

Hayden Michael Ritchhart

Hayden Michael Ritchhart, age 22, of Carrollton, Missouri, passed away on Thursday, July 13, 2023, in Osage Beach, Missouri. Born to parents Michael Todd and Kimberly Ann (Cox) Ritchhart on August 28, 2000, in Marshall, Missouri.

Hayden was a member of the First Baptist Church of Carrollton, where he was baptized on September 26, 2010. Hayden was an adventurous soul, known for his kind and selfless nature. His infectious smile was renowned, lighting up rooms and warming the hearts of those around him. He was a natural-born leader with a larger-than-life personality, making friends wherever he went and placing immense importance on his relationships with friends and family.

Hayden's childhood in Carrollton was spent playing Little League baseball, camping at Rec Lake, playing flash light tag, fishing in Grandpa Cox and Papa Roy's ponds, going to Mizzou football games, enjoying family beach vacations, participating in Team Kid and youth activities at the First Baptist Church, checking cattle, farming, and tormenting his precious little sister, Hannah.

Athletics and physical activity were a major aspect of Hayden's daily life. From youth basketball, Commotion baseball, to CHS Trojan Football, Basketball, Baseball and Track, Hayden loved to compete. He was a natural-born leader on the field inspiring his teammates and coaches. While his charisma and stage presence outweighed his vocal abilities, he shined on the stage from pre-school programs, to student council election song-speeches, throughout Show Choir and High School Musicals. Hayden reluctantly participated in musicals every year and played the lead role his senior year delivering many laughs and abundant joy to his Meme Sue, family and dance team friends.

After graduating from Carrollton High School in 2019, Hayden attended the United States Naval Academy (USNA) in Annapolis, Maryland. During his two years at USNA, Hayden built tremendous friendships, enhanced his physical prowess through intense weight lifting, and obtained his skydiving A-License while a member of the USNA Parachute Team. Hayden's time at USNA molded him into a strong and confident young man, with a thrill-seeking mentality which inspired his desire to enter aviation. This led to his decision to transfer to Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida.

Hayden found a home at Embry-Riddle where he was a proud member of the Sigma Chi Fraternity serving as House Manager and President. He was deeply involved in philanthropic events, community service projects, and intramural sports. Hayden worked closely with fraternity alumni, campus officials, community leaders and the Daytona Beach City Commission. His impact and legacy spread throughout the entirety of Daytona Beach serving as an example of what it truly meant to be a brother and leader within the Sigma Chi Eta Iota Chapter. Hayden was a commercial pilot in his last semester of college, eagerly preparing to graduate in December 2023 with a Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Science degree.

Hayden is survived by his parents, Michael and Kim Ritchhart; his sister, Hannah Ritchhart; aunts and uncles, David Ritchhart (Janet), Scott Ritchhart (Amber), Brandon Bugher (Tammy), Doug Cox (Melissa), Robert Cox, Katherine Cox Riepe (Dan); and his cousins, Kyle Ritchhart, Katelin Ritchhart Spalding (Zane), Brooklyn Ritchhart, Madelyn Ritchhart, Maddie Davis, Aaron Bugher (Gwynne), Leesa Bugher, William Cox, Theodore Cox; and his grandparents, Roy and Sue Ritchhart, Richard and Verna Cox, and Ladona Sorrels Love (James West).