quit football after his freshman year, and who was also my freshman year roommate, and is now still practicing law in Charlotte) dad took us to Duke to see them play Navy, whose star running back was Joe Bellino, who went on to win the Heisman trophy that year. I remember reading that his calves, huge anyway, were so pumped up after a game that they had to cut his football pants off-now that's some calves. He was drafted by the NFL but had to fulfill his 5 year Navy service commitment first, and by then, he had lost something but I think played a few years, mainly as a kick returner. (Just remembered, Lee Farmer was the L-R [Lenoir-Rhyne] little All American tailback). Four years later, in 1963, Roger Staubach, the Naval Academy's quarterback, became the only other Midshipman to win the Heisman. He was drafted by the Cowboys but served his 5 years in the Navy. I've probably told you this story, but when I flew out to California to try out with the Cowboys as a punter in 1968, Roger had one year left in the Navy but the Cowboys wanted him to come to a couple of weeks of training camp when he was on leave (that's what military vacation is called). The veteran NFL players were on strike then, so only the rookies, including Staubach and me, flew into the LA airport to go to the Cowboys preseason training camp at a small Lutheran college in Thousand Oaks, near LA. We rookies, who I guess were their draft choices and maybe just me (I was given a tryout because I hit some boomers at their "Kicking Caravan" where, in the spring, they travelled around to several cities letting anybody tryout as a place kicker or punter, in April in Jacksonville, Fla-I think I was the only one invited to come to training camp from the Kicking Caravan) all flew into the LA airport together and I was looking around at these mooses and wondering what I was doing there and I spotted a guy about my size and went up to him and extended my hand, saying "I'm Tommy Caldwell, Davidson College" and he shook it, saying, "Roger Staubach, Navy" and I think I said something dumb like, "Yeah, I've heard of you". The next year, Roger became the Cowboys star quarterback, leading them to play in 4 and win 2 Super Bowls.

I've told you a little about what I knew about colleges when I was in junior and high school, and it was mostly associated with sports. Bill started at NC State in 1960, when I was in 9th grade. He ran the hurdles at McClintock and East and also at State. I visited him a couple of times my senior year, seeing a football game and watching him run in a track meet, again, sports stuff. I stayed with him in his dorm and walked with him to his classes one Friday. State was a huge campus, even much bigger today, and the textile school, where he took most of his senior year classes, was at the opposite end of the campus from his dorm, at least half a mile, probably even a mile, or more. That probably got me to thinking that I wanted to go to a smaller college.

I'm not sure when I thought that I might be able to attend college on a football scholarship. My junior year, there were two great running backs on our team who were seniors, so I just played defense. I didn't even punt because one of them, a stud fullback named Pete Batte (the other was Bobby Houser, also a great baseball player whose father owned the Charlotte Hornets, Charlotte's minor league baseball team, and who, tried out and maybe played a year or two with the Minnesota Braves [before they moved to Atlanta], and then played football at the University of Chattanooga, now UTenn at Chatt;

both Batte and Houser played in the Shrine Bowl, the top high school all-star game played between North and South Carolina at Memorial Stadium in Charlotte at the end of the regular season-I don't know of the fullback and tailback from the same high school ever being selected for the Shrine Bowl, before or since) who got a scholarship to Clemson but didn't last after his freshman year because he lifted weights like a weight lifter, and probably used steroids, became so muscle bound he was slower than Memaw, was also a punter who could kick a spiral. I was a better punter but Coach Hipps, like Coach Ligon at McClintock, loved him and wanted him to star, and he did, though not for his punting.

My senior year, I started at tailback on offense and as a cornerback on defense, punted, and returned kick-offs, because I was the fastest guy, not just on the football team, but at East. I didn't return punts because I was very near-sighted and had trouble catching them, though I had returned them in junior high and on JV's in the 10th grade. I started hearing from some colleges during my senior season. East Carolina, which wasn't as big time in football as it is now, but I knew I didn't want to go there, mainly because it had the reputation as a party school, not high in academics, and besides, it was in Greenville, NC, 4-4.5 hours from Charlotte, nowheresville! Wake Forest, maybe because Coach Hipps played there and may have put in a good word for me. They invited me up for their opening game against Virginia Tech, which they lost, increasing their streak as the longest losing team in major college football at the time, 18-20 losses in a row. They kept losing until they invited me up for the homecoming game against South Carolina. My good friend, Bill Carr, whose dad was our pastor, was considering Wake because it was a Baptist school (he ended up going to Mars Hill, where your great grandfather, Col Mac Tweed, had gone, for 2 years, transferring to Davidson and graduating with me [he was best man and witness when Grandma and I eloped], starting law school with me, but dropping out after the 1st year, going to Vietnam in the medical corps as a 2nd Lt because he had been in Army ROTC at Davidson, going to seminary afterwards and becoming a Presbyterian minister while remaining in the Army reserves in the Chaplaincy Corps, being called up and serving several tours in Iraq, and retiring from the ministry and the Army reserves as a colonel, and receiving military retirement, probably not as much as Mac's was because only 2 of his 30 years was on active duty, but still I'm sure a pretty good amount, along with his pension as a Presbyterian minister for over 25 years, probably another pretty good chunk-on the way back from Fla in March, I camped in Big Red at his cattle ranch outside Gainesville, Ga, about 40 miles north of Atlanta), so I told the assistant coach who was recruiting me that our quarterback, Bill Carr, who never played a day of football in his life, was also interested in Wake and asked if he could come along. They got us a room in a fraternity house which some football players belonged to on Friday night, and we attended their frat party that nite, got us meal tickets in the cafeteria for Friday supper (we must not have had a game at East that week), Saturday breakfast and lunch. Saturday morning, the assistant coach took me in to meet Wake's head coach, Paul Hildebrand, in his office and I remember him saying something like, "Well, I told the boys this morning at the pregame meal that we'd better win today, because next week, we've got Clemson, and we don't have a prayer against them." He must not have wanted me too bad. I can't imagine a head coach telling a recruit that, but even if he wanted me, I made up my mind then and there that I didn't want to play for him. Wake won, ending their losing streak. Their star was a running back named Brian Piccolo, who would be the subject of the film, "Brian's Song" about him dying from testicular cancer in his 1st year or so playing for the Chicago Bears. It's a pretty good movie. You ought to watch it. Maybe it's still available.

Sam, I know I'm rambling. I didn't mean for your graduation congratulation letter to be this long, but you know me, when I get started talking, or writing, it's hard to shut me up. I started writing this Sunday morning and I'm now typing at 8:00 on Wednesday morning.

I didn't know a lot about Davidson. I had been on the campus once, when we ran in a track meet there against all the other teams in Charlotte called the Davidson Relays. The only Davidson graduate that I knew was my junior English teacher, Charles Davis, one of the best teachers I ever had. Davidson's basketball was being developed into a power by its new coach, Lefty Driesell, and Mr Davis was a big fan. That year, I saw Davidson, when its best players were sophomores (in those days, freshman couldn't play varsity), beat Duke, ranked #1 in the nation, with two All-Americans, one of which was selected as national player of the year at the end of the season, in the old Coliseum. When I was a freshman at Davidson, those guys who had been sophomores when they beat Duke, were seniors and were ranked preseason as #1 in the nation and their picture was on the cover of Sports Illustrated. There's something called the SI jinx that means that any team in any sport the makes the cover when its ranked #1 will lose its next game, and sure enough, the jinx hit the Wildcats and they lost the next game against some team in maybe Ohio, maybe the University of Cincinnati or Ohio State. I was watching the game on TV with a bunch of guys at the student Union. That was 1964-65. No blacks were playing basketball or any other college sports in the South. Early in the game, a Davidson shot bounced up off the rim and this big black dude went up, pinned it against the backboard with one hand, turned and made a baseball pass before he hit the floor for a snowbird layup at the other end. We all went, OMG, did you see that? I don't remember the score but the loss dropped them out of the #1 spot. They had a good season, but I think lost to West Virginia in the Southern Conference finals and thus didn't get into the NCAA playoffs. In those days, only the conference tournament winners advanced. But it was fun watching them that season, especially in Johnson Gym, the campus gym that held 1200-1500, and there were 1,000 students. Most of the professors and their wives and kids came. That place got loud. When the pep band played, you couldn't hear yourself think. Of course he wasn't famous then, but I saw Pat Conroy play for the Citadel in Johnson.

Lefty, about 6'5", played at Duke and he was a character. He wasn't Bobby Knight volatile, but he did get excited and excited the crowd with his antics. Once he stomped one of the bench's metal folding chairs flat. One night early in my freshman year, I went over to the student union snack bar to get a hamburger and got in line behind Lefty and the basketball and football trainer, Tom Couch, who we used to call, behind his back, Dr Crotch. Dr Crotch knew me from football and introduced me to Lefty. Just in front of Lefty in line was a guy a year ahead of me, who I didn't know at the time, named Gordon Ball. Gordon's hair was a little long by Davidson's and Lefty's standards and Lefty said, "Are you a hippie? Why don't you get your hair cut?" I don't remember Gordon's response and I don't remember ever having another conversation with Lefty. The next year, I was rooming on the 2nd floor of Duke dorm and our showers weren't working so I went up to the 3rd floor to use theirs. Gordon Ball, who I really didn't know except by his reputation as a very liberal student leader, I think he wrote for the Davidsonian, the weekly campus newspaper, and he was known for his longish hair and as an avid Vietnam war protestor, which there weren't many of at Davidson at the time.

