

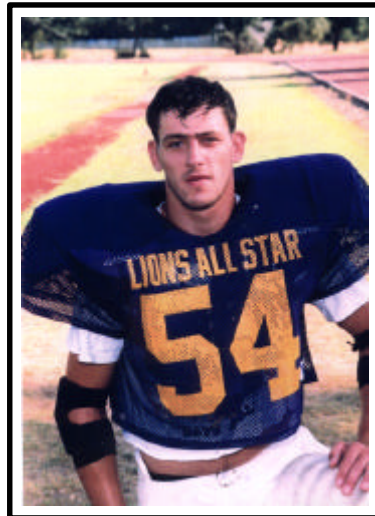
Chapter 1

Remembering Joshua



Joshua Edward Woody was born October 6, 1975 in San Jose, CA. He attended school through the seventh grade in Los Gatos. During 1989 Josh moved to Corning where he entered Maywood Junior High School. He graduated with the Maywood Class of 1990 and the Corning Union High School Class of 1994.

At CUHS Josh lettered in wrestling and football as well as academics. Josh was the varsity football team co-captain his senior year. Following graduation he played in the Lions All-Star North-South football game.



Wearing jersey number 88 Josh, “Woody”, earned a reputation for being an outstanding team player and leader. Josh was selected to the All-League team his junior and senior years. Many believe his best performance was during the Fall 1993 Corning vs. Foothill game, which earned him a position on the Lions All-Star North team.



Josh enlisted in the United States Air Force March 8, 1995, taking basic training at Lackland Air Force Base. On completion of basic and advanced individual training the Air Force assigned him to the 33rd Fighter Wing, 58th Fighter Squadron at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida.



Josh married Dawn Marie Riniker of Pryor, Oklahoma on February 21, 1996. They established their home in Fort Walton Beach, Florida near his duty station at Eglin.



Josh and his mother at the church

A Mother's Memories

I remember when he first was able to play outside, and Jonica took him everywhere with her. From swinging, and sliding to watching Grandpa milk Melissa, our cow.

I remember pulling him and Jonica in their wagon about two and one-half miles to the grocery store, while Tracy rode her tricycle.

I remember the time our dog, Windy grabbed him, because he was trying to spank her with a belt. She only left a couple of scratches.

I remember Tracy bringing books home from school, and I would read to them before bed at night.

I remember when Josh was about three, or four. He went with a friend to someone's home who had chickenpox. When asked if he had already had chickenpox, he thought a while, and then replied, "I don't know, but we got chickens."

I remember popping popcorn, and going over to Vasona Park, and feeding the ducks.

I remember him, and the rest of the kids riding Lightning, their pony up the hill behind the house. We lived on about two acres.

I remember him helping feed the chickens, pigs, and cows. He liked helping his Dad dress out the wild boar he shot while hunting.

Like most big brothers do sometimes, he would complain about Timmy following him everywhere. He didn't quite remember doing it to Jonica.

When we moved up on Mt. Uminum, we had a dirt and gravel down hill driveway. The kids decided to fold the stroller flat, and ride it down the driveway. Tim was the only one to get hurt. At just three and a half, he got his first black eye.

One afternoon we encountered a newborn fawn on the road, as we rounded a corner. It was trying to stand and its legs were all wobbly. Josh wanted to get out and help it off the road. The doe came back as we watched, and it wobbled away.

I remember him shooting a rattlesnake with an arrow, and penning it down with the first shot, even though he couldn't see it.

I remember the fun times he had at the pig parties, over at Rick and Joyce's.

I remember the kids trying to make a snowman in the snow. He had to shovel a path after it had melted, and then froze-over.

I remember the time the kids picked berries, and I made homemade jam, and biscuits for lunch.

They would run and hike through the trees, and shrubs with our beagle, Peppi.

