

February 2021

Dear William:

If you're reading this, you've made it - you should be about 18 and just graduated.

Congratulations!

I know you've faced challenges that - from where you were at the time - looked impossible to overcome, but with the love and support of your whole family you're now on to the next phase of your life.

I'm writing this to you in the days leading up to and just after your birth - February 12, 2021 was one of the proudest days of my life. As that date approached, every time the phone rang Grandpa John's excitement grew hoping that maybe it's a call to announce Baby Watson's arrival. We are all filled with hopes and dreams for you...and as the years pass we will never stop believing in you - you may remember being told by Grandpa John to believe in yourself.

We each tried to be supportive of your goals and aspirations throughout your life; you were as much of an inspiration to me as I tried to be for you. I made a commitment to myself to always be your cheerleader - and I hope I haven't disappointed you. I will always back you up when you need support, but I'm committed to challenge you to always see a bigger picture, hear the words that aren't spoken and give where there needs giving.

I was so overwhelmed with emotion when your mom told me she was pregnant with "Baby Watson" - it hardly felt real. When you were in your mom's belly and I felt you move, I was awash by this feeling that you knew more than me - that you were intuitive and wise well beyond expectations.

That feeling brought me back to when I was pregnant with your father. Pregnant at just 14, I was still a child myself, but I made the very adult decision to have a loving family raise and care for your father in a way that I was simply unequipped to do at the time. That day was December 23, 1990, and Grandma Sarah and Grandpa Terry always made sure I was connected with your dad... and as he grew up and matured, so did I.

Albert has always been so close to my heart. When he graduated high school - right about the same age you are now - we began to know each other as adults and we became very close, very fast.

Our family is so special, and while it may differ from others, the love that unites us is so strong. And that's what matters most.

With your dad, I always wanted to be the "best mom" I could be for him under the circumstances; just as I want to be the best partner for Grandpa John... and now I want to always be the best version of grandma that Baby Watson can have in his life.

When I first saw your newborn face, it was like I was looking at your father's face for the first time. But looking into your eyes in a way that only a new grandmother could, I saw that your eyes were deep, insightful. It was as if I saw a flash of your entire future - then it vanished literally in the blink of an eye - erased for us to discover together in the years to come.

And memorable years these have been.

It's been just a few days since you were born, but I barely have the words to express the joy and excitement I have in being a part of your life - and I thank you for the years that this has been possible.

As you grow out of childhood and into an adult, I want to reaffirm with you the importance of always loving yourself, being proud of who you are and knowing what you mean to others. Growing up, I sometimes felt I was living an undeserved life, but even when things got hard - *I mean real hard* - I never stopped treating myself how I'd want my best friend to treat me.

Your family has always been there to love, guide and support you - that will never change - but as you continue to grow and mature you'll be responsible for your own decisions. I hope that your parents and extended family have given you the strength, values and beliefs to live each day with honour and integrity... even when it's hard. I'm always careful to remember that all the choices I make affect someone else - please never forget that.

Your life impacts others and every decision you make will take you along a different path in life - be as wise and confident in those choices.

Dearest William, I cannot tell you how - for the first time in my life - my heart feels complete. I don't regret any of the decisions I've made in my life, but the collection of minutes and moments combine to give us all experiences to build upon and memories to cherish - they all have helped shape you into the person you are today.

We are so proud of that person!

Looking to tomorrow, and all the tomorrows that follow, always remember that - and I'm going to say it again as I'm sure you've heard Grandpa John say more than once - **believe in yourself.**

Grandma Amanda

*I'll love you forever, I'll like you for always,  
and as long as I'm living, my first grandson you'll be.*