

Ambitious Vet Rises to the Top With VFW Scholarship

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35-year-old veteran Jeremiah Braudrick, is 24 years older than his best friend. Yet he and his pal are inseparable, and have seen each other through the good and bad times. In fact, his best friend propels him forward to reach his goals.

Braudrick's best friend is his son, Mason. As a single dad who grew up in relatively poor conditions, Braudrick is firmly set on making sure Mason has it better.

Braudrick said, "There were times when I was in high school that we didn't have electricity, so the ability to go to college seemed out of reach.

"My dad is a great man, and an incredible provider, but at times the goings got hard, and work was sparse."

Braudrick's solution was careful consideration of the benefits and opportunities for active-duty service members and veterans. He joined the Marines in May 2001, and spent time overseas in the Middle East and Asia. Braudrick was a sergeant when he separated from the service.

While on active duty, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree. Saving his GI Bill for afterward, Braudrick was able to achieve two master's degrees; a master's in divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and a master's in theology from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va.

Available veteran scholarships dwindled once out of the service, but finding the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" was the game-changer Braudrick needed.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

Today, Braudrick attends Fuller Theological Seminary to obtain his Doctor of Ministry Program degree.

“I’ve had to work hard for everything I’ve ever had. The mere fact someone would support funding that provides scholarships to veterans, out of the kindness of their own heart, blows me away. I never thought I deserved it, but I will surely accept it!”

Braudrick is grateful for the VFW's support which has allowed him to hone his educational goals, grow as a leader and set a good example not only for his son, but also others in his community.

The difference he makes in his career, running a local community center, is strengthened through his studies at Fuller. The aim of his work is to meet the physical, spiritual and relational needs of those living at or below the poverty line within his city.

He also founded a nonprofit that supplies prisoners with basic needs that the Department of Corrections does not supply.

Braudrick's journey to become the best spiritual leader and community developer he can has been a team effort. Without the VFW and its supporters, an organization he calls “an incredible group of war fighters who have given so much to me and my son,” he and best friend Mason couldn't live the life he dreamed for them to share.