

BUSINESS STUDENT GRADUATES WITH SKATEBOARD IN TOW

One familiar face at the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business participated in the graduation exercises last December, on a skateboard, even though he wasn't even a graduate.

Jake Anderson was pulled onto the stage on a skateboard by graduate Jimmy Jones, who was driving an electric-powered wheel chair. By that point, Anderson had already been introduced by President Stan Albrecht.

As President Albrecht welcomed people to Utah State University's 118th Commencement exercises, he singled out Jones as a graduate,

and recognized Anderson for the role he had played in helping Jones earn his degree.

"Jimmy Jones graduates in business today, but when you see him head across the stage for his degree, you will see him accompanied by his friend Jake Anderson," Albrecht said. "Jake has been working with Jimmy since 2003, driving him from Tremonton every day, going to every class with him, taking notes for him, pushing him across campus during these lovely Cache Valley winters and even scheduling his wedding and honeymoon around Jimmy's school schedule."

The two reversed roles during graduation with Jones towing Anderson across campus, and even up to the stage where Jones was recognized for graduating.





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Jimmy Jones, Huntsman School of Business 2007 graduate

It was the end of the formal part of an unusual relationship. Anderson, who was paid with money through the Division of Services for People with Disabilities, not only helped Jones get around, he helped him take notes.

Jones said he was long-time friends with Anderson, and that Anderson’s help went beyond that an employee would offer.

“He always had a good attitude,” Jones said. “We always had a lot of fun together up at the college.”

Anderson said he had been friends with Jones since high school.

“It wasn’t really a job to me,” Anderson said. “It was just going and hanging out with Jimmy.”

Jones said he was paralyzed in a car accident when he was 17, and yet he still calls himself “hopelessly optimistic.”

“I’ve seen people that have it much worse, so that keeps me humble and thankful for what I do have,” he said. “But I know if it wasn’t for my wreck I wouldn’t have accomplished such a feat as graduating college. I never had it in me before my wreck. It’s been a blessing.”

Jones said it was challenging to get his degree.

“College was really hard, but I’ve beat tougher things,” Jones said. “And I had it in me to finish it and go through with it.”

*Writer: Steve Eaton, (435) 797-8640
steve.eaton@usu.edu
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