

Dear Robbie,

I write to you on behalf of my late teammate, Oliver “Corky” Shepard, who received the Turnbull Award in 1950 at Johns Hopkins University. Corky and I were senior co-captains in 1950, and we had the honor of placing the flags on the nets of the goals, a ceremony, I understand, with which you are familiar.

Corky was a very important player for our Hopkins team. Our coach, Howdy Myers, had always considered Billy Hooper the outstanding assist man on his St. Paul's teams (Billy left to go to UVA) and it meant so much to our Hopkins team that Corky grew into that role of being an outstanding feeder. He was a key to our many victories. Corky brought a contagious enthusiasm and very positive attitude to our team. He always did his best and set high standards for all of us. Corky and I were teammates at Mt. Washington after graduating from Hopkins, playing for our great coach, Kid Norris. It was certainly an honor for me to play with him and remains friends for sixty-some years!

In regard to your special stick and Jack and Doug Turnbull, I grew up in Mt. Washington (as did Corky—but he played at Poly, where Jack and Doug played), close to where they grew up. I never knew Jack Turnbull, but knew Doug and various other members of the family. The entire Turnbull family were inspiring and generous people and excellent examples by how they lived, providing lessons for all of us in how to live. They were respected and admired by everyone in our community.

Robbie, all of us who attended St. Paul's school back then experienced the spirit of our great game as it lurked in every room and hallway. We carried our stick with us wherever we went—even to bed. When we went to class, we lined our sticks up on the wall outside of the classroom. Coach Myers was the stimulus for this, and the entire faculty backed it up. I think it instilled a sense of pride in us and, much more importantly, served as a tangible and visible reminder that being able to play lacrosse every day was a privilege—not a right—and that we had better get the job done in school in order to get to play that day!

I understand that you are also connected to Captain Jim Lewis through your stick—wow! I was the head coach at West

Point for twelve years including the time when Jim was at Navy. The Army-Navy games were always memorable. Jimmy Lewis was the best player we ever came up against anywhere. Even after our "civil wars," their coach, Willis "Bilty" Bilderback and I were good friends and always got together in the summer at Ocean City, Maryland, and often went fishing together.

I am so glad to have connected with you on behalf of Corky—we were truly fortunate to play at Hopkins with so many great players—one of whom, Wilson Fewster, passed away just recently.

I recently read a book about the Navy SEALs that I would recommend—it's called *Lone Survivor* by Marcus Luttrell with Patrick Robinson...and eyewitness account of Operation Red Wings. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I did.

All the best, young man. If you are a fraction as fortunate in the game of lacrosse as Corky and I were—you are in for quite a treat!

Jim Adams

Johns Hopkins University 1950

[RHS Note: Robbie, Jim was one of my teammates at Hopkins! The US Lacrosse Men's Collegiate Officials Committee presents the James "Ace" Adams Sportsmanship Award to deserving teams every season. From a press release: "Initiated in 2006, the awards are presented annually to the college or university in each of the 11 officiating districts whose coaches, players, and fans exhibit the best sportsmanship throughout the season. The award exemplifies the tradition of sportsmanship in lacrosse displayed by Ace Adams, who amassed 284 collegiate victories during a coaching career that spanned across five decades and included stints at the United States Military Academy (Army), University of Pennsylvania, and University of Virginia. At the time of his retirement in 1992, Adams had the most wins of any active NCAA Division I coach. He was inducted into the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 1975."]

Mount St. Mary's University  
Head Lacrosse Coach

Dear Robbie,

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 Robbie, I have 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 eight tough years to get my body back to good health, I survived.

However, over those eight 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

led by great leaders, coaches and teammates, 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 teammates, 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 Robbie, 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 Coach, Mount St. Mary's University  
Hobart College 1988  
1988 Turnbull Award Recipient

Dear Robbie,

So I understand you found the great game of lacrosse. You may want to double-knot your shoelaces because this is going to be the ride of your life.

My name is Darren McGurn, and I grew up in Chester, New Jersey. I was lucky enough to be introduced to the game of lacrosse at the age of 5 (1979). I am the youngest of four boys and my oldest brother, Mike, made the great leap from baseball to lacrosse his sophomore year in high school. With Mike's fascination of the physicality, speed, and grace of lacrosse, all three of his younger brothers craved the chance to play. At this time, our town didn't have a youth lacrosse program. My father, Ron McGurn, decided to start the Chester Lacrosse program with the help of the Police Athletic Association. This program is still running today and has produced thousands of lacrosse addicts like you and I.

