



Ryan Lafferty

April 13, 2026

Ryan Lafferty, beloved son, brother, and friend, passed away April 13 at age 23.

Ryan was every good thing in this world —unfailingly kind, deeply humble, and eternally generous with his time. He had an extraordinary mind but an even bigger heart.

Ryan was a student at Dartmouth College, finishing his degree in Government and Math. He was the president of the Dartmouth Parliamentary Debate team and actively involved in the international debate community, including previously coaching Team Mexico.

When his debate travels took him to Vietnam, Panama, Bulgaria, Mexico, Serbia, the Czech Republic, Canada, or during his time studying in London with his Dartmouth cohort, he was always quick to report back on the coffee scene in each country. Outside of Vietnam, the news was usually not good. No matter how brief or long the tenure of these trips, he returned with fascinating insights. Why are Panama's uber or taxi services so expensive compared to the cost of living there? Ryan would notice an issue and figure it out.

Whether it was complex geopolitical topics or Marshawn Lynch not being

handed the ball leading to Ryan's beloved Seahawks losing the Superbowl, he was ready with a deep dive of facts on any topic imaginable.

If you knew him, you felt lucky. The number of people who didn't know him personally but still followed and cheered him from afar is breathtaking. He was an actual treasure. You didn't need to be close to him to have that light reflected back at you.

His mind worked quickly, perhaps only outpaced by his walking speed, which was hard to keep up with. He had an insatiable appetite for learning and figuring out ways to share that knowledge. In the debate community he is well known for freely sharing all his debate prep research and materials. He thought it was essential to keep it free and give it to anyone who might be able to use it.

He exceeded the highest level of accolades with complete humility, carrying pride in his accomplishments without ego. Despite knowing so much about the world, he never spoke in definitives and was always happy to admit when he didn't know something.

His sense of humor was charmingly off-beat. Upon his first visit to Dartmouth he remarked "you know the food will be good here because it Darts into your Mouth." His jokes were a constant source of both delight and head-shaking chuckles.

Ryan was the person people turned to. He always had a unique perspective guided by his immense knowledge and his innate ability to listen and frame the issue. He was happy to stay at a restaurant with friends well past closing discussing China and Taiwan or the situation in Iran. He could bond with friends over shared critique of The Economist's reporting on China.

He took such great care of everyone around him. He would figuratively and literally carry a friend on his back. Ryan was the person who drove all night to pick up his teammates, to drop off donuts to brighten someone's day, to write long hand-written letters for his friends, to remember all the small things – your coffee order, favorite smoothie, or the types of jokes you enjoyed. He once read an entire book on the philosophy of logic to guide a friend through a paper.

Ryan was surrounded by family and friends who adored him. His absolute devotion was always felt in return. He leaves his parents, Ed and Shannon, his brother, Connor, his sister, Kate, his sweet puppy, Eliza, and an adoring extended family as well as more friends and admirers than any person could collect in any lifetime, including Aryanna, Helen, Les, Liz, Ann, Senay, Angela, Tejas and Julia among countless others who were ready at a moments notice to be with Ryan.

One of Ryan's greatest joys was having a decadent meal with friends and family, especially the Cruller French Toast at Lou's in Hanover. In his memory, please share a meal with family or friends and say yes if they offer whipped cream on top.

A Memorial Service will be held in the future.

Tribute Wall

MB

“ I grew up going to school with Ryan. He was such an intelligent and kind person. I remember doing Kids Lit Quiz with him in middle school, and I’m not ashamed to say he carried our team. I also remember finding out that he was the student speaker at our graduation that year, and thinking “that makes sense.” I still remember his speech, where he compared life to a Rubik’s cube. Sending my love to the Lafferty family, he will be missed.



Marlena Bailey - May 05 at 08:33 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Ryan Lafferty.

April 28 at 11:58 AM

HA

“ I only knew Ryan briefly at ADPA nats back in 2024. From our brief chat, I came to enjoy his knowledge of life in his truly unique way he presented it. Dartmouth, the world and his family have lost a rare thing. May his memory be a blessing.

Henry Simon Alexander - April 26 at 07:07 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Ryan Lafferty.

April 24 at 09:39 PM

MG

“ Maeve G. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ryan Lafferty.

