

## FUND FINANCE FRIDAY

**'Alzheimer's Sucks'**

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Last Saturday, Wes Misson was faced with the incredibly sad task of memorializing his mom Judith, who passed away after more than a decade-long battle with Alzheimer's. As is often the case, it was a moment I was proud to get to be one of Wes' friends. He did a wonderful job paying tribute to an amazing woman. Judith was an incredible wife, mother and friend to many. You could feel her love and commitment to family, America, hard work and perseverance in the room.

Listening to the service in a small chapel of the small Ohio town where Wes grew up, you knew immediately where he got his grit: his mom. Many wonderful stories of her effort to instill passion and pride in her children were told, but one stood out for me. When Wes was young, his older brother capped off an excellent high school academic career by being named Salutatorian of his class. Judith was gushing over her son's achievement one evening, and Wes asked, "What's a Salutatorian?" When she explained, Wes was dumbfounded: "Mom, why are you making such a big deal about him coming in second?" She tried to explain it to him, but Wes was underwhelmed and having none of accepting second as an accomplishment. So she turned on him: "If you think you are so incredibly smart, why don't you shut your mouth and go out and try to finish first?" So he did. And a few years later, Wes was named Valedictorian of his high school class (now living in Virginia Beach and swimming in a much bigger pond as well).

COVID has had so many painful human elements for all of us. Because Judith needed institutionalized care for her Alzheimer's, the COVID restrictions prevented Wes from being able to visit his mom in her final days to say goodbye. He had to do it over FaceTime. Heartbreaking stuff. I wish he could have seen her one more time. But layering over that, Alzheimer's robbed her of the opportunity to see and appreciate many of Wes' professional accomplishments. It's a tragedy that plays out over time, each day more painful than the prior. Wes said simply: "Alzheimer's sucks." I am positive, though, that while she may not have been able to say it, she is exceedingly proud of him. I certainly am.

If you would like to make a donation to the Alzheimer's Association, of which Wes serves as a member of the board of the Western Carolina Chapter, click [here](#).