For me, lacrosse has always been about my family and friends. All four of my brothers played college lacrosse, Mike McGurn (Brown University), Bryan McGurn (University of Hartford), Kevin McGurn (Ohio Wesleyan University). I played at Ohio Wesleyan and was a four-time All-America selection. I won the Turnbull Award in 1998 as well as being named the Iroquois National Player of the Year. I was also fortunate enough to be inducted into the New Jersey Lacrosse Hall of Fame (2003) and Ohio Wesleyan Hall of Fame (2009). My brothers played such a key role in my success and what truly made lacrosse fun. We spent countless hours in our backyard shooting on our goal and making up games to challenge each other for bragging rights at the dinner table. Today, I know that each day we played, I was refining my game; at the time, we were just having fun. There is no replacement for putting time and effort in to the game.

Receiving the Turnbull Award was an amazing cap to my college career. I owe so much of my success to my teammates, coaches, and family who pushed me to achieve such great

heights. So many of my teammates are lifelong friends. My coaches are not only great coaches but also great friends. Lelan Rogers and John Zulberti (Turnbull Award Recipient '88 and '89) played a key role in my success. My brothers Mike and Bryan both coached me in high school. Mike was my head coach at Mendham High School and Bryan was an assistant coach my senior year. Mike Fuller coached me at Bridgton Academy in 1994. Coach Fuller was a great mentor, a great coach, and a great friend. Coach Fuller guided me through my recruiting process and introduced me to coaching summer lacrosse camps in Wilton, Connecticut. My college success would never have happened without Coach Fuller's mentoring. I was fortunate to have learned from some of the best coaches, but the lesson here is to listen to your coaches and learn from your teammates. Every practice and every game is an opportunity to improve.

If I can give you any words of wisdom, Robbie, it would be to treasure the game of lacrosse and the people you will meet along the way. Lacrosse will introduce you to amazing people who will impact you for a lifetime. The lessons learned will go well beyond the lacrosse field. These lessons will shape who you become. Now, as a part-time high school lacrosse coach in Atlanta, I see the importance of the little things in the game. I'm proud to see these guys graduate and go on to play in college and beyond.

Best of luck Robbie and enjoy the ride.

Cheers,

Darren McGurn

Ohio Wesleyan University  
Turnbull Award 1998

Dear Robbie,

I cannot express enough how excited I was meet you and Captain Lewis—that is some “magic” lacrosse stick you have, full of so much history!

Lacrosse has played such an enormous role in my life since I received my first wooden stick when I was 12.

I learned that lacrosse had two major components in my life, both being spiritual in nature. The first was the lesson of hard work that my first stick taught me. I had to use the wall at my school to learn to catch, throw, pick up ground balls and develop little tricks that later made my career so much more enjoyable. I used that wall to develop all the basic skills that served my own career so well. Having a speech impediment for many of my early years, I found that stick was my way of speaking without having to say a word.

The second lesson I learned was that great people would enter my life to guide me on the right trail for a healthy, wholesome, spiritual life. From Bill Wormuth, my West Genesee High School Varsity lacrosse coach, to Lloyd Elm, Junior Varsity coach at West Genesee, originally a Lafayette High School graduate. He eventually returned to the Onondaga Indian Reservation School to lead that program and their young warriors to many championships and life-changing programs to better the fate of the Onondaga Nation in Syracuse, New York.

Probably the most influential coach in my career was the great Johns Hopkins All-American attackman, Jerry Schmidt (Turnbull Award 1962). He was my coach and mentor at Hobart College and gave me the space to become the attackman I grew into. My heart will always go out to him and his silent but strong direction in my life on and off the field.

One more thing Robbie, I would like to recommend a book for you to learn the spiritual basis of the life that we so much cherish in this wonderful country. It is *America's Prophet*

by Bruce Feiler. This book will hopefully help explain the basis of the rules that guide us and where they originated.