Maeve G. - April 23 at 12:12 PM

WM

“ I had math in high school and ran track with Ryan. I was always so impressed at how incredibly smart Ryan was and so caring. He was always so happy to help and so easy to talk to. My thoughts are with you, Connor, and the whole Lafferty family.

Will McPherson - April 22 at 09:14 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Ryan Lafferty.



April 22 at 09:05 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Ryan Lafferty.

April 22 at 09:05 PM

AT

“ I first met Ryan as a junior in high school. We knew each other dissonantly through practice rounds for several months—but we quickly became the best of friends around December 2019, after a holiday party our debate school, Westfield, hosted.

Our friend group and corresponding group chat (whose name I won't expose for the sake of keeping our adolescent humor sacred) became central to my routine for years. Every day from high school into college, I'd spend hours—without hyperbole—chatting with Ryan and our best friends, most of whom I call my friends for life to this day.

Over the years, our group chat became an archive of debate memes, APDA critiques, Ryan's ironic poetry, anxious 'what does the future hold for us' conversations from our high school years, unusually well-written debate fan fiction, math practice problems (most of which Ryan would help us solve, thank goodness), and sincere "I love you's" we all shared with each other.

I always admired Ryan's willingness to say "I love you", not only verbally to us—and to everyone, really—but also through his unyielding willingness to help everyone he could at a moment's notice.

In my first year of college, I chose to quit debate entirely after a particularly difficult moment in my life, and even still—Ryan was there cheering me on. He was one of the few people I could confide in about that loss of identity through quitting debate, and he remained determined to find ways (in a very Ryan fashion) to cheer me up. We continued to bond over our mutual appreciation for Bo Seo, our favorite niche debate deepcuts, meme-making, and global political issues that we both fervently tracked.

Ryan was incredibly dynamic and selfless, and until our friendship, I had never met someone so earnestly invested in the wellness and joy of everyone he crossed paths with without expecting a single

thing in return.

My last time seeing Ryan in person was in 2022, when our friend group came together for a picnic in West Hartford, CT. Under the summer sun, we indulged in a Whole Foods cake and hours of catching up—memories I hold incredibly near to my heart, now.

Ryan, you are so loved, and I miss you so very much. Even in reading others' memories of you, I am so overwhelmed with admiration for the way you've impacted everyone who has had the privilege of knowing you. Thank you for everything.

Anana Turner - April 22 at 01:48 PM

NF

“ *Planting a grove of 5 trees to represent your beautiful family and the love you have for your sweet and brilliant Ryan. That love is clearly shared by all of us and is palpable in every tribute here. With all my love...Nancy*

Nancy Federice - April 21 at 04:23 PM



“ *A grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Ryan Lafferty.*

April 21 at 04:15 PM

SS

“ *Senay's Parents from Singapore purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Ryan Lafferty.*



Senay's Parents from Singapore - April 21 at 01:31 AM

SS

“ *Senay's Parents from Singapore planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ryan Lafferty.*

Senay's Parents from Singapore - April 21 at 01:31 AM

DI

“ *I had the luck to face Ryan 6 rounds in a row at NAUDC, and despite losing to him again and again, I came away with a very positive opinion of the man. He was incredibly kind, and lacked any of the arrogance you might expect someone of his talent and intelligence to have. He set a good example for the debate community, and I hope to better myself from his example.*

Diggory - April 20 at 11:32 PM

TS

“ Ryan was one of my best friends. I got the chance to be there by his side for his first ever university-level BP tournament win as well as his most recent one.

Every time we went to a tournament together, we'd inevitably get food, I'd lean against his shoulder, and ask him what he thought of developments in international relations -- and would be entertained by extensive, detailed thoughts from military blogs I hadn't even thought to read. He'd tell Liz and I about the military strategy of Carl von Clausewitz; why helicopters don't work quite as well in mountainous regions; why El Salvador was unique in its mano dura-style policies working; and his thoughts on the bombing of Hiroshima.

He was there for us at tournaments when we needed help. One of my favorite memories is when he gave me his solitary Red Bull when I was exhausted and dehydrated on day 3 of Panama Worlds -- and as soon as he made the final, I made sure to return the favor. I remember leaping and screaming with joy at the thought of our friend winning Worlds. I also remember all the times he took us in his car to anywhere we wanted to go, and all the times he swiped us into Dartmouth's dining hall if the tournament vegan option wasn't quite good enough. And wow, Liz, Ryan, and I have spent so many hours together on Zoom calls -- I can barely count them.

