

March 18, 2019

Dear Wheeling Jesuit University,

Snow. That is how I first met you. I can remember so vividly the 6-hour drive my parents took me on to visit your campus for the very first time. Looking back, I believe your beauty was even more evident during the falling flurries as we walked around your campus that day. You had some competition...specifically 25 other schools vying for my deposit. But it was within the first few minutes of arriving that I knew, that we knew, you were the school for me.

And who would ever think you would be in this situation right now?! It boggles my mind that you may announce in just 2 short weeks that you are closing your doors...forever. Financial exigency?? You taught me a lot during my 4 years of undergraduate studies but that is a term that never came up in any of my classes. And as you know, if Father O'Brien does not teach you something in class or include it in one of his sermons, it can't be that important...right?

Very often, sometimes multiple times in the same day, I used to brag about you while giving campus tours to perspective students and their families. I wanted them to realize how special of a school you really were and always tried to hone in on how much I valued you as an institution. And they saw that! They believed it! They were experiencing exactly what I experienced when I first met you. They began to fall in love with you.

Even on my cloudiest days or when life's rain cloud seemed to be following me around, a walk around your beautiful pathways or along the creek bed always made me feel better. Wheeling may officially be called *The Friendly City*, but I think it's safe to say that Wheeling Jesuit is unofficially called *The Friendly Campus* by everyone who experiences its magic. You became my very dear friend on that initial snowy campus tour, and now it is hard to believe that my friend is leaving...and I might not ever see you again.

Whether I learned it in class or out of class, you taught me many things. And now, 6 years after graduating, I appreciate and recognize even more of the lessons you instilled in me. Saint Oscar Romero said that, "There are many things that can only be seen through eyes that have cried." And right now, many people are crying for you and crying with you. And those same people are fully realizing how much you mean to them.

Just because mistakes have been made, please do not forget that droves of people are fighting for you. Service to one another is one of the hallmarks of WJU; your motto always reminds me to *Let My Light Shine*. You have had so much history since your birth in 1954 and I truly believe you have not yet lived your best years. I am writing this letter to you with the dream that future generations can also get that *Wheeling Feeling*.

Upon opening a dictionary, one would see that love is defined as an intense feeling of deep affection. Wheeling Jesuit University, you are LOVED. Loved by me. Loved by my family. Loved by my classmates. Loved by West Virginia. Loved by the world. You know what? After that initial campus visit, that one that when it was snowing, I was given a t-shirt. And it included one of your former slogans on it: *Use Your You*. I want to let you know that I want to continue to use my you to help you. Even though at this point in my life I cannot monetarily assist you, I am pledging my time and energies to you. I sing. I host. I entertain. I emcee. I make people smile. Can you utilize any of my talents to try to stay open? I think in these dark days, you need to realize how many people are in your corner. Your flame needs to keep on burning. You need to see just how many people want to see you succeed. You are something special. And I am proud to be your friend.

My heart will always be open to you,

Christopher James Bohinski '13