To conclude Robbie, the stick and its contents, and the men that possessed it before you, were all great men that gave so much to their country, their families and the game they respected so much. I do hope you learn from it and soak in all the positive energy that it possesses and enjoy the trail it leads you to follow in the footsteps of Lt. Col. John I. "Jack" Turnbull. Congratulations!

Rick Gilbert

Hobart College, Class of 1974

Turnbull Award, 1974

Hobart College Hall of Fame Inductee, 1989

Inductee of the Greater Baltimore Chapter of the US Lacrosse

Hall of Fame, 1999



Dear Robbie,

Congratulations on earning the special stick and thank you for picking up this letter. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed putting pen to paper.

I love the sport of lacrosse for the same reasons most people do. It's beautiful to watch, combining great individual creativity with graceful teamwork. It has hard-hitting and ballet-like finesse. It has great people playing, coaching and supporting it. If you make it a meaningful part of your life, it can create a network of friends and business relationships that will be with you forever. But above all, I loved lacrosse because it was my way of showing my parents how much I loved them.

I am the middle child of five in a middle class family. The tuition at Hopkins in 1992 was far more than what my family could afford. When I found out I got accepted but wouldn't receive a scholarship I was disappointed but understood that I couldn't attend. I remember thinking, the other more-affordable schools are not Hopkins, but they would be fine and I'd make the best of it. I'll never forget when my father came to me and said, "You are going to Hopkins. We will make it work for one year but you have to go and blow them all away and earn a scholarship for the next three years."

My freshman year I tied the freshman record for goals and points earning All-American honors and a full athletic scholarship. I graduated the leading scorer and point producer in the school's storied history. I won the Enners Award and Turnbull Award for Best Player and Best Attacker, respectively.

I'm grateful for all of my teammates and coaches over the years. I played with (and for) some of the greats. Many of my goals were the result of a great play made by Brian Piccola or Dave Marr during my playing days at Hopkins, but I never would have been there had it not been for my Parents' great sacrifice. I loved to play for them.

I was told long ago when I first started playing, "If you love lacrosse, it will love you back ten times as much." I hope

you love it, Robbie and I hope you can find a special fulfillment in it like I did.

Thank you for reading my letter. I wish you a great lacrosse journey.

Warmest regards,

Terry Riordan

Johns Hopkins 1995  
Turnbull Award 1995

Hi Robbie,

My good friend and teammate Michael French has informed me that Coach Scott has invited all Turnbull Award recipients to write a short note to you in relation to your magic stick. Mike has asked me to write to you on behalf of our late teammate, Eamon McEneaney Cornell '77. What an honor to be asked to do so. I should begin, I think, by telling you a bit about Eamon and his career.

Eamon played at Sewanhaka High School in Floral Park, Long Island for the legendary coach Bill Ritch. Eamon then attended Cornell University and played for three years on the varsity (back then freshman were ineligible for varsity competition). He was a First-Team All-American and First-Team All-Ivy for his three varsity years. He won three Ivy League championships, two national championships, and was the MVP of the 1977 National Championship game. He received the Jack Turnbull Award as the Division I Attackman of the Year, the Lt. Raymond Enners Memorial Award as the Division I Player of the Year, played in the 1977 North-South Collegiate All-Star game, was enshrined in the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 1992, and received the *Tewaaraton Legends Award* in 2012. He also played football at Cornell. I could go on and on about a lot more accomplishments.

Eamon had two distinct parts to him; his athletic attributes and his keen intellect. He pursued both with full focus, commitment, and joy. While most people saw his athletic side in action, he never sought the limelight (that said, he was hard to miss with his long, flowing blonde hair, skinny legs, and his fiery demeanor). He cherished his time at Cornell, and his ability to be part of the literary scene there. He was always seeking wisdom and enlightenment.

Eamon was a truly fantastic player—one of the greatest ever to play. To get to play with him at Cornell was an experience none of us will forget. His passion and spirit for the game were unmatched. Cornell University and the entire game of lacrosse

remember Eamon fondly. I have been fortunate to stay connected to Cornell and many of my teammates and coaches all these years (my son played there, too!).

One unique feature that Eamon brought to the table, which is truly a gift, was his ability to make those around him better. His work ethic and ability to believe deeply in himself, was evident to all who were around him. The great UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden (of whom we were great admirers), commented that, "A player who makes a team great, is more valuable than a great player." Eamon was that kind of player.

