

Happy 2016 Class of 1996!

A few weeks ago our family attended an Augie basketball game. Both the men's and women's teams were stellar, and it was an action-packed evening. I'm not sure what was more fun – watching the games, or watching our girls jumping up and down in the stands, cheering for their “favorite team EVER” (as Abby would say) – the Vikings!

I was struck that day by the joyful feeling of being part of a community that has been such a positive force in my life. Looking out over the blue and gold in the Arena, I felt deeply grateful to be connected to a school that stands for so many good things. Somehow, our kids feel that sense of connection, too. The fact that Abby wants to be both an oceanographer and an Augustana cheerleader when she grows up speaks volumes! ☺

I have said this before, but it bears repeating that every time I am in an Augie crowd or visit the campus I am struck by the really amazing people I encounter. Through Augie connections I have met the most interesting and inspiring people – students, staff, faculty, and family members committed to strengthening and honoring the gifts and needs of their communities. Their convictions and drive are incredible. **YOUR** convictions and drive are incredible!

Classmates, although I have not seen most of you for many years, I want you to know that I am truly thankful to be connected to YOU. I hear your stories, see pictures of your families, and feel the ripples of what you do every day that brings love and hope to this world. I'm not sure why God placed me where He did, when He did, but I'm glad to be on this journey with you, sharing the connection of an education at a place where we were taught the importance of giving back. Thanks for who you are and for what you do – especially in small ways every day – to carry on the “enter to learn, exit to serve” way of life we experienced as part of the Augie family. I mean it with every ounce of my being when I say it is an honor to know you!

I hope you will be able to make it back to Sioux Falls this October for our (gulp!) **20 year reunion!** (Twenty? Really?) Here is your chance to see old friends, reconnect with former classmates and revisit the laughter and fond memories we shared during our college years together. Viking Days will be **October 14-16, 2016** – mark your calendars! There will be lots of great events and fun activities, but the best part will be coming back together to celebrate our Augie connections. I look forward to seeing you there!!

Augustana has undergone some **major** changes this past year, including the transition from Augustana College to Augustana University! Wow! Please read about the top 15 highlights for Augustana in 2015 for more campus news. Also, remember to send updates to the alumni office every once in a while, or better yet, send your classmates a note and update your information directly through AugieLink!

Look on the left hand side of the page for AugieLink Community and click on Alumni Login or New User. Your updates do NOT have to be anything dramatic or life-changing! Just jot a note every now and then to let us know where you are and what you are doing! I have not heard from many people over the past months – so please take a few moments and send in the latest.

Wishing you joy and smiles until next time – hopefully, this October!

Blessings,

Cari Eastman