Davidson had Army ROTC. All freshman and sophomores were required to take one semester of ROTC. We had Army uniforms and marched in drills once a week, for which we had to shine our shoes and polish our brass and clean our M-1, WWII style rifles, which were inspected when we fell in for drill and which we carried in drill. At the end of the sophomore year, you could elect to go into advanced ROTC, which meant you were, in effect joining the Army. If you decided to join, you were issued summer and winter uniforms, fatigues, a field jacket, shoes and socks and combat boots. You were also paid \$50/month. You were required to attend basic training at Ft Bragg, a huge Army base in Fayetteville, NC, the summer between your junior and senior year. You then continued to take a semester of ROTC your junior and senior years. The junior and seniors served as officers, and the freshmen and sophomores were considered enlisted. At drill, an upper classman served as platoon leaders, company commanders and executive officers, battalion commanders and their aides and at the top, the brigade commander, all under the direction of Colonel Outlaw, who was a regular Army colonel, commandant of the ROTC program just like your great grandfather Tweed had been over NROTC at Vanderbilt, and a major, a couple of captains, and several sergeants. One of the captains was an assistant freshman football coach and the major, the assistant freshman basketball coach. When you graduated, unless you went to graduate school, you went directly into the Army for 2 years. If you went to grad school, you had to go in afterwards, as a JAG (Judge Advocate General corps-Army lawyers, many of who handle court martials) officer if you graduated from law school [your great Uncle Doug was a Marine JAG officer for 3 years after he graduated from Vanderbilt law school] or, if you'd graduated from medical school, as a captain, practicing medicine in the Medical Corps [doctors could consider their Army service as their residency, which is the 2 or 3 years all newly graduated doctors must go thru before they are allowed to go into private practice; usually, the residency is in their specialty, such as emergency care or cardiology {heart} or cardiovascular {heart and blood vessel} surgery or urology {peter, bladder and kidney} or brain surgery or psychiatry {what the brain's thinking, not thinking, or feeling} or oncology {cancer} or orthopedics {bone and joints, and many more}. Harry's oldest daughter, Alexandra's husband Mike is doing his residency as a hospitalist {that's a fairly new specialty where a doc works in and for a hospital, following patients who are there for whatever reason, bringing in specialists as needed. His youngest daughter, Meredith, who went to Clemson and is now pursuing her PhD in nursing at Vanderbilt, has just gotten engaged to Winston, whose Chinese father is an emergency room doctor and whose American mother is a cardiologist in Birmingham, Ala. Winston just graduated summa cum laude, the tip top of your class, from the University of Alabama-Birmingham med school and is moving to Spokane, Wash this week to do a year fellow ship before starting his residency next year in intervention radiology {that's a new field which I think uses x-ray and other things like CAT scans to try to discover the beginning of things like cancer and to intervene before it develops very far, but I'm not sure} in Philadelphia. He and Meredith just announced that they are getting married November, 2021. Many of my classmates went to Vietnam but none were killed. Ted Edwards, a good basketball player two years ahead of me at East, was.

I elected to go into advanced ROTC. In those days, every male had to register with Selective Service, the draft board, when they turned 18, and it was almost certain, unless you were physically or mentally disqualified, that you would be drafted. You got what was called a deferment if you went to college, and, as I've just described, a graduate school deferment for grad school. I decided on advanced ROTC

because I knew I would get drafted when I graduated and I would rather go as an officer than as a private. Grandma and I had gotten married in April of my junior year and I needed to work that summer to earn some dough, so I asked Col Outlaw if I could wait to go to summer camp at Ft Bragg until the next summer, after I had graduated. Though highly unusual, he OKed it. That fall, in the 3rd game of my senior year, I hurt my knee and that ended my football career. I'm not sure when I decided to go to law school, sometime that year, I guess. In April, 2 months before graduation, I got signed by the Cowboys. Two problems; the Army and/or law school, which I'd been accepted into. So, I go to see Col Outlaw and explained my predicament. He was a big football fan; he would often come down and watch practice. He wanted me to have the chance to play for the Cowboys so he told me to go get a letter from Dr. Richard Wrenn, the team orthopedist about my knee, which I did, telling him what I needed it for. He liked me and wanted to see me become a Cowboy, too. The letter made it sound like I could hardly walk. Then Col Outlaw told me to go to the Army induction center in Charlotte, give them the letter and when they told me to do a deep knee bend as part of my physical, only to go down about half way. So I did. The young guy conducting the physical had a speech impediment and when I only went half way down (actually, that was about as far as I could go without pain), he said "whas wong wit chew" and I could hardly understand him so I said "what" and he yelled, "WHAS WONG WIT CHEW" and I told him and he looked at me askance and told me to go sit down in this room. After a bit, an older guy came in and asked me a few questions and said he was going to recommend that I be discharged as physically unfit. Not long after, I got a letter from Selective Service reclassifying me from 1A to 4F. I was out of the Army. They never asked me to return my uniforms and other paraphernalia, nor the \$50/month I'd been receiving for almost 2 years. I don't remember what I did with the uniforms. I think I wore the summer khaki pants, the black dress shoes, boots, and the field jacket was my best winter coat for years. Thanks, Uncle Sam. I wrote a story about this and some of my feelings about my military career a while back called Bone Spurs and Bad Knees, which your Dad may have a copy of. I'd like you to read it. If he doesn't still have it, let me know and I'll send it. I also wrote UNC law school a note and told them I wasn't coming and wrote and got some material from SMU (Southern Methodist University) law school in Dallas. I was going to be a Cowboy, but sometimes things don't work out as you hope and plan.

Sam, it's Friday morning. I took a killer hike up Hawksbill Mtn yesterday-remember it, your Mom & Dad, you and Sophie and I hike up it when y'all visited a few years ago. The others hiked ahead but you hung back with me to be sure I could make it. I'll never forget that. It's kind of like a couple of things your Dad did which I'll never forget. He was 17 when my Dad died on a Sunday night in Dec, 1989. My mother called about 8:00 PM and said they rushed Dad to the hospital. Grandma and I left your Dad at home because he had school the next day (Tommy was in college) and drove to Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte. Mema, Bill and Sylvia were there. Dad had passed away before we got there. We drove Mema back to her apartment at Plantation Estates and Grandma stayed and spent the nite with her. I got home probably close to midnight. Your Dad waited up for me. I don't remember whether we'd called to tell him his PawPaw had died or whether I told him. He put his arm around me and hugged me. Tears ran down my cheeks. My son was comforting me. Several years later, I flew out to San Francisco and met Tommy, your Dad and a guy named Alex, one of Tommy's college fraternity brothers, who had taken the same van we drove on our trip in 1984 and made their own trip out west, and spent 4-5 days with them, including a couple of days backpacking in Yosemite Park's back country. The 2nd day we were hiking out

to the road and Tommy and Alex decided to take a side trail to hike to a seldom seen part of the Park called Hetchy-Hetch, a valley as big and once as beautiful as Yosemite, which was dammed up probably 100 years ago to provide water for San Francisco (a terrible decision since it's been under water every since) and I told them to go ahead and for your Dad to go, too, as he would probably never have the chance to see it again, and I would hike out to the road and thumb a ride to back where we'd left the van. Your Dad, though he never said so, I'm sure didn't want me to have to hike alone, as I was a bit tired from the two days of backpacking, and told Tommy and Alex to go on without him and hiked out with me. You never forget those kind of things.

Before I forget, back to Gordon Ball and the 3rd floor Duke dorm shower. He wasn't in our fraternity. He may not have been in any of the 12 fraternities, which 95% of the students belonged to (we didn't live in them-just ate, watched tv and hung around there). I won't take the time to tell you much about fraternities, but I wish I had had the maturity of my friend, Monroe Gilmour, when he heard that neither of the two black guys in our class, Wayne Crumwell and Les Brown, the first two blacks to be admitted to Davidson, were not going to get a bid to join any fraternity, he decided not to join one either. I admire Monroe as much as I admire anyone, not only for that, but for the way he's lived his life; going into the Peace Corps in India, from there to work for a non-profit in Africa, where he met his wife who was serving a year there as a Mennonite missionary, marrying her there without his or her family present, now living in a cabin about an hour from us where he still runs and is the only staff member of an organization he founded over 30 years ago, WNCCEIB, Western North Carolina Citizens Ending Institutional Bigotry, when he read about a black kid getting kicked out of a birthday swimming party he had been invited to at a country club in Asheville, operating on an annual budget of less than \$25,000/yr, raised by contributions, to which I've given \$200/yr the last few years. I nominated him for and he received the John Kuykendall (named for Davidson's president when your Dad was there) Distinguished Alumni Leadership award at our classes 50th reunion a couple of years ago.

Dang, I keep chasing rabbits. Back to Gordon. As I've said, he had long hair and a lot of guys, me included thought he was a little weird. One night at supper at the frat house his name came up and guys were dissing him and saying how he needed to get his haircut and I, like an idiot, piped up, and said, "yeah, why don't we cut his hair." Apparently my comment got repeated outside the frat house and got back to Gordon. When I walked in the shower, he, who I don't think I'd ever spoken with said "I hear you think I need to get my hair cut." I don't remember what I said or what else was said between us but I wanted to slide down the drain. I was so embarrassed. Words spoken, regardless of how stupid or hurtful, can never be sucked back into your mouth once they're released, and you never know who might hear them or the consequences they might have, some good, some bad. Mine were bad, though they taught me a lesson and didn't really hurt anyone but me. Think what Gordon, and the fraternity brother who heard my words and told Gordon about them, thought about me. Think about the circumstances that gave rise to the words "I can't breathe" and the man's death they caused, though tragic, might be the rallying cry that will help end police brutality towards blacks and begin healing the racial hatred and discrimination in this country and around the world. Sam, I know your affinity for blacks and I love and admire you for it. It's going to be up to you and your friends and your generation to clean up the messes my generation

and those before me have made in the world. You can do it, but it will take a lot of work and preparation for that work.

