

The Next Phase

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What a beautiful sight! It is a privilege to stand before an audience as full of promise and potential as this one. As president of the BYU Alumni Association, it is my privilege to hereby confer on each of you graduates lifetime membership in the Brigham Young University Alumni Association. I offer you congratulations and welcome you into this great association of more than 415,000 alumni.

Our alumni association had an ad campaign prompting us to remember our time at BYU with the tagline “Remember when; remember why.” We all have a BYU story. Recently I asked some of you graduates why you chose to come here.

One of you said:

Both of my parents went to BYU. Hearing their stories and seeing the relationships they built here made me want to have that experience for myself.

Another graduate answered:

I chose BYU because of the concentration of goodness I found when I first visited the campus.

I can relate to these reasons. I fell in love with BYU at a young age, when my family lived in Heritage Halls for a couple of summers while my dad worked on his doctorate.

But some of you might have had very different reasons for attending BYU. My husband came here on an athletic scholarship. He knew very little about Mormons then. Imagine his surprise on the first fast Sunday when the Cannon Center did not open for breakfast.

Regardless of why we chose to attend this university, we all now have in common a BYU experience. Some of the fond memories that you graduates have shared with me include this one:

Professors knew my name, wanted to hear about my life, and cared about me as a person.

Another graduate shared the following:

Amy Fennegan, president of the BYU Alumni Association, gave this commencement address on August 17, 2017.

One of my professors asked our class to tour the Education in Zion exhibit. During my visit, I realized that I was part of something greater than just earning my bachelor's degree. I realized the sacrifice that was required to build such an elite institution, and I realized that I had a part to play in continuing the tradition of educating Zion, wherever I went forth to serve.

Finally, here is something recalled by another alum:

We would meet for church every Sunday in the Clyde Building foyer. I will never forget watching from the long windows as the snow fell when I received the prompting that I should serve a mission.

Our BYU stories have played a major role in shaping us. We all leave this place with memories and experiences that have shaped our future for good and serve as a springboard for the next phase of life.

The BYU Alumni Association is really all about this next phase. Our purpose is to help you stay connected to BYU. One way alumni

help that happen is by mentoring and supporting current students.

Carrie O'Dell is a recent graduate of BYU. Like you, she worked hard and sacrificed to make the most of her BYU education. Because of a family hardship, she needed a little financial help. She got that help in the form of a replenishment grant that was funded by BYU alumni who live close to her home in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She is now back in Tulsa, serving as a leader in a BYU Alumni chapter there. It is the same chapter that helped her when she was a student. Carrie is excited to be involved and is doing what she can to bless the students from Tulsa with the opportunity for a BYU education.

You will soon start to receive *BYU Magazine* in the mail. I hope you will read it. I hope you will join the BYU Alumni chapter where you live. Go to alumni.byu.edu to find your chapter, to learn about other inspiring alumni, and to share your own story.

Congratulations, graduates. Welcome to the family. Your fellow alumni are rooting for you. We love you and want all the best for you. As you go out into the world, remember *your* BYU story and stay connected for good.