One Saturday, Josh had stayed in town with one of his friends. I got a call from his friend saying Josh needed stitches. When I arrived I found out that he had broken the chain on his bicycle, and scraped his shoulder, and arm on the pavement. There wasn't any skin left to stitch.

On one occasion, I picked up some second-hand tennis rackets, and tried to teach Josh and Tim how to hit the ball over the net, into the right court. It was a lot of fun.

I remember when he helped me put brake shoes on my car, because they were worn out.

He was about twelve years old when his father left us. He helped me with the hot water heater, and other things around the homestead. He told me that he would buy me a house, because we were just renting.

He would call his father every week to check about the weekend. The boys went to their Dad's place on the weekend.

Josh got an award, a first place ribbon at the Santa Clara County Fair, for his windmill he made in metal-shop.

When George and I got married, and bought a house in the town of Corning, he came to visit on the weekends. Then he moved in with us so he could play sports in high school. He played football, and was on the wrestling team. He also started working for George on the weekends wiring houses. He bought an old '70 Ford pickup truck with his money, and took driving lessons so he could get his drivers license on his sixteenth birthday. After passing the test, he went right over to McDonald's and filled out and application for work.

I remember how, when working with George, he just grabbed hold of the rafters and pulled himself up to string wire across the top. He was a very diligent worker.

It looked so easy, when he climbed the tree in our backyard to pull down the ivy that was trying to choke it.

I remember his shyness, when he first started going to school dances. The first time he brought a girl to the house for us to meet. When he asked if he could cut a rose off my bush when he and Carrie were dating.

I remember how at his wedding to Dawn, he exclaimed I have two sets of parents to the photographer.

Walking through the antique shops with him and Dawn the next day.

But most of all I remember how much I love and miss you Josh.

Corning Observer - July 15, 1996

Family, friends remember Josh

By **TODD SHURTLEFF**
Staff Writer

It was just the way Joshua Woody would've liked his friends to celebrate his life.

Woody, who is best remembered by his friends for his "great smile" and was known for his "monkey faces" was honored by more than 300 people who Joined his family members in a memorial service held on Saturday night inside the Corning Union High School gymnasium.



The Beale AFB Color Guard prepares the "Retirement of Colors" at the end of Saturday night's memorial service for Joshua Woody.

Woody, a U.S. Airman 1st Class, was killed, by a terrorist truck bomb blast June 25 while stationed at a U.S. military base in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

A Beale AFB Color Guard was in attendance for the service and was joined by Captain Charles Knauer, who spoke during the ceremonies and also read a poem.

Woody had moved along with his family from San Jose to Corning in 1989. He was a member of the class of 1994 at Corning Union High School, was a co-captain and standout on the football team and competed on the wrestling squad.

The memorial service began with a welcome to the crowd by one of Woody's closest friends here in Corning, Ben Dennis.

"Josh was my best friend and we had a lot of fun together," Dennis told the gathering. "He would do anything for anybody and always had a smile on his face."

After an invocation by Knauer, a video of the Eglin AFB memorial service held two weeks ago in Florida was played for the gathering and included remarks from President Clinton and a song, "On Eagles Wings," which was performed by Kathryn Rasu.

Following the video, Woody's former boss at McDonalds, Tom Ramos, spoke and was one of five speakers who remembered their contact with Josh. Among those who spoke were Jim Bingham, Don Minto and Bob Hall, all teachers and coaches at Corning High School along with Mark Pettengill, a teacher at Foothill High School in Redding.

Hall announced at the end of his speaking that there is a memorial fund set up and that the first Corning home football game for the 1996 season on September 6 will be dedicated to Josh.

Hall said that the money raised from the fund would go toward a small memorial of Josh that will be displayed on the campus, and any extra money from the fund would go toward a new sound system for the foot ball stadium.

Those wishing to make a donation to the Joshua Woody Memorial Fund can do so through Corning Union High School.



Some members of Corning Boy Scout Troop #5 who attended the service look at a memorial to Joshua Woody that was set up on a table.

