

Ever since my brother announced that he was going to go to Texas A&M, I knew that I was bound for Aggieland also. Regardless of whether I showed it or not, I looked up to him. Gerald 'Keith' Ebanks, Jr. ('89) was my brother. In 1994 he was killed in a car accident, leaving behind a fiancée and our family.

— Michael Ebanks

Brother **Confident** **Friend** **Industrious** **Boy Scout** **Pilot**
Pianist **Student** **Genuine** **Spontaneous** **Outdoorsman**
Comedian **Caring** **Son** **Happy** **Catholic** **Shepherd**

Michael was a hard worker. He saved aluminum cans as a young boy to attend U.S. Space Camp twice. In high school, he refereed soccer and roller hockey games, plus had a job at the airport, to earn money for his pilot's license. He was not afraid to work for what he wanted. He was a 1996 Experimental Aircraft Association Air Academy Cadet and returned to AirVenture reunions at Oshkosh for two years. He also participated in the Young Eagles program, which takes children on their first airplane flights. His piano music was another example of motivation. He was self-taught and determined to play works by Beethoven. He practiced until he was well-accomplished and later learned other classical composers as well.

Michael loved the human mind. He loved to tweak it, and even more he loved to tickle it. But he loved the human heart most; goodness knows he made his way into about a jillion of them. And he loved life beyond belief, as well as all that went with it. Meanwhile, we are left struggling and mourning. Let there be no doubt we wonder why our second son has been taken from us. But we believe God has a plan. We trust He knows what He is doing.

— Bulinda & Jerry Ebanks,
 Cynthia Ebanks Wade & Phil Wade

"In English class Michael would say such outlandish things as, 'Due to the nature of this poem, it is obvious that Ralph Waldo Emerson had webbed feet.' The teacher would question him so as to make him look ridiculous. Michael would always have something to say that made this obviously idiotic point seem valid. Michael was always prepared, always ready. So when that stack fell, I cannot believe that Michael fell, because Michael never fell. No, Michael flew—he flew right out of that pile of lumber and he has not come down yet. When I think about him, I am sad because I lost a friend, but a smile crosses my face and shivers run up my neck in knowing that he is doing the one thing he loved more than anything. From Michael's death I have learned to cherish every conversation, every event, and to not care what others think. Most of all, I have learned to really love life. That is what Michael did best. He cherished life, and in turn, it cherished him."

"It was Wednesday, November 17—in the MSC Flagroom. He had a sparkle in his eye when he talked about his music. I learned that he was a freshman aerospace engineering major, and I asked him if he planned on studying for his tests anymore that night. Again he smiled and told me that more than anything he would probably wind up at Bonfire to help with Stack. At that point, I could see the sparkle in his eye again."

"While I was at home playing Nintendo, he was out flying airplanes."

"Michael fully understood the secret to life: unlimited boundaries and boundaryless love. If we could all dream like he dreamed and love like he loved, our lives would be as fulfilling as his. I truly believe that he had mastered the secret of life at a very early age, and God was ready for him to move on to the next plateau."

"Mike always wore his blue Wal-Mart flip-flops to class."

"I remember how important your family was to you. I remember how you never changed to please others... It is sad to me that it took a tragedy to remind me how special it is to be connected to such a wonderful school with such wonderful people."

"...I wish I could remember every time you made my problems go away. I wish I had told you all this more frequently when you were here, but I know in my heart you already knew all this."

"Those who knew him well are experiencing the loss of a friend described as having a great sense of humor, a tender heart, a brilliant mind, and a life-long love affair with the Aggies."

Michael Stephen Ebanks

MICHAEL STEPHEN EBANKS
'03

