

## ROBERT'S GRADUATION 1964

by

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Last evening was your graduation. I've watched other children finish high school but never did I imagine how deeply their mothers felt. On what was such a momentous occasion, I sat with a lump in my throat.

The whole class seemed so young, over two hundred of you, but my eyes and heart searched out just one - you - in your rented white jacket, looking so innocent and so much like the little boy you had been, such a short time ago.

Your friend Howard Palmer's date, Beverly Hamilton in pink and your date, Elizabeth Harker in blue, both looked SO beautiful in their long dresses, so recently back in style.

"What did the future hold for all of you?" This thought coursed through my mind. There were brave talks about freedom and courage. Someone quoted former United States Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson, as having said, "Golden silence turns to yellow when freedom is at stake." I wondered how other mothers must have felt when their sons graduated back in the late 1930's and early 1940's. Would you be strong enough even for that? I hate to even think the word!

How hard you 'went' at basketball, and the other games you loved to play so much, these last few years. I loved to see you develop your muscles, but I wondered what other lessons life was teaching you. After awhile, would you be able to give up momentary pleasures for something greater and more lasting?

Will you miss the heavy lunch I've handed you every morning; and also miss the youngest of our five who stood on tip-toes, all puckered up for your kiss, before you left for school?

One of your former classmates (Vincent Balderson) graduated very early this school term, cancer's untimely victim. His parents were also at the graduation. They must have seen "him" in everyone of the others; and their hearts must have ached each time a name was called, with the memory of the hopes and ambitions they held for their spirited son. Last year at this time he was dashing around on his scooter, and Oh, you cried so hard the tears ran through your fingers when you heard he wouldn't live. Does your age group think more seriously than we parents give you credit for?

In one week it will be your eighteenth birthday. It was a morning much like this that the Doctor said, "You have a fine big boy." And were you ever big! In one week you weighed ten pounds and we were so proud to pick you out of the other sixty babies in the nursery and say, "That is our son!"

You were quite bruised and battered in getting here. You and I both had blood transfusions, but it was worth it many times over. When your father studied so much, you were such a comfort to me in helping with the other children. I even told many of my troubles to "little you" and we understood each other so well.

Your father went back to school after three and a half years in the service (WW II). The years have not been easy. It had been four children and many years of teaching, earning his own way, before he got his Bachelor's Degree, so don't expect too much too soon, my son. You must creep, then crawl, then walk, then run; but never too far from your mother's love.