In the summer, when I was going through a hard time, Ryan was the person I talked to every single day. Every time I came home from work, I'd text the group chat with Ryan, Liz, Rohan, and Matt, and Ryan would very often be the first to see my message, and we'd chat over DM about how my day was.

Last December, we hadn't talked in a few months -- but on my birthday, he quietly made a donation to the Humane League in my honor. I loved him as a friend, and whenever I told him (overly openly) that I loved him, he always told me he loved me too. When we met up in Bulgaria, I was basically constantly beside him -- I

watched him coach the Dartmouth team through a practice, and saw him get incredibly excited about his first time trying freshly-squeezed apple juice.

I last saw Ryan last month. We had dinner at the exact same place we first had dinner, and first became friends: the dining hall at Bates. We joked about how, the first time we had dinner, he'd cited a paper about Rwanda that used a kind-of-suspicious instrumental variables design. He sat next to me and helped me workshop the wording of the NAUDC final motion. I told him he should play a fun quiz game online where he tries to guess the date of a battle from a description of the weapons used. I told him how important he was to me.

Last year, Ryan ran a fundraiser lecture series asking for donations to the Malaria Consortium. I'll be making a donation to the Malaria Consortium every month that I can in his memory.

Tejas Subramaniam - April 20 at 09:14 PM

DC

“ I met Ryan through debate. Had heard rumblings of him in HS, but never had the pleasure of meeting him or watching him debate before college. In the lead-up to a freshman year tourney i told my teammates this would be my last debate tourney because i didnt enjoy it anymore, and this was completely true until i had the fortune of getting absolutely cooked by Ryan and Julia. He didn't approach debate like a game that he was just trying to win, he made arguments that he truly believed in, that treated everyone in the round with respect. He was so kind and uplifting, recognizing that I was a novice w a super cracked varsity teammate and giving me kudos for the arguments, which I really appreciated coming from him. Every interaction with him was always incredibly pleasant, from when he was cookin in round to when he agreed to do a demo round for a bunch of high schoolers even after winning an entire BP tournament. Will always be thankful for each and every moment spent w Ryan. Rest in peace Ryan, you'll will be missed more than you could ever know. Best wishes to his friends and family

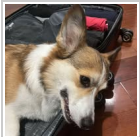
Diego Castillo - April 20 at 08:31 PM

XA

“ Ryan Lafferty was my debate coach for over a year, and while I often found myself in some form of trouble with my team's coaching staff, he was always kind and understanding. It isn't often that someone so smart can explain things to you without making you feel less than. He easily could have, being as good at everything as he was, but his guidance was only ever constructive. It would make sense to say Ryan's mind was the most impressive thing about him, given that he was no less than a genius and a master of debate, but even that was obscured by his kindness. For whatever reason, Ryan chose to coach a team of unknown children from a foreign country, and he came to our practices with a smile on his face every single day. He was patient, and he acted as a natural born leader. He built a group of students with no chance at winning anything (ever) into a team who had more than a fair shot.

Still, the most important thing I learnt from him is to approach life with joy. I hope to be able to bring even a smidgeon of Ryan Lafferty attitude into my life every day. The world will certainly miss Ryan, but it will also learn from everything he had to give.

Xaviera - April 20 at 05:56 PM



“ The only time I met Ryan in person was at NAUDC in March 2026. I wanted to go up to him and say how grateful I was for all his practice debates, debate podcast episodes, & lectures that have made me a better debater & thinker.

But I never got the courage to do so.

I will always cherish those online memories & the few times I saw him from afar. His legacy is stamped into the APDA/BP community & I'm grateful I got to see his brilliance, even if it only was a tiny glimpse of his brilliance.

Andrew Li - April 20 at 05:19 PM

TD

“ Ryan had a rare way of making brilliance feel warm. He carried a sense of wonder that took him to the most complex ideas and deepest research, while at the same time allowing him to fully enjoy the simplest moments, a dad joke, a meaningful conversation, making people smile. He was one of the smartest and most well-read people we have ever met, but he never held that over others. Instead, he shared it openly, explaining, teaching, and inviting people in, making everyone feel capable of engaging with ideas that might otherwise have felt out of reach.

