

# Mission UpReach Newsletter



**Harrison Walt Waldron**, 29, of Nolensville, TN passed from this life on Thursday, June 23, 2022, in his home. He was born October 18, 1992, in Atlanta, GA to Philip and Donna (Durham) Waldron. He grew up with his two sisters, Sarah, and Laura, in Mexico, Georgia, and Honduras. After high school, he attended Harding University where he met Hayley Smith, the love of his life. They married May 31, 2014. He graduated in May of 2015 with a bachelor's degree in Oral Communication with Speech and Drama Licensure.

Shortly after graduation, Harrison was injured in an accident that left him permanently disabled. Through years of hardship, Harrison and Haley persevered and inspired a community across countries and continents with their commitment to their marriage and faith. Harrison's example of faith in suffering has touched countless lives over the years and will continue to do so.

However, so much of his story predates the last seven years of his life and deserves to be honored and celebrated as well. Harrison's life was full of love, laughter, and faith. He enjoyed working with children, creating and building, spending time with his family and friends, and making

others laugh. Harrison was a creative visionary, actor, and director, starring in plays from the time he was in high school through college. Combining his love for teaching and performing, he went on to inspire kids at Nashville Children's Theater. He had a unique ability to make everyone feel special and valued, was a friend to all, and was a loyal protector of those around him. Harrison

was a devoted and loving husband and found much of his joy in experiencing life with his bride. Though he received many accolades and awards throughout his life, he would say his identity was in Christ and his greatest achievements were how he loved and served others.

He is survived by his wife Hayley (Smith), his parents Philip and Donna (Durham) Waldron, sisters Sarah Beckwith and Laura Waldron, in-laws Tim Smith and Lisa (Knox) Smith, sister-in-law Katelyn Smith, nephew Liam Hollis, paternal grandparents Jim and Laura Waldron, maternal grandmother Sarah Durham, and a host of extended family and friends around the globe who have been touched by his life.

He is preceded in death by his maternