



# THE MOUNT LACROSSE

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Dear Robby,

I hope you are enjoying the start of summer and taking your special stick everywhere you go, even if it's a baseball game! I am humbled to share my story with you about my experience playing lacrosse and grateful to Coach Scott for the privilege to share it with you.

In the spring of 1979, I stood patiently waiting for my friends to come out of our middle school locker room to start our baseball practice, that's right, baseball! To my surprise they walked out carrying lacrosse sticks and looked at me confused. I quickly got on board, ran back into the locker room, crossed my name off the baseball roster and ran over to the lacrosse field to begin my journey in 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

My journey in this sport has been truly humbling and medicinal in miraculous ways. I have been blessed with championships at the high school, college, and coaching level, while also honored with humbling awards that are dedicated in memory of great people and lacrosse players such as Jack Turnbull.

However Robby, I had come to understand how truly special this great sport was to my survival when I received news on Sunday October 1, 2000 that my health had failed. Unfortunately my young friend, my body had a 15 centimeter mass growing in my chest cavity that did not belong there, I was dying.

My road to recovery started immediately at Johns Hopkins Weinberg Center in Baltimore, Maryland. To make a long story short, I battled for 8 tough years to get my body back to good health, I survived.

However, over those 8 years I had come to understand that lacrosse was not just a game to me, it was survival. I had played this great game with passion, but all along I was being lead by great leaders, coaches and team mates who were teaching me life lessons in discipline, respect, perseverance and most of all, faith in God. I was blessed with unbelievable support from family, friends, former team mates, and the lacrosse community altogether at the youth, high school, college, and professional level. Their love and support gave me great strength to physically and mentally battle my disease and survive.

In closing my note to you Robby, I would like to share some special advice with you. Success in life is not granted, it's earned by those who are not afraid to fail and are willing to find the answers to succeed no matter how many times they fail. Trust all who love you and put your faith in God, because with God in your life anything is possible.

Sincerely,

Tom Gravante  
Men's Lacrosse  
Mount St. Mary's University  
Hobart College '88 and 1988 Turnbull Award Recipient