His generosity defined him. It is how he came to coach a team from another country, simply because he saw an opportunity to help. That same instinct shaped everything he did, from sharing his debate materials freely with the entire community, even when it meant giving others the tools to compete against him, to always paying attention to how people were feeling beyond their performance. He cared, first and foremost, about people's well-being.

Having Ryan as part of Team Mexico and calling him our coach and our friend has been one of the greatest privileges for all of us. We will remember him with love and gratitude. We hope to carry his example of generosity and his deep sense of social responsibility forward, not only in debate but in life, in his memory and because of everything he taught us.



Team Mexico Debate - April 20 at 03:34 PM

TD

“ *Team Mexico Debate purchased the Love's Journey for the family of Ryan Lafferty.*



Team Mexico Debate - April 20 at 03:15 PM

TD

“ *Team Mexico Debate planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ryan Lafferty.*

Team Mexico Debate - April 20 at 03:15 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Ryan Lafferty.*



April 20 at 11:15 AM

ZF

“ Ryan was so much more than just a once in a generation debate talent (which he clearly was). Ryan was so much more than just the funny guy that showed up, spammed a shitposting channel took some firsts (or some wins depending on how early in his career you're looking). Ryan was the beating heart and soul of every single community that he'd ever had a chance to be a part of. While tainted by the memory of COVID-19, I first met Ryan when I was 14, some shit stomping novice who thought i was good at american parli who happened to be judged by Ryan. I had heard from my friends who had been coached by him that he cared, that some people viewed debate as a game and some people as a way of life. That day i learned not only did discord messages had a word cap (a few thousand of them), but for someone like ryan, that wasn't even an obstacle, just type and send a few thousands more words. Ryan had the time and the energy to help every single person who was exactly in my shoes in any way he possibly could. Sadly, like all things in life, Ryan's time with the NYDDL came to a close, and despite the occasional lecture or volunteer judging weekend, but unlike all things in life, the impact of that change was beyond transparent. While the quality of debate may not have immediately declined, Ryan put in effort work training the next generation, but many of the things which made it magical did. There were no more streams of shitposts after every round to keep everyone entertained, there was no longer the perfectly timed factual clarifications to infoslides that made everyone chuckle, debate became cliquier, and there was a whole generation of debaters who never even knew Ryan's time, who never realised that everyone truly does need someone like Ryan, someone to connect, and laugh, and bring people together. It's no coincidence that 3 years, upon my own graduation, freshly off of moving to the UK and attending my first in-person BP competition but who else do I see, but Ryan, sitting at his laptop getting god knows what work done at 6:30 in the morning. In a strange country, full of strange people, Ryan gave me a hug and said, "you're going to love it here" and a year and a half later I still haven't looked back.



While he may no longer be with us in practice, I truly hope we all hold him together in our hearts, and not just Panama Champion Ryan Lafferty, but the Ryan Lafferty that made each and every one of us feel valuable in our own way. Thank you Ryan, may you rest in peace.

Zach F - April 20 at 10:22 AM

AM

“ Amy M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ryan Lafferty.

Amy M. - April 20 at 04:10 AM



“ I first met Ryan during the Western Spring HST 2021, a high school BP tournament ostensibly for Canadians. I didn't know who he was, but when my debate partner and I hit him in round 4, I remember being convinced he was a truly special, one of a kind, generational debate talent. It was honestly a miracle that we somehow pulled a 1st against him, and the only time I would ever beat him was when we met each other in a round.

It was really scary because at that time he was only at 1% of his true debating skill, and we only barely won by the skin of our teeth.

Later, I learned he hailed from a city I had never heard before in the foreign, terrifying land of our debating nemeses: Hartford, Connecticut, in the United States. Who was this randomly crazy good American debater pulling up to our online Canadian BP tournaments??

It was at this point that my partner and I were just beginning our online tournament grind as we got into the worst part of the COVID-19 pandemic. Somehow, I got pulled into a Discord server with a bunch of Canadians called “let's argue,” you know, one of those spar servers only degenerate high school debaters were hopping on at 12pm on a Tuesday afternoon to yell at each other.

Imagine my surprise when I saw the name “Ryan Lafferty” on the server, generously offering to judge spars while tossing in the occasional esoteric debate meme or eloquent poetic piece.

In a debating community so full of toxicity and clout culture back then (and still today!), it was refreshing that Ryan remained so humble and down to earth. This was just one of the many interactions that showed Ryan did not care whether you were a WSDC champion or just Some Discord Debater, he was always down to spar with you.

