

A temporary goodbye to St. Joe

Elation surged through my quivering palm as I looked at my phone and saw Washington was calling.

The message was simple and to-the-point: "On behalf of Sen. Thad Cochran, you've been appointed a U.S. Senate page."

My junior year of high school rushed before my eyes. September felt like year one, and I had a whole lifetime until I would leave for the District of Columbia, our nation's capital.

This is as best I can describe how I felt when I received the news that I would leave in late January to join thirty other high school juniors and serve as a U.S. Senate page. I'll live in a nice dorm, go to school in the early-morning hours, and work in the U.S. Senate after classes.

This call was a dream come true.

This semester will be the polar opposite of any other educational setup I've ever

experienced.

Of course, however, there is a downside.

I'll miss simple lunchtime meals, joking and talking with my friends, the scenic route along the lake when walking to Jazz Band, and even being told at least four times to take off my Navy blue sweater in homeroom.

St. Joe is an environment like none other, and I will miss it.

All the opportunities I've been given here – journalism, speech and debate, cross country, track, Youth Legislature and religious education – could not have been possible in another setting.

Some people may remember the disgruntled eighth grader that I was at St. Joe. Most people, however, now realize I changed dramatically in returning to St. Joe in the spring of my freshman year after a brief stint that fall in



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public school.

St. Joseph Catholic School, with its namesake the father of Jesus, has been like a parent to me – consistently guiding me in the right direction and yearning for my success.

St. Joe has made my dreams a reality. And for that, I am thankful.

I cannot wait to serve my

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country in the Senate. Yet, at the same time, my ultimate goal remains to return to St. Joe in the fall for my senior year; return to the excellent educational programs that have prepared me for a broad college curriculum; return to the beautiful campus I've called home for so long; return to the teachers, staff, administration, and students that have helped me and prodded me along when I was ready to accept defeat.

Because I've never been good with goodbyes, and because the literal use of farewell goes with the intention of never returning, I bid you adieu, St. Joe. (Until we meet again.)

Jack Hall served last year and last fall as sports editor of The Bear Facts while a junior at St. Joseph Catholic School. Hall is serving as a page in the U.S. Senate.