LEGACY SPEECH

FOR

YORDANOS ASFAHA

Hello everyone, and thank you all for being here today. It is with love in our hearts and cherished remembrances that we are here to honor the memory of our wonderful son, brother, friend, student, and inspiration, Russom Michael. Russom was a special soul and an unforgettable and precious gift in our lives and although he was taken from us way, WAY too soon, he is with us in our hearts and minds all the time and forever. I am sure that each one of you has your own special story or moment or “legend” to share that would remind us about what a joy it was just sharing time with him, and whether it was while enjoying some sports, listening to music, or even just being in his presence and hanging out, each of our lives is richer for having known and loved him. We are here today to announce the Russom Michael Memorial Scholarship and I KNOW he is smiling down from heaven as I say that.

I think the Bible passage that meant the most to Russom was Micah 6:8 which tells us, “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and walk humbly with your God.” Russom was a young man of deep faith, compassion, consideration and caring. As you all know, he had many different kinds of friends and as his friend, there was nothing he would not do for you. Ever since Russom was a young boy, he had a tremendous heart and a calling to help others. I remember that each time when the commercial for World Vision would come on the television, they would show the number to call to donate support and he would repeatedly ask me to sponsor a child in need. While other children had a calling for playing, Russom also felt the need to give to others. We did sponsor a child and he loved having the chance to make a difference in the lives of others. He made a difference in so many ways. He had a true passion for his basketball team and their team spirit. He was a happy and loyal young man and loved his friends and family. He was a supportive and natural born cheerleader who lived by the words in the passage from Micah that I just shared. The way he lived his life and honored his friends was a beautiful example of all that is good in this world.

Russom is still with us in everything we do. We carry him in our hearts and by our side as we live our lives in ways he would appreciate. We honor his favorite sport of basketball, as we know he would want us to do that. We practice our faith and that brings him closer to us… we all know what God meant to him. And today we take one giant step in honoring the generosity, kindness, supportiveness and thoughtfulness of a young man who was wise beyond his young years by establishing the Russom Michael Memorial Scholarship. When Russom passed we knew we wanted to carry on his legacy and this scholarship will focus on supporting deserving children in need in two schools in East Africa and in Eritrea. This is our way of showing and sharing Christ’s love in the way he would have wanted to do so himself.

Bishop Desmond Tutu has said, “Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.” By establishing this scholarship in Russom’s memory, we reaffirm the life he lived and the ideas he loved and believed in. He was a brilliant light in all of our lives and thanks to his vision and passion, young children who really need the guidance of light and education will be able to learn and find their paths in life. (**Name the members of your family who have helped you establish the scholarship fund**) On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ we want to thank all of you for being here for us and for Russom. Thank you for giving us strength when we needed it most, and thank you for sharing this dawn of a new day in the life and legacy of Russom Michael. I know that he is smiling down on us and he is very proud to have his name represent a symbol of hope and progress to deserving students. Thank you all.