I don't think it can be understated how integral of a role Ryan played

in holding our community together. After a tough debate tournament where we were all crashing out, Ryan would be there. When we were frantically panic-studying for our APs and SATs, Ryan would be there.

Ryan and I would talk less after we started debating in university, hitting each other at the odd online comp. Even then, he was a great sportsman and never rubbed his wins in, despite absolutely obliterating me and my partner in whatever round or motion we encountered.

As I continued my journey of being relatively mid in the CUSID debate circuit, accumulating a few breaks here and there, Ryan moved on to bigger and greater things, like winning the 45th World Universities Debating Championship. But even after his grand victories, he would always make time to chat with me when we crossed paths at the random local or international comp.

I will never forget our shared joy reminiscing on high school times at Panama Worlds, the laughs we shared at NAUDC, or the fifteen minutes of personal feedback about NVIDIA chip development he gave me in R2 of McGill IV this year (only to drop us, very deservedly so, from the break in the R5 bubble).

If I had to compare Ryan to a GOAT in professional sports, I would compare him to Kobe Bryant. He was the embodiment of someone who put his head down, never stopped improving, and put in the hours (and thousands of matter file pages) to become the best in the world at this competitive activity. But beneath his absolute intellectual dominance was also a playful, kind-hearted soul who cared deeply about his fellow debaters, his mentees, his students, and his communities.

I will miss your inimitable humour, your well-timed handcrafted memes, your Shakespearean prose and poetry about AP Microeconomics, but most of all, the love you had for debate and others.

Rest in peace, Ryan ❤️

David Zu - April 20 at 02:02 AM



“ A grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Ryan Lafferty.

April 20 at 01:00 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Ryan Lafferty.



April 19 at 10:56 PM

OM

“ I met Ryan at Princeton APDA, when Rohan introduced us. I remember having seen his name in a lot of BP tabs pre-Belgrade, and always thought he was a BP veteran, only to be surprised to learn that he was just a freshman. I witnessed him knocking out the TOTY contenders in QFs, and was there to listen to the OA despite not being in the round. I would see him one week later at Bates NAUDC, which he finaled, talking about finance (a topic I HATED back then), guess culture and IMF. I would notice Ryan in a lot of spring BP comps I would attend, including the extremely competitive Sofia online which he won. Over the summer, we got closer, because we both spent a lot of time on the infamous NA Spar discord server, debating rounds like religious proselytization, and talking about it after, something that would make his matter file a year later to my surprise. I would later hit him up randomly at a 6 hour notice, asking if he would want to debate this DK Wien mini comp with me, trying to find a partner last moment, and to my surprise, he enthusiastically said yes. Ryan was my first and to date one of the only few BP Pro-Ams although its funny that he was the freshman and I was the pseudo-dino having been debating for half a decade. I had a fun day, learning about SAG-AFTRA (where we would run a version of X-risk smh wth Ryan), the american military, and gated communities (one of my favorite rounds of my debate career; a round I keep going back to this date, something I just set a version of two weeks ago, oh how life is cruel). Oh and I also remember that Barbie background Ryan used for the Barbie R2, that I would later use as a thumbnail for his podcast episode. Waiting for the OA he mentioned his desire for Barbiehiemer, a case he would later write (or he might have already written, I do not know). Ryan docbotted and carried a log like myself to my first ever BP debate final, which made me feel like I could debate, and it is OK to dream. We would spar again, half a week later in NA Spar discord server, where we were chatting about giving competition to the structural reasons podcast, and Ryan cheered me on. I conditionalized me starting the podcast on him being my first guest. I rewatched the episode yesterday and man what an uninteresting host I was, falling over my words, but smh Ryan made the episode

