

Through the years, harvest has played a very important role in my life. Our family's business started out in 1983 when my uncle bought a combine and a truck and followed the wheat harvest. In 1985, my dad joined my uncle in the harvest operations. I was born in September of 1988, and since that time harvesting is the only way of life I have known in the summertime. In 1990, I completed my first harvest season at the age of 20 months, often spending many hours strapped in a car seat next to my dad in the combine. I began doing some actual combine driving at the age of 10. The 30 ft. platform header seemed almost more than I could handle at times, but as time went on I grew to love the challenge of it. By the age of 12, my brother and I completely replaced one hired man, sharing the responsibility of a JD 9650STS combine. Driving the equipment became somewhat of an addiction...I couldn't get enough of it. When I was 13 years old, I was finally the sole operator of a JD 8420 and a 1040 Kinze grain cart. Operating the tractor and grain cart was a little different than driving the combine, but I soon grew to like it just as well.

I consider going on harvest a privilege. One of those privileges is being able to meet many people and having the opportunity to develop many lasting friendships. We have cut for many of our customers/farmers for years, staying in contact with many of them and their families throughout the entire year, and even having some social outings with them as well. It's also been a privilege to get to know and work alongside hired men who are from a wide range of backgrounds and who have a variety of talents. Because of their friendships, I've been exposed to a wide range of cultures. Many of them are from various areas of the U.S. as well as from such countries as Australia, England, Ireland and Scotland. Hearing about their way of life and agricultural practices is very interesting. Typically, they have a great sense of humor, making them fun to work with. Another opportunity I have had is the privilege to see the landscapes in the United States as we travel from state to state. From the terraces of Oklahoma to the mountains of Montana, I get to see it all. Sometimes, if it rains, we visit such places as Mount Rushmore, the Black Hills, and Glacier National Park. The states that I have harvested in include: Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, South Dakota, Montana, and North Dakota.

Harvest has taught me plenty of lifelong principles. One of them is working with other people and getting along with them. Even if someone has a personality that I don't really care for, I still need to get along with them and work with them just as I do everyone else. This not only allows things to work smoothly, but also sets an example for the others on the crew. Only when we work as a team are we able to reach our highest level of productivity. I've also learned that I can work 18 hours a day, and if the conditions are right, were going to move forward as efficiently as possible. We will do what the weather allows us to do in a day, and we need to accept the weather conditions, whether good or bad. Harvest reminds me every day that God is in control and whatever happens is His will, and I need to accept that. The responsibility that harvest has taught me is also one that I will carry through life. Servicing the equipment is an important responsibility and if it's not done regularly and correctly it will lead to problems resulting in costly down time. The equipment needs serviced, taken care of, and operated as if it were my own.

The best part of harvest is that I get to spend a lot of time with my dad and my uncle in the field. Our operation is a family affair and I feel it's important for a family to be able to work and "play" together. I truly love harvest and can't imagine the thought of life without it. I'm glad the Lord has given me the opportunity to experience it. I've seen firsthand the many challenges that are associated with a career in agriculture. However, I also feel that the rewards to be gained from such a career are even greater. My hope is that agriculture can be a part of my life-long career. To best prepare me for the challenges it holds, I plan to attend college at Kansas State University, and major in Ag Technology Management, which prepares students to organize and manage technology based businesses and operations in relation to agriculture. Ultimately my hope is that agriculture in general will have a strong future, and that the upcoming generation will be a part of the success which the past generation has sought to build. Thank you for your consideration in this scholarship endeavor.