



Model Of Excellence (MOE) -on- Journey Of Empowerment(JOE)

Roger Isom Sr has completed the 1st Ever: MOE -on- JOE Story



First Generation College (FGC) Student Story

Elder John Wallace Isom Sr and Mother Mary Elizabeth (Washington) Isom

Education Completed: Both High School (Public School) Graduates

**Click Link Below Read about Our Family over 100 Years of Military Service
See Page 25 of the Recruiter Journal, May 2006 issue.**

<http://www.usarec.army.mil/hq/apa/download/RI/may06.pdf>

Parented 9 Children, Roger Isom Sr was the first to attend college.

Below is Roger Isom Sr First Generation College (FGC) Student Story

If He-Can! U-CAN!



Roger, John Jr, Ronnie, Dianne, Kenneth, Mary, John Sr, (Parents) Reginald, Margret, Jeffery, Clara Isom

College Education: Continuing the Legacy - Generation to Generation

By, Roger G. Isom Sr.

Submitted to John Isom Jr.

As one of nine siblings growing up on a farm in rural Monticello, Florida, I am forever grateful to my parents and my community for inspiring me to pursue a college education. I was a first generation college student and I graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy with a degree in Aerospace Engineering in 1988. I never would have made it through Annapolis without the continuous support and high expectations of my family (especially mom and dad). My dad was a carpenter and my mom was a maid. They did not attend college, but you never would have known that because they emphasized the importance and value of an education for my generation. They also specialized in “Character Development.” My dad had a quote that continues to guide me: “get an education and get what’s coming to you, don’t get an education and all you get is leftovers.” Well we ate plenty of leftovers growing up, and I didn’t want to have to settle for “leftovers” in the job market.

The priority (through words and actions) that my parents placed on education shaped my approach with my children. I decided that I would be proactively engaged in the preparation, planning, and execution of my children’s college education experience.

I am in the Navy. In 2009, I was separated from my wife and kids due to my duty assignment at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. My family remained in Kings Bay, GA that year. My son (Roger Jr.) was in 10th grade and Brittany was in 9th grade. That following summer, I made a decision that my family and I had to be in the same location for the duration of their high school years. My wife and I had to make a financial sacrifice, by renting our home in Georgia at a very low price and accepting the losses so that we could be together. Two years later, I know we made the right decision. Those years were critical for my son and daughter’s college preparation

(academically and socially). My wife, Lisa, and I were committed to this process with clear purpose and passion. We took a short term and long term view. We realized that our children would use our level of effort and involvement with their college preparation as the template for preparing their children (our grandchildren) twenty years or so in the future. In other words, two generations could be affected by our involvement (or lack thereof) in the college preparation process. Too much was at stake and we wanted the legacy of pursuing higher education to continue from generation to generation. That is how we could honor my parents' (and Lisa's parents) legacy.

Roger Jr. (our oldest child) was the first "test case." We started the summer before his junior year in high school. I read several books/articles on the latest lessons learned for attending college in the 21st century. I accepted the fact that some things about college had changed. I needed to get current information on what I could do as a parent to help my son prepare for college admission, and more importantly, prepare for successful college completion (meaning: good grades, having a well rounded college experience, minimum student debt, and finishing in four years). We visited several institutions including University of Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, and Pennsylvania; Drexel, Howard, McDaniel, Georgetown, and George Washington Universities, and of course the Naval Academy. I really enjoyed the trips because it allowed time for me and my son to bond and compare/contrast the universities. Six of seven universities accepted Roger Jr. In hindsight the college which didn't accept him, motivated him to excel at the college he finally selected. The rejection, although painful at first, increased his resiliency and should serve him well in the future. I also made him an offer he couldn't refuse. I agreed to pay him \$3 for every college scholarship application he submitted. Surprisingly, he actually applied for 27 scholarships. My wife and I laughed when he still asked for "his \$81" despite having received over \$5000 in scholarship awards, not to mention the huge academic scholarship he received from McDaniel University. Roger eventually chose McDaniel and completed his first semester in December. He has made a successful transition.

Now it's Brittany's turn and then we have an empty nest (hallelujah). By the way, the \$3 per scholarship application gesture is not working with her. I probably need to raise the incentive offer (smile). There are some lessons learned I'd like to share with parents, in particular first generation college parents. Most of all, began early (elementary or middle school years) planting the seed of college being a high priority option for your children. Everyone may not want to go to college, but every child should have access and the academic ability to pursue college as an option if desired (or required). Don't underestimate the influence you can have on shaping your child's outlook on college. Communicate "value" early and often through your action and deeds. Get them involved in college prep courses. Start visiting colleges early. Ask friends or co-workers for assistance. Call the college admissions office and be up front about your concerns/questions. Don't be intimidated about navigating the college application process. It can be challenging, but help is available. Don't let fear (or in my case - a little pride) overwhelm you such that you avoid asking for help. Visit colleges in your area. Make a day-trip and have fun doing it. Your excitement can be contagious. Go to sporting events at colleges. Attend college career fairs at your child's high school. Again, be actively involved - early and often. Many institutions are committed to helping first generation students (and parents) succeed at their institution (including the Ivy League schools). My parents should know. Their grandson Jason (finished Harvard Law School last May).

My parents have been a blessing to me and my career. They started their legacy of college completion with my generation. I am grateful for their encouragement, high expectations, and their no-nonsense approach to valuing education. Six siblings have completed college and I'm so proud my big brother, John Isom Jr., is setting the example by attending college now after 26 years of faithful service in the U.S. Army. For a while, he and his oldest son were attending Valdosta State University together. So the legacy of college attendance and excellence continues from one generation to the next - thanks to the vision, involvement, and prayers of our mom and dad. Dad's powerful words of encouragement still apply today "don't settle for leftovers..."

Thank you for this opportunity to reflect and share. I wish the best to every generation of college seekers and want to especially encourage the first generation college families. I am on the sidelines cheering for you with my brother's (John) passionate motto - **"You Can."**

Very Respectfully,

Roger G. Isom Sr.

PS:

Roger Isom Sr was ask to do the 1st ever

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Roger Isom Sr (Best Man In Our Wedding 22 Years ago) You have:

Hit a Grand Slam Thanks For Your

MOE -on- JOE