

## 2017 YMCA Short Course National Championship Devotion Offered by Brian McKenrick



This is it. The last session on the last day, and for some of us, our last swim at YMCA nationals. My name is Brian McKenrick and I am a senior from the Upper Main Line YMCA. This coming fall I will be attending the US Military Academy at West Point and in about 4 hours I will fall into the category of YMCA swimmer.

Tonight I will swim my final races as a YMCA swimmer in front of two people who have attended every swim meet that I have competed in up until now. From my first summer team meet, to my last nationals swim here, my grandparents have watched and supported me through them all. Looking back on my YMCA career, I realize that they represented YMCA core values like no other. Their constant respect for the officials, coaches and of course, the Gate Guys got them the Fans of the Meet award during my first nationals. Their ability to get my siblings and me to and from practice, even when we had vastly different practice schedules demonstrates the responsibility they took for our swimming. Although they were very involved in my swimming, they also went to great lengths to better my education. For example, during summer breaks they would give me extra math and reading homework. Although I now appreciate their efforts to help me be fully prepared going into the school year, I'm still a little bitter about those extra worksheets.

The incredible amount of love and care they have given to me, my siblings and my team, is unimaginable. Throughout the years they have done so much for my team. The best example that I can think of are the countless action photos that they have taken of the UMLY team. Whether it be diving off the block, taking a stroke, or simply walking up the stairs, my grandparents were there to document it all.

And of course I would not be here without their sometimes brutal honesty on how my event went. Whether it was a good or bad swim, they always thought it was either the greatest swim on the planet, or the worst swim mankind had ever seen. And for that honesty I am truly grateful.

So thank you grandma and grandpa, thank you for all that you have done for me, for this team and for the YMCA.

Now, for all the swimmers here tonight. I want you to be my grandparents. Or at least act like them. Be honest with your coaches, friends, families and especially yourself. Be responsible for not only your actions and thoughts, but also those of your team; because after all, you and your team are one and the same. Respect all of your competition, coaches and the officials here today

because they help you strive to be better. And most importantly, take care of your team mates because, as we all know, they truly are your family.

Now if everyone could join me in a prayer:  
Lord, please let these swimmers cheers and support be heard from all around the world as they push their team mates to the limit and even further. Also, please let these swimmers here today arrive back a their homes safe and ready to lead their team to greatness once again. In your name we pray, amen.