

Laura Mersereau Memorial Scholarship Award Ceremony

City Hall Atrium  
December 11, 2008

Good Morning, I am Brad Mersereau, Laura's brother. Today's event is a sacramental gift beyond measure. Our website's mission at [www.bradmersereau.com](http://www.bradmersereau.com) is to ensure that the memory of my sister Laura matters. In my calls to Portland metro area high school college career counselors, I enthusiastically stated that our objective was to motivate participation and receive at least 50 essays about the perceived reasons for drug and alcohol use and effective avoidance strategies. Students from 23 high schools responded ... avalanche-style. We are overwhelmed and grateful for the 125 essays, all of which honor the spirit of Laura. (Actually 126; I wrote one also.) By posting these thoughtful responses December 15th at the Oregon Partnership website, we are creating a unique cyber-educational community about drug and alcohol issues from the student perspective. All participating students offered helpful suggestions some of which I hope will eventually affect public policy. I believe we have tipping-point content with the potential of saving lives. Thanks to the Oregon Partnership, all participants in the process, and to all of you today.

I loved my sister, Laura, and I still do. Until the summer of her senior year, Laura had a special spark and lots of laughter in her eyes. Witnessing her addiction to alcohol after a cruel introduction to LSD in 1971 was almost unbearable. It was like observing and unsuccessfully trying to prevent a slow suicide. Laura knew she could always reach out to me but many times angrily indicated no need for my assistance. After a 25 year destructive dance with alcohol, she admitted at an AA meeting that indeed she was an alcoholic. I told her how proud I was that she could confront this difficult and challenging truth.

I have discovered since Laura died, June 13, 1999, how necessary it is for me to be truthful with myself ... so I journal my hopes and dreams daily and am grateful when, through planning and implementation they are accomplished. 1000 folks have visited our website since the October announcement of the Oregon Partnerships-sponsored scholarship memorial contest. 9 more individuals have taken the Laura Pledge to live life to the max ... honoring their minds, bodies, and spirits, drug and alcohol free. Since May of 2006, 179 brave souls have documented 2200 collective sobriety anniversary years. We are partners and these intentional actions at our website honor my sister's memory and spirit.

I have also discovered since Laura died, my daily application of serenity prayer principles is as vital to my mental, emotional, and spiritual health as breathing. Here is an Emersonian variation of the Serenity Prayer. You may not be familiar with this one.

God grant me the serenity to accept the people I can not change  
Courage to change the one I can, and the  
Wisdom to know I'm that dude!

Thank you.