

Rebecca Bongiorno

March 28, 2020

Regarding Jarrett William Smith

To The Honorable Daniel D. Crabtree  
District Court Judge  
District of Kansas

Your Honour,

My name is Rebecca Bongiorno. I am blessed to be Jarrett William Smith's mother.

I beg of you to consider my child's meritorious qualities, which stack much higher than the blunder that has landed him in the position he is in now. We so much desire for him to come back home where he has family, love, support, work, educational opportunities with funding, and counseling help available to him. Most of all, he has a bright future as an upstanding citizen right here at home.

Jarrett originally wanted to be a police officer when he was age 3-4. He has always had a high regard for standing up for what is right. (Not just what HE THINKS is right, but what IS right.) He believes in order. He is highly intelligent and academically inclined, especially in historical dates and Biblical scripture. At age 7, he dreamed of being an US soldier or a marine.

At age five, he consistently prayed for a little sister (despite my doubts!). His prayers were answered & he loves her very deeply and has always been protective over her. He is against child & spousal abuse, kind-of 'old school', believing in preserving the traditional family and its wholesome ways. He also has a special love for pets and animals. He is truly a loving, caring and compassionate young man.

Jarrett had a rough start in life, growing up while enduring about eight cranial facial surgeries to reconstruct his birth defect, a bilateral cleft palate, lip, and nose, using parts of his hip bone and ear cartilage. He had a palatal key expander, 9 years of braces, Myringotomy ear tubes, & even speech therapy. He still has an under bite which can make one appear mad or pouty when they aren't.

Jarrett went on to win the School Spelling Bee as Top Speller 2007 of Palmetto Bays Elementary, at age 11, and went on to compete in the Regional Spelling Bee. He was also proud and excited to get to play on several youth baseball teams and the middle school basketball team during his school years.

He suffered through the years with school bullies belittling him because he looked 'different', even punching him, but he persevered without taking revenge on them. We taught him that it was okay to protect himself when there were no teachers around to help him, so he did. But he never incited violence on anyone. He never constructed devices to hurt anyone. No plot or plans to retaliate. He felt so alone, as depression set in from being rejected. Many times, after school, I'd find him alone in his room, sobbing as if he'd given up on life, so upset and in need of a friend that didn't care about the cleft. He just wanted people to accept him and to be able to fit in somewhere. His internal pain broke my heart.

Jarrett's dream of serving our country continued, so he joined the Civil Air Patrol for two years, age 12-14, receiving "Best Flight" award.

I'm proud to say my son has never involved himself in the usual trouble that most teenage boys or young men get into. He never engaged in peer pressured activities, pranks, or recklessness, had no DUIs, no smoking habits, no drugs, no theft or burglaries, none. No criminal record whatsoever. We even put a tracker on his phone without his knowledge, and although we secretly knew where he was, he was always truthful about his whereabouts when questioned. If he was going to be later getting home, he would respectfully call or text. His honesty is an awesome trait that he continues to carry. He definitely does not conform to today's "entitled" millennial lifestyle.

Jarrett was raised in a Christian home and has that 'root system' in him. By his daily living, even today, he depends on it to help him through these tough times. He is a sponge for the word of the Lord. He asks, begs, for prayer, because he truly believes it will help him.

He had planned to further his education at Horry Georgetown Tech after graduating high school. But first, he earned a certificate online at Penn Foster while working several low paying jobs in the area which offered no career prospects. He decided to join the US Army before continuing his education, following his long awaited dream, aspiring to go Airborne and possibly make a career out of it. Although he did not pass the physical requirements of Airborne, he dreamed of trying out for it again following his 3 year Infantry term. His desire to do his part in protecting his country from the Mideast crisis was very strong, and he was willing to risk his own life in the process.

According to reports I've heard and discussed with from the Army, Jarrett was a very dedicated soldier, earning the Army Achievement Medal as well as some other admirable pins, ribbons, and patches, and certificates, and without reports of any misbehavior, prior. He truly cares about our country and was honored to work hard at protecting and defending it.

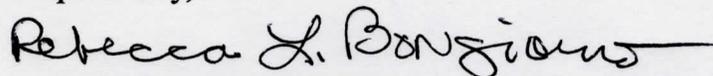
He has listened to our advice, as his parents, most all the time, and always remembers birthdays and Mothers Day/Fathers Day. I am the proud receiver of that phone call to Mom every few days that always ends with him saying "I love you."

I'd like to add that there are many adult people who loved Jarrett dearly while he was growing up. Some were sitters, teachers, family friends, church friends, employers, and family. I wish they were here to send you letters. Unfortunately, they have passed on: Laura Smith, Carolyn Fonner, Glenna Hartsock, Roscoe A. Bartlett, Steve Sr. and "Sparky" Johnson to name a few. Also, his Math Tutor, John Sautter, but I cannot locate him. If they were all here today, you would have many more letters of good standing in your hands.

People are becoming increasingly aware that the mainstream media's primary goal is to promote sensationalism. The media has made dis-credible, despicable, disrespectful attempts to paint quite the opposite portrayal of who my son really is, disregarding the fact that he voluntarily signed his name on the dotted line to serve and defend this country, knowing the risks involved. Yet, they continue to slander his name with over-exaggerated accusations for unproven things he is not even being charged for.

Jarrett is young, never been out into the world prior to the ARMY, or even abroad. I think he deserves a second chance at life. He's really a good kid and we are lucky and blessed to have him as our son. We love him so dearly and only want the best head start for him to succeed in life. We want to help him in every way possible. We sincerely hope and pray for favor towards Jarrett.

Respectfully,



Rebecca L. Bongiorno (Proud Mom)

