

A. CRAVEN

It's not what America can do for me; It's what I can do for America

Carl Sandburg wrote, "Nothing happens unless first a dream." That's how my vision begins - thinking about what I can do today as a young leader that will have a positive impact on others 10 or 20 years from now. That vision challenges me to do something of value now for the future. I sincerely believe the ability is within each and every one of us, it is just a matter of what we choose to do with that ability that makes some of us leaders. As our society advances, individuals of this generation will soon choose to make profound differences in our way of life. As a young man involved in various leadership roles and community programs, I will be one of those individuals because I am committed to the development of youth in my community. My future aspirations will always be grounded in the fundamentals of ethical service and strong moral character.

I have been fortunate to experience personal growth while testing the limits of my courage by skydiving from an aircraft at 13,000 feet, surviving in the back country of New Mexico for 10 days while hiking 80+ miles across mountainous terrain, piloting a Cessna "Skylane", and rafting in Class 5 rapids on the New River. Culturally, I have attended a National Boy Scout Jamboree where 32,000 youth from 26 nations lived in harmony together for over a week—in extreme heat, hosted a foreign exchange student from Germany in our home for a year, and even celebrated New Year's Eve in Times Square with thousands of my closest friends. These activities have contributed immeasurably to the self-discovery of my very own strengths and weaknesses and have also been a factor in my personal development as a mature and disciplined leader.

These experiences have revealed to me the passion I have for living and learning, and through effective time management skills I have come to embrace every opportunity to study, to serve others, and to no longer simply go through the motions of life, I thrive on the challenges of an extremely busy schedule involving school, church, sports, scouting, and community service. I give great attention to everything I set out to accomplish, and I constantly try to challenge myself to do even more. I know that the passion, curiosity, and confidence instilled in me through these experiences will never abandon me.

I must confess that I haven't spent my entire 18 years of life trying to be the student that everyone is looking for, I've spent it trying to be the most well-rounded person I can possibly be. I pray, in the end, that this is what will justly set me apart from everyone else.