Sam, when I started this letter I sure didn't intend for it to be this long or to talk so much about myself. I'm not sure exactly what I originally thought I was going to say, or what I thought might be worth saying. Hi school graduation is, of course, a crucial junction in a young person's life. You've been required not just by your parents but also by the Commonwealth of Kentucky to go to school until you're at least 16, and by society's norms for 2 more years. And you've lived at home, with help when you wanted or needed it from your parents with your schoolwork and with other issues you've faced and decisions you've had to make. And I feel sure you know what a blessing (I don't use that word often because it has some connotations I don't always agree with, but it's a good word, and appropriate in this context because here, to me, it means something that is freely given, out of love and concern) you have had to be raised by intelligent, good and loving parents and to have a brother and sisters who love and care for and are concerned about you and your happiness. As you well know, every kid doesn't have that. I'm sure you know kids who live in tough situations. And, of course, you've had so many others blessings; good health, being handsome and tall (studies show that in people applying for jobs or whatever, of those with equal skills and other attributes, there is a natural bias in favor of nice looks and, especially for males, height), being white (and I don't mean this like I'm proud that you're white but I've heard many blacks say in recent days what is sad, but true, it is, particularly in the US, a white man's world), having a good brain, and being raised not just to be smart, but to be good. And Sam, I know you are a good human being.

I had the same blessings you've had, though I would have like to have been 2" taller. And I guess I've told you some of my story so you'll see how lucky, yes lucky, I've been. I didn't sit down and plan my life. A lot of it just happened, and fortunately most of it has turned out well for me. I've been married to a wonderful wife and mother for 53 years, and that hasn't always been easy, for either of us. I can give you lots of good advice on women. Shop around till you find a girl you know will be your very best friend for the rest of your life. That may take many years, but it's more than worth the wait. I think it took your Dad what, 27 or 8 years to find your Mom and I think it took Tommy 35 to latch onto Kim. Maturity counts. Patience counts. I had neither when Grandma and I got married. We got married way too young. I wasn't even out of college; no job; no money. But again, I was lucky. We came from similar backgrounds and were raised to have the same values. Maybe I shouldn't say it this way, but thinking about every girl and woman I've ever known, I can't think of one who suits me better than Grandma. And we have 2 wonderful sons who married wonderful women, 6 terrific grandchildren and 2 greats.

Those stories about sports I told to show you how I was spending a whole lot of my time. Not reading or studying; not preparing for my future, but doing what was fun, but, as you know, accompanied by a lot of hard work and pain, and doing what came pretty naturally to me. And I just lucked out. I didn't set my sights on a scholarship to college or the NFL. I just stumbled along. Even in college, I had no idea what I wanted to be and, though I didn't talk about this, I took courses I thought I could make a decent grade in without having to work too hard. I majored in psychology. It was reasonably interesting, but fairly easy, but, looking back, I didn't learn much, if anything, I've used in life. Sure, psychology is the study of human behavior, and there's a lot to know about that that's important, but most of what I know about

people is thru common sense and experience. I've thought about this recently and have asked others what specific classes they took in high school, college, or even graduate school, or even what exact lectures of the 100's or even 1,000's they've set thru, do they even remember. And the answer is, very few; in my case, less than a handful. I was a pretty good lawyer, not a great one. I could have been much better. All I had to do was study harder and focus in law school. I did enough, just enough, to get by.

In my story I mentioned several of my coaches, who I spent more time with than my teachers and professors. Just in the last couple of days, I read one story and listened to a podcast on how important a couple of coaches were to the writer and podcaster. Both said the two coaches they talked about may have been, if not the, then one of the most important figures in their lives. The podcaster said his 8th grade baseball coached turned his life around. He's Mike Lewis, not the kind of guy who usually talks about his life being turned from drugs or crime or something terrible, but a smart kid from a wealthy family going to an expensive private school who said he really didn't care much about anything in his life until he met the coach. He went to Princeton and now is a brilliant guy and terrific writer who's written everything from Moneyball, made into a great movie about the true story of a so-so major leaguer who managed the Oakland A's 12-15 years ago and revolutionized baseball by using statistics to draft and trade players, to a book I've read but name I can't think of about the financial crises in 2008-9, to a book about the fact that in the presidential transition from Obama to Trump, unlike any president before him, Trump did not retain many of the civil servants who run and are the experts in many of the critical federal government agencies, and that as a result, many of them are not operating nearly as well as they should.

