

Good morning. On behalf of our son Benjamin, Laura and I are honored to accept the first Active Citizenship and Public Service Award from the Tufts Alumni Association. We wish Ben were here to accept this award. He would make you smile, excite you and make you proud to be joining the Fletcher alumni family.

In reading about this award, the words "Active Citizenship" stuck in my mind because active citizenship is a choice, it is one option out of many. Ben lived in no fewer than 5 communities in his brief adult life, and he chose to be an "active" citizen in all of them.

At Fletcher, Ben learned what it meant to be a citizen of the world, and joined the military which he viewed as a community uniquely suited to bring about positive changes in areas affected by man made and natural disasters.

In the Atlanta community, he worked for the Center for Disease Control and traveled to African refugee camps to assess the toll taken by hunger and disease, and to New Orleans where he worked with disaster victims after Hurricane Katrina.

In the Army Reserve community, he proudly served in the 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion where, on his first deployment he and his soldiers built wells and schools in Northern Uganda and helped to resettle refugees and children soldiers recovering from their 20 year war with the Lords Rebel Army. In Uganda, Ben was referred to as "Moses Ben" by those whose lives he touched.

On his second Army deployment, Ben went to Afghanistan where he gave his life trying to make our country safer while also trying to improve the lives of the Afghan people living under the oppression of the Taliban.

Finally, in precious times at home, he was our leader, son, brother and husband-to-be.

While engaged in all of these full time activities Ben formed his own NGO, Clearwater Initiative Inc. raising money from friends and family to pursue his passion of providing clean drinking water to the people of Northern Uganda. Preparing for combat in southern Afghanistan, Ben would send emails to his Fletcher classmates David Abraham and Elaina Loizou (Lwa-zoo), board members of Clearwater, suggesting ways to keep Clearwater active until his return. And we are proud to say that through the efforts of David and Elaina and Ben's fiancée Beth Segaloff and Ben's friends Alyssa Sperber and Jake Herrle, Clearwater is an active, thriving NGO with several water projects ready to launch.

Ben inspired everyone who knew him to be an "active citizen". I would like to end by sharing some words from a young man who never knew Ben but who was involved with water projects in impoverished communities and who read about Ben's accomplishments. [Quote] "I get the feeling that Ben wouldn't be satisfied with simply being an inspiration, that he wanted to affect change, but sometimes it's the row of dominoes that all start moving after the first one has fallen that make the difference. I know that all those who knew him, and people like me that just heard about him, have now been changed, and that he is the reason".

Our family hopes that the dominoes put in motion by Ben will continue to fall throughout the Fletcher community. Thank you for honoring our son.