

Our Own BYU Stories

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Graduates, you are 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 420,000 alumni.

Our alumni association has an ad campaign that prompts 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 attend BYU.

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. Here are some of the fond memories that you graduates have shared with me:

Amy Fennegan was president of the BYU Alumni Association when this commencement address was given on 11 August 2016.

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

Another graduate shared the following:

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 one of you:

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 impact 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. We want to know how your story continues. You can tell us your story at rise.byu.edu. A visit there will introduce you to inspiring alumni and give you the opportunity to share your own personal and professional experiences and successes. We want to see the realization of the potential for good contained in this audience.

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