

For Lokae...(April 9, 2011)

While I have been watching you study and prepare for today and, really, just watching you grow and become the person that you are, I have been reminded that we are a part of a religion that has lasted for thousands of years. You embody qualities of those who came before you and you will pass those qualities on to your children because *THAT* is how we as a Jewish people survive. Learning and observing the traditions of our ancestors and passing those along to our children. The Talmud says, "When you teach your son, you teach your son's son." This is what we do.

As you know, you are named for both your great-grandfather Joseph Harmon and your great-grandmother Lillian Tobias Harmon. Lokae, believe it or not, is for Lillian, and Jazz for Joseph - you also share your Hebrew name with Joe's... Yehoshua.

Joe was a risk-taker, he was able to take chances. Just like us, as Jews took a chance when we left Egypt to follow Moses into the unknown. I hope you will embrace that risk-taking quality too.

Lillian had a kind and patient heart and as the saying goes, "He that can have Patience, can have what he will", it is a work in progress, but I believe you will

eventually find Lillian's patience.

Like your paternal grandfather, Carl - you throw yourself into your work and take great pride in all that you create. His wife, your grandmother, Jan, always did things with flare and had her own style....you too have your own sense of style and flare. Continue to be confident in that. Be confident like your father who possesses a willingness to follow his dreams. Always dream big and then make those dreams a reality.

You share with my father, your grandfather, Al - the ability to "work a room" you both LOVE a party. And I love seeing the way that you effortlessly talk to new people wherever you go. It amazes me.

Esther and you; Grandmother; Grandson (*my bookends*) you two share a FIERCE love of both education and of family. Woe to the person or persons who treat one of your family members or someone you love badly... I know that I am at my safest when I am with the two of you. I can only ask that you please keep **yourself** safe while you are protecting those you love.

The passion that you have for your family, you also share with your great-grandfather Herbie. He is the head of our family, **our** patriarch. He has taught his children, and so in turn has taught his grandchildren and now his great-

grandchildren. May you have the same kindness, loyalty and wisdom that he possesses when you have a family and children and grandchildren of your own.

Lilyan - you and Lilyan. For as long as she could, she never stopped telling me how special you are. You share with her an appreciation for art and poetry. You also share the ability to memorize poems or lyrics in an instant but maybe most importantly, is the way you make friends. People just loved to be around Lil, and they love to be around you too. Your friends are numerous and wonderful. Just looking around here today at everyone who has joined us. It's a testament to that quality.

Which brings us to the other "illian." Your G-d-parents: Gillian and Jake.

You and Gill, share many qualities, but one of my favorites is your tenacity. You can both accomplish anything you set your minds to. May it always be of use to you. Anytime you run into adversity, and as you know, you **will** run into adversity, use this gift to force your way through and accomplish your goals.

Disciplined. **That** is your Uncle Jake. And that is you as well. I look on in amazement whenever I see the two of you put something you **HAVE** to do, before you do something you **WANT** to do. Because of that, you reap the rewards of your hard work. Today is one of those days. You have approached your studies in a disciplined way. And while I may have helped you organize your time, I never

once had to nag you to study and it shows.

Lokae, you are rich with the gifts of those who have come before you. These are just a few. And it is all of your gifts that you will share with your community and with your children. And so we go on and continue to be the Jewish people that we are: passing down traditions and who we are generation after generation. That is what makes us Jewish.

You are now responsible for how you choose to continue that tradition. I am so proud of the person that you are, for how you express yourself as a part of the Jewish community. I have no doubt, that as proud of you as I am today, I will just become more proud as you become more and more of who you are. I am amazed by you. I am in awe of you. I thank G-d for you. I love you.