

Where am I now? Well, I'm writing this from my childhood bedroom in Burlingame, CA, after deciding to leave my current home in New York City four weeks ago when the COVID-19 outbreak started worsening there. Every time I come back home to California, I make sure to go to the pool and visit Tony. This will be my first time in 6 years that I will not get to visit him. Being in my childhood room has brought back a lot of memories, and of course a lot of those involve swimming. Since I am working from home on an east coast time zone, I find myself waking up at the crack of dawn and remembering all those early morning practices with Tony. Now six years later, I can still remember the steam coming off the water, the early sunrises over Stanford, the grueling long course sets, and the rewarding breakfasts at Jimmy V's. I miss being surrounded by my friends from PASA and listening to Tony yelling and joking around with us every day. I am still friends with most of the people I swam with on PASA – friendships rooted in long days, impossible practices, wins, losses, meals, travel meets and most of all Tony's words. My last summer on PASA before I left for college resulted in a team win at Junior National Championships. While we didn't win every event or have stand-out individual stars, we had depth, cohesiveness, and determination and always had a lot of fun. I will forever remember that meet and getting to throw a pie in Tony's face when we won.

Being a part of PASA and Tony's group was one the best decisions I ever made in my life. Everything I learned in age group swimming and from Tony I took with me to college. I went to Duke University in North Carolina and swam all four years, including representing both my school and PASA at Olympic Trials in 2016. It was important to me to represent both because my swimming journey included so many people, and it was only right to recognize both where I came from and where I was at the time. I qualified for D1 NCAA Championships all four years at Duke, and each year at the end of the meet the PASA alumni from all the different schools would come together and send a photo to Tony, a thank you to him for the profound impact PASA and Tony had on our lives. Even though we swam for different schools, we all came from the same place and understood the commitment it took to make it there. This was true not only in NAAs, but also when I traveled halfway across the world to Israel in 2017 to represent Team USA in the Maccabiah Games...competing alongside other PASA alumni and taking pictures together from the top of Masada overlooking the Dead Sea.

After graduating from Duke in 2018, I moved to New York City for a job at Major League Baseball working in the league office. Since swimming was my job for 17 years, I never had an internship or job experience before graduating college, but quickly realized the extent to which swimming prepares you for life. Of course, I found my way to the pool again too, where I still swim 2-3 days a week. I compete for fun in a local sports club and swim with PASA alums who live in Manhattan. We still send Tony pictures every time we get together. I like to think that we are Tony's children – we love updating him on our lives, sending him photos, and waiting to hear his responses while trying to predict what joke he'll reply with next.

I am changing jobs at the end of April to work at a sports agency called TEAM8 Sports and Entertainment, where I will work under a sports agent representing some of the top tennis players in the world. I am excited for this new opportunity to work closer to talent and to be a part of another athlete's team and journey. I want to take what I was so used to doing for myself and provide that to another athlete, helping them accomplish their goals much the same way I had so many people help me throughout my swimming journey.

As I said before, swimming is a lot like life: while swimming is an individual sport, remember that you cannot succeed on your own; your teammates, coaches, friends, and family will always be there to support you, and will still be there long after you finish swimming. I hope everyone is safe and healthy during this crazy time, and hopefully see you at the pool sometime soon.