enjoyable to watch. I would talk to him about teaching novices in my club in fall, as I considered giving up on Drexel's debate team, since I planned to retire post Vietnam and he would motivate me to continue putting an effort, since guiding people is such a joy. I would later fall back to him for when I needed fun motion ideas for our Halloween practice, and when I was filled with anxiety related to Vietnam. I remember Ryan cheering for my novice debate partner winning top ESL award at HHIV that year, not knowing her personally but still excited by the event. I remember going after HHIV inrounds to a bar with Matt, Aiza and him, and Ryan talking about how he got so much into meme-ing and his time in high school, and what his thoughts on fashion were. This is true, Ryan was a quick draw, ready with memes and templates before someone even said anything, as if he had future foresight. For those who were lucky to have seen the Ryan illustration of the famous "they say a criminal prosecution will occur, 5 responses" created on a motivational sunset template, it still brings a smile to my face. I remember having a half an hour message chain, after I missed his India fundraiser finals that he won, and learning about how to argue ZIRP good, a conversation that still forms a baseline of my understanding of macro debates today, or me and Ryan bouncing thoughts about Japan and Taiwan after the Vietnam motion. Ryan would later go on to make the semifinals that year, and I could not be any happier. I would take a break from debating for the earlier half of 2024, although I would still occasionally talk to Ryan about current events. I would st



Omesh - April 19 at 09:05 PM

MM

“ From Manuel Machorro:

I first met Ryan in April 2023, when he stepped in to drive our group back from a tournament at Princeton after our original driver fell ill. A five-hour journey that usually dissolves into mindless small talk and the quiet dread of the week ahead was, instead, transformed by the interesting and quick-witted observations of one of the most charismatic and brilliant people I will ever know.

The following weekend, after the North American Championships, Ryan messaged me with a casefile and years' worth of debate lectures to share with the Latin American circuit. We talked about access in debating, I expressed my admiration for him, and went on to browse through his resources in total awe of his brains and dedication.

Four months later, I took over as a coach for Team Mexico, certain that we would benefit from including more people with international experience. Needless to say, Ryan's name came to mind immediately, and I excitedly reached out to see if he would be willing to work with us. After merely a twenty-six-minute conversation, he agreed. He didn't just say yes to join the occasional practice or to be a guest speaker. He said yes to coaching Team Mexico permanently despite knowing nothing of the circuit or the kids, and despite having aspirations and commitments of his own. What should be apparent to anyone who ever met Ryan was made apparent to me that day: that he always saw helping others as an opportunity and giving back a profound responsibility.

I had the privilege of a lifetime coaching alongside him for over a year as he became a close friend. We shared hundreds of hours planning practices, laughing over fun drills with the team, writing cases, traveling, sharing meals, and nervously exchanging thoughts during the debates of our kids, who he always showed so much care and love for.

I always found it funny when people found out we were coaching together. They would ask me about Ryan's approach to debating and about the complex training regimen he must've established for the team. However, while his knowledge and experience evidently helped everyone in ways I can't even put into words, his impact as a role model was a hundred times bigger. He would join practice with a smile on his face, a meme on every presentation slide, and the willingness to listen to how everyone was feeling, rather than how they were performing. This is why, when kids from other teams approached our students to ask what it was like being coached by the great Ryan Lafferty, answers never started with his famous speeches or casefile, but rather spoke to his personality and the impact he had on us far beyond rounds.

From learning Spanish slang trying to get a laugh from everyone, to delivering serious and tactful talks to ease people's nerves, he was always incredibly compassionate. It was always a pleasure to hear his opinions on complex matters, his invariably correct predictions on world events, and the jokes that made him an all around extraordinary human.

After seeing the incredible person it took to be that smart and successful, I found it a privilege to have lost a Worlds Semifinal and a Worlds Final to him. As the results were about to be announced, I listened with nervous anticipation, incredibly excited to see the best representation of our community holding that trophy, and aware that I wouldn't have made it that far had I not learned from him for so long. I am so proud and thankful to him.

When someone passes, we often mourn the things that will not happen, grieving for the experiences left unlived. But I want to think of Ryan the way I hope to be remembered one day: with the realization that when you pass, you do not suffer from what is not or from what could have been. Similarly, it is easy to get lost in the "what ifs", but for someone who cared for others as deeply as Ryan did, I wish to focus instead on what was. I am happy I told him we loved him countless times, that I was grateful, that we admired him,

and that he changed the lives of so many people. I am happy that, in this lifetime, he was able to become the best on the planet at the activity of his choosing. I am glad he found joy in learning at one of the world's greatest universities, and that he walked away knowing he had helped so many learn and grow as well. Most of all, I am glad he was and is loved, for he deserved it deeply.

The Ryan Lafferty we all respect and admire is the person I hope we all aspire to be, in his honor, every single day.

Manuel Machorro - April 19 at 07:50 PM