Friends, family pay respects to airman killed in Mideast

The former Corning resident died at a U.S. military complex in Saudi Arabia on June 25 when a terrorist truck bomb was detonated.

By Damon Arthur
R-S civic affairs reporter



Eric Thibodeau hugs Joshua Woody's mother, Bernadine Beekman, at Saturday's service.



Former teammates remember Joshua Woody Saturday

CORNING — Tom Ramos shared Joshua Edward Woody's memory with a little roll of nylon electrical tape.

Eric Thibodeau had a stained football jersey to recall his former classmate. And about 400 other friends and family who attended a memorial service Saturday for the slain soldier had the youth's spirit in their hearts.

"Whenever a small town rallies in the face of tragedy and becomes better for it, I'll think of Josh," said his former teacher at Corning High School, Jim Bingham.

Woody, 20, was killed June 25 along with 18 other American airmen when a terrorist's truck bomb exploded at a military complex in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. He was buried July 5 at Barrancas National Cemetery on the grounds of Pensacola Naval Air Station in Florida.

But Corning residents held a memorial service Saturday night at the high school gym in his honor.

“It is men and women like Joshua who have made freedom possible in this country,” U.S. Air Force Capt. Charles Knauer said in his honor.

During the ceremony, Thibodeau and about a dozen other football players from Airman 1st Class Woody’s Corning High School class of 1994 presented Woody’s number 88 jersey to coach Bob Hall.

Thibodeau said the team members all signed the white, red and black jersey, which is being retired. Another jersey was also presented to Woody’s parents, mother and stepfather, Bernadine and George Beekman of Corning and father and stepmother, John and Carol Woody of Rancho Tehama.

Woody’s wife, Dawn Riniker Woody, of Pryor, Okla., also attended the memorial service. The two had been married only since February.

The couple had lived in Fort Walton Beach, Fla., where Woody was stationed as a weapons load specialist with the 58th Fighter Squadron at Eglin Air Force Base. Knauer said prior to the service that Woody was posthumously awarded the Meritorious Service Award. He was also awarded the Purple Heart, which is presented to soldiers wounded or killed, in the line of duty, Knauer said.

Foothill High School football coach Mark Pettengill said the Aug 3 high school Lions All-Star Football Game will be dedicated this year to Woody. Pettengill coached Woody in the 1994 all-star game.

Hall said a memorial fund has been set up at the high school and the proceeds will go toward upgrading the public address system at Cardinal Stadium in Corning. And the football team’s first home game will be dedicated to Woody, Hall said. Pettengill said he remembered Woody’s performance against Foothill during a 1993 match up between the two teams.

“That’s when we first got a taste of Josh. He was a really good kid,” Pettengill said. Bingham, his former teacher, said Woody was a man of deeds. “Josh was economical with his words,” Bingham said. “He was like a hero in a ‘50s western movie. He let his actions speak.”

Ramos, his boss at the McDonald’s restaurant in Corning; said Woody could do wonders with a roll of electrical tape and a screwdriver. “With those tools Josh could fix anything,” Ramos said.

A poem from his memorial service in Corning:

His Spirit Lives On

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there I do not sleep
I am a thousand winds that blow
I am the diamond glints on snow
I am the sunlight on ripen grain
I am the gentle autumn rain
When you awaken in the mornings hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circle flight
I am the soft star that shines at night
Do not stand at my grave and cry
I am not there
I did not die

A poem from his memorial panel at Eglin AFB:

Success

To laugh often and much;
To win the respect of intelligent people
and the affection of children:
To earn the appreciation
of honest critics
and endure the betrayal
of false friends:
To appreciate beauty,
to find the best in others;
To leave the world a bit better,
whether by a healthy child,
a garden patch
or a redeemed social condition;
To know even one life
has breathed easier
because you have lived.
That is to have succeeded.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