What is far more important than all of the well-deserved accolades that Eamon accumulated, is the person and player he was. I can tell you from a teammate's perspective that Eamon represented everything that is good about the game and in athletics. He was totally dedicated to his game—he did the work necessary to be great—and his teams, but he was also a scholar, a poet, and a great husband and father and friend to all.

Eamon passed away in the attacks of September 11, 2001 at the World Trade Center in New York. Eamon was also in the World Trade Center in 1993 when a terrorist attack took place and he was the first to help people during that incident and likely saved dozens of lives with his courage, selflessness, and leadership.

The Cornell University Press published Eamon's poems under the title *A Bend in the Road*. Eamon's wife, Bonnie, is also a published author, writing *Messages: Signs, Visits, and Premonitions from Loved Ones Lost on 9/11*. I would commend either one or both of those books to you.

We should all be so lucky to have played with people like Eamon. He truly is one of the most—if not *the* most—amazing people I have known in my life. He played—and lived his life—with a genuine fire. There were never enough hours in the day for Eamon to impact people, work on all of the things he wanted to do, to help make things better for people, not to

mention being the husband and father that he was. The world lost a true hero and incredible person on 9/11 (as well as the other 3,000 people).

Coach Scott invited us to offer some advice about the game and life in general. I think Eamon's advice to you in regard to lacrosse would be to strive to be your very best, to enjoy every second of the experience, to find ways to make your teammates better, and to represent the game in a positive manner at all times.

I think the life advice Eamon would probably offer would be very similar—work hard, enjoy the journey, help people. But Eamon never "lectured" people to tell others how to live their lives. He believed all people should follow their hopes and dreams, and "be the best they can be," wherever their life journey took them. He did however have some thoughts on what helped him in his journey. We call them:

### "Eamon's Points of Life"

- 1 - Love is Light
- 2 - Family and Friends
- 3 - Honesty, Humility, and Curiosity
- 4 - Spirituality
- 5 - Poetry, Literature, and Music
- 6 - Laughter and Wit
- 7 - Hard Work, Toughness, and Tenacity
- 8 - Athletics and Physical Fitness
- 9 - Passion, Purpose, and Heart
- 10 - Leadership
- 11 - Kindness

I would hope that you could use the example the Eamon left to all of us, Robbie. Be good, strong, and courageous, and look for ways to make the world a better place. Eamon

certainly did. Mike and I—along with all of Eamon's teammates—wish you nothing but the best.

Eamon was truly a remarkable person and a "true brother." We miss him dearly.

All The Best,

John "Jake" O'Neill for my teammate

Eamon McEneaney

Cornell University 1977

Turnbull Award 1975

Enners Award 1977

Team USA 1978

*Tevaaraton Legends* Award 2012

Robbie,

I hope you realize how much I have enjoyed getting to know you and accompanying you on your journey over these last several months. Thank you for attending the Tewaaraton ceremony—it was a wonderful evening for me. It brought back so many great memories of my playing days and it was an honor to be there with those great college players.

The physical award is a 12-inch figure mounted on hexagon-black granite and polished wood. The hexagonal base symbolizes the six nations of the Iroquois Confederacy: the Mohawk, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, Seneca, and Tuscarora tribes. They say the stick is a replica of a pre-1845 Cayuga stick. To me, Robbie, the Lacrosse stick being held represents one that you have become very familiar with.

I told a reporter that a reason that our championship teams were so successful was that we were at peace with whom we were and in love with the game and how we played. That was many years ago. What I didn't say should be very obvious. I was there that evening, receiving the award because of the great game of Lacrosse. What success I enjoyed in Lacrosse and in life was built upon core values....values that helped me on that journey; love, honesty, respect, discipline, determination and generosity. The six sides of the foundation of the trophy may also represent these six values. By now you should realize that these values are not only the keys to success on the Lacrosse field. They are just as important to the challenges of daily life. I think that might sum it all up.

Good luck to you as you continue your journey. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help you.

Sincerely,

Jim

Jim Lewis

United States Naval Academy, Class of 1966

Turnbull Award 1964, 1965, 1966

National Lacrosse Hall of Fame 1981

*Tewaaraton Legends* Award 2014