Those coaches were their mentors. Looking back, I would have to honestly say that I didn't have any real mentors. Of course, I had a wonderful Mom and Dad, but as I think I mentioned, they hadn't gone to college and I didn't ask and didn't receive much advice or guidance from them, their main parenting methods being serving as role models as good, hard working, honest, reliable, church going, family oriented folks. I'm not sure if I didn't ask for advice because I didn't think I needed any or because I thought the future I was facing was beyond their comprehension and ability to advise with respect to. My Dad's dad died before I was born; my Mom's dad, lived in a little house beside us from when I was about 11 till he died when I was 17. His name was William Badger Beaty, and was called Badger; can you believe that? I wrote a story about him within the last year which your Dad has a copy of, and if you'll read it, you'll know why he wasn't a mentor. And none of my coaches were real mentors, in the sense that I looked up to them as strong leaders who were interested in me, personally, and that I knew, deep down, that I could turn to them for help and could count on good advice and support. Nor did I have any teachers that fit the bill as mentors, none that I felt I could go to for answers to or guidance for anything. I kind of had to figure it out on my own, though I don't think there was much figuring, just stumbling forward.

The reason I told you about my two brothers and your Great grandfather, Tweed is to show you the paths their lives followed, and how they differed from mine. I went into some detail about Bill and Mac's military careers for a reason. Though I didn't serve in the military, in some ways I wish I had. The Vietnam war was a stupid war, with almost 60,000 US troops killed and hundreds of thousands, maybe even a million or more North Vietnamese soldiers and Vietcong, the "enemy", and Vietnamese civilians,

including many women and children. And, we sprayed something called Agent Orange, a chemical defoliate over vast areas of Vietnam to kill the leaves on the trees in the jungle so it would be harder for them to hide. Agent Orange turned out to be cancer producing and caused cancer and other physical ailments such as diabetes and heart problems to tens of thousands of US service men, many of whom, in addition to the 60,000 who were actually killed “in country”, have died from it, including Steve Burch, the husband of Grandma’s dear friend, Betty, who developed nasal area cancer and his nose literally fell into his face before he died about 10 years ago. As far as I and I think they know, neither Bill nor Bill Carr, nor was Mac, affected by it. But think of the hundreds of thousands, probably millions of Vietnamese who have died from it or are still suffering the consequences of it. HORRIBLE! Mac hated war, though he fought in three. After bombing the Japanese in WWII, which ended in 1945, he was stationed in Japan for a year in the 50’s and said the Japanese people were some of the most humble and gracious people you’ll ever meet. In Vietnam, his helicopter squadron sometimes evacuated peasant farmers whose villages had been destroyed. Once, when some were boarding his chopper, one of his men complained, “Colonel, they’re bringing their chickens and pigs on” and Mac responded, “Sgt, that’s all they have.” Think about that. Your home has been napalmed, and you have to take everything you’ve got and get on a helicopter which you’ve never been on before, with Marines whose language you can’t speak, and being taken to a new place to try to build you another hut and start a new life. Union General William Tecumseh Sherman, ordered to drive his troops to and burn Atlanta, and then come up thru South and North Carolina, killing and eating their livestock and eating or burning the farmers’ crops and taking their horses and mules and burning their barns and sometimes their houses, all ordered by Lincoln to bring the Confederacy to its knees and surrender, said “War is hell”, and, of course, it is and always has been and always will be, regardless of the causes or supposed necessities.

But, though Vietnam was a stupid and, in my opinion but not in others, an unnecessary war, nevertheless our leaders thought we should be there to keep South Vietnam from being taken over by the communist North Vietnam and our military was obligated to follow its civilian political leaders orders, so brother Bill, Bill Carr, Mac Tweed, Steve Burch and many others of my generation went. If I had stayed in ROTC and been ordered to Vietnam, I would have gone, and if I had, you might never have been born. I’m glad I didn’t have to go. The military is absolutely necessary to stand up to Hitlers when all else fails, and there are plenty of Hitler wannabees in the world, though I think the US spends way to much money on the military. When I was younger, I thought about going to West Point or Annapolis and don’t know exactly why I lost interest.

Sam, I don’t mean to sound too pessimistic, but in many ways I don’t envy you or your 2020 classmates. Climate change is scary. If you listen closely, the scientists say we don’t have but 10 or so years to reduce drastically the carbon being released into the atmosphere, which most say will mean the whole world getting off fossil fuels. And here, Trump has even gotten the US out of the Paris Accords, the best effort yet for the world to agree on carbon reduction. And if we do get the political leadership to go in the right direction, the automotive and fossil fuel industries will fight tooth and nail, because it’s going to cost them major money. And even if we do go to all electric vehicles, we still have to produce the electricity to charge them, and we’re still burning some coal and a lot of natural gas to produce electricity. And that’s just us. And what about India and China? What will they do? And what about the

economies that rely on oil production as their main industry, such as the Middle East, Russia and Venezuela. Not only is climate change with rising ocean levels going to threaten Miami, New York, Boston, Houston, San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland and Seattle, as well as major cities around the world, it's going to cause major migrations of people from the equatorial areas all around the world. In fact, that's already happening as Africans board unsafe boats, paying huge sums to smugglers, to take them to Sicily, Italy, Greece and France, who don't want uneducated, different cultured and religious foreigners invading them, putting demands on their already overcrowded schools, hospitals, and living quarters. This is a very serious problem in Europe, not to mention the illegal, and even legal immigrants coming into the US, and causing Trump and Trumpsters to want to spend billions to build a wall they can easily tunnel under, climb over, or pass thru at border crossings.

And, here in the US, one reason Trump got elected is because so many workers have lost their jobs when their employers have moved their plants to China, India, Malaysia, anywhere they can get work done cheaper. He says he's going to bring those jobs back; he even says he's going to bring coal mining back to Ky, but he can't. Capitalism, particularly since globalism, caused primarily because of the breakup of the Soviet Union and China's move from all communism to more free markets, means jobs are going where labor is the cheapest. Coal is and should not come back to Kentucky. General Electric build its Appliance Park in southwest Louisville, only 3-4 miles from my condo in the early 60's and employed at one time close to 30,000, 3 shifts a day, 7 days a week. Now, GE has sold its appliance business to China and I think employs maybe 5,000.

The US is making less and less goods and moving more and more into service industries. The obvious ones are restaurant and hotel workers, but also retail sales such as at Target, though Amazon is taking away a lot of stores business. But also, banking, stock sales, realtors, healthcare workers, and all government employees, including teachers, are all providing a service. None of them are making anything. I don't have any idea what the job picture will look like in 10, 20 or 30 years. And now, on top of this, we're hit by COVID-19, over 30 million have lost their jobs and the government has spent trillions and trillions more to try to boost the economy. Who knows how long this will go on? Even if they were to find a vaccine by the end of the year and schools open and business picks back up, economists say it will be years before the economy gets back to normal. The job prospects for even 2020 college grads, much less high school grads, doesn't look too promising. Have you gone back to work? How many hours?

Sam, I'm not going on much longer. If you read this far, I'm sure you're glad. There's a lot more I would like to say that I think you might find interesting or at least something to think about but there's plenty of time for that. I'm sure you've heard me running my mouth about a lot of stuff, including the fact that I think all hi school grads should take at least a year, preferably two off before going to college. A lot of folks have been talking about what they call a "gap" year for some time. In fact, I just heard someone on the radio a couple days ago saying that now, with Covid-19, a gap year may be more important than ever. Of course, there are a lot of ways to spend a gap year. One could be working at Target. Another could be traveling or bumming around, if you have the money. I personally, and I know, I'm not the one facing it, think we should have at least one, preferably two years of compulsory public service for all 18 year olds. It could be in the military, working for AmeriCorps, with Habitat for Humanity building houses,

changing bed pans in a VA hospital, or just picking up trash on the side of the road. And I think the way it should be done is like Roosevelt instituted the CCC, Civilian Conservation Corps, as part of the New Deal during the depression, where camps were built military style and young and even some older jobless people worked primarily in conservation. I think I've read that the CCC planted over a billion tree seedlings to replenish cut over forests and eroding soil. They helped build some of the beautiful rock walls and bridges and landscape along the Blue Ridge Park. They built school and hospitals and libraries. And, of course, they fed them, many of whom came from homes with little food, and paid them.

There are a lot of reasons I think that it would be good for 18 year olds. You've all been sitting behind a desk for 13 straight years. I think a change would do most kids good. I think I've heard that the majority, maybe way over a majority of Americans are obese. I've read that the military has said that if we had a major war and needed to reinstitute the draft, they would have trouble finding enough non-obese soldiers. So, I would put kids in a military type barracks, have a drill instructor get them up at 5:30 or 6 for at least a mile run and exercises before breakfast, and then off to work. I would pay them what enlisted military make. They would be required to make their beds, clean their barracks, wash and iron their clothes, just like in the military. Some kids have never been away from home or out from under their mothers coattails. This would give them a chance to mature under some supervision, unlike college, where many kids, particularly boys, party, party, sleep, sleep, and party some more their first semester or year, or two. I was always relatively mature, and not a partier, but even I could have used some growing up before I started college, and I think most kids can.

Sam, I'm not suggesting or even encouraging you to consider going into the military, but there are some advantages. How is your eyesight, 20/20? If so, you could become a pilot like Mac, learn to fly, and stay in the military like he did, or when you got out, become an airline pilot or fly a corporations jets. I've explained about being enlisted versus being an officer, and without a college degree, it's difficult, maybe impossible to be an officer. But there are the military academies; West Point (Susie Brock's, Tommy's age from Monroe, daughter just finished her first year there and loved it), the Navy Academy at Annapolis, Md, the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and the Coast Guard Academy, maybe in Connecticut. You have to be appointed by your Congressman to get into one of the military academies and you have to have good grades and probably good SAT scores. But I think there are a couple of other routes for those whose grades and scores might not be quite good enough. There are academy prep schools that you (when I say "you", I don't mean you "you", I mean "you" in the universal sense, or, I could use "one" instead of "you" - you dig?) can go to to improve your scores and prove your qualifications. And I think the academies reserve some slots for enlisted personnel who shine in their enlisted status and show good potential as officer material, such as having the necessary smarts, showing discipline, working hard, and probably, most important, exhibiting leadership skills.

