

The custom harvest run to me is not just time out of the year spent on the road, moving from place to place working for farmers and helping them with the harvesting of their crops. Harvest is truly a way of life. Custom harvesters have a different mentality and way of approaching their daily endeavors that set them apart from the rest of the population. Like the name of the recently remade and released movie, custom harvesters possess the quality of *True Grit*. They must possess this in order to make it through long tedious days.

Our business is not just a start-up harvesting crew with little experience. In actuality, it spans clear back over half a century to when my grandfather and his brother ran the business. When the time came, they passed it onto my father, who is in charge now. Having a business last that long without breaking up or dissolving means that business must be doing something right. That something for us is working hard, fulfilling all responsibilities and taking care of our customers. This is not always easy. However, it is very rewarding. When we go on our summer harvest run, we return to the same farmers year after year. My dad has worked for one farmer for 24 years. During the past five years, the years I have been going on harvest full-time, no farmer has asked us not to return next year. This is something we pride ourselves on, and something I will take into life with me.

I have truly grown up on harvest in a handful of different states across the central part of the country. My birthday, which falls on June 29th, has been celebrated in Western Kansas in a wheat field practically every year I've been around. When I was old enough, I started helping with the servicing and window washing of the combines. My first field job was running the tractor and grain cart, which I did for two years. After my freshman year of high school, I started running a combine full-time and have ever since. Because I've spent so much time on harvest, I've been able to learn a lot from it. I've learned how to be away from home for long periods of time, and how to deal with working many long days in a row. It has taught me how to concentrate even when I'm tired, and it has taught me to focus on quality of work while still being very efficient. However, the most important thing I think I have learned from harvest is how to be there for my family. We are a family run crew, with everyone chipping in to help however they can. Every one of us does whatever is asked so the business can run smoothly.

My harvest experience has led me to an interest in a career in agriculture. If I receive this scholarship, it will greatly assist me with my future plans of studying at Kansas State University. I am enrolled in the College of Agriculture and plan to focus on the consulting and production option in the field of Agronomy.