Sam, again I'm not trying to push you toward the military. I dodged the Army. One year at Fork Union was enough military for your Dad. As he said when Mac and Grandma and I encouraged him to consider going to Annapolis (after all, from our view point it was a free, to us, great college education), he'd always heard that if you had any reservations about the rigors of military life, that you probably shouldn't go in, and that Fork Union had more than satisfied any military itch that he needed to scratch. And Sam, knowing you as well as I think I do, you probably don't have that itch, either. The discipline,

hard work, persistence, goal setting and resiliency, i.e., overcoming frustrations, necessary to not only becoming a military officer but to gaining satisfaction by achieving it, certainly isn't for everyone and maybe, even probably isn't for you. For you, it would be stepping into a completely different life than you're used to. But, if you wanted to take a chance at it, I know you could do it. The physical part of basic training and staying in shape would be a breeze for you. You wouldn't have to break a sweat. The academic part I'm sure you could handle, though you might have to break a sweat with it. But the discipline, the constant living in a strict rule based and authoritarian structure, would probably have you sweating profusely-would me, too. But you know what, it can give you something very few of your peers will have: the confidence in yourself and your abilities that very few paths other than the military can give you.

And I know you're too young to be thinking about retirement, but I still remember being 18 and can't believe how quickly I became 74. And though I don't have a military or federal government retirement income like your Great Grandfather Col McDonald Tweed had or your Great Uncle, Harry Caldwell or my almost life-long friend, Bill Carr have, fortunately, I made enough money practicing law that I could set aside retirement money in something called a 401K and we saved enough on top of that that Grandma and I can live very comfortably financially for the rest of our lives. And today, providing for retirement is getting harder and harder to do. Corporations that used to provide pensions for their employees are doing less and less of that, and besides, unlike in the past when some people would work their entire careers for one employer, now, that's the exception rather than the rule as most folks now work in 4-5 different jobs over their working years, and many won't have built up any retirement and will have to rely solely on Social Security, which, BTW, many Republicans want to privatize, meaning that each person would decide how the SS money taken out of his paycheck is invested, and, of course, all investments, some more than others, are like riding on a roller coaster, up and down, whereas with SS the way it is now and has been since it was started as part of Roosevelt's New Deal, the US government guarantees your SS will be there for your retirement, and though it's not a fortune, it's all some retirees have to live on.

OK, finally I'm going to stop what probably, if you've read this far, sounds like a lecture and advertisement for Uncle Sam. I don't mean it to be. A few closing thoughts:

- 1) Grandma and I love you more than you know and always will, regardless of anything that may happen to you or us
- 2) We couldn't have a better Grandson and our hearts are busting because of how grateful we are that you are ours; we're proud of you beyond these or any words
- 3) We hope and pray, maybe not as some more religious folks pray, but as sincerely, that your life will be filled with joy, love, and excitement in and grateful for just being who you are
- 4) Whatever you choose to do with your life, now and in the future, we're behind you all the way
- 5) Being good is much more important than being rich, successful or popular; being good will make you rich in what is truly valuable, successful in what counts, and popular with those who seek the good and not the bad or the whatever
- 6) The 10 Commandments, especially as expanded on by Jesus's Sermon on the Mount, are good guides for living, though I, and I'm just speaking for myself, not others, would substitute or,

maybe the better word is translate the word "God" as the word "Good", and, remember, the Gospel of John says that God is Love

- 7) Believe in yourself; trust yourself; be yourself
- 8) Listen to your Mom & Dad. Nobody loves and cares for you like them

Sam, again, congratulations on reaching full Dragonhood. I'm enclosing a little check. Use the money any way you want to, but I would encourage you to start an investment account with, if not all of it, at least 75% of it, maybe in a mutual fund. I don't much about them. Get your Dad to explore some options with you. I think Fidelity is truly a mutual fund, that is, owned solely by the investors, with low administrative costs. You might check it out. If you've told me, I've forgotten your female friend's name. Use a few bucks to take her out to eat-how about Hometown Pizza. YUM!

Pawpaw

PS: I was going to print this out and mail to you but I don't have a printer and the library isn't open so I'm emailing to your Dad as an attachment. But, the letter is for you and I'm going to ask your Dad to print it out for you and for him not to read without your permission, though as far as I'm concerned, it's fine with me for him and your Mom and anyone else you might want to share it with to read. I'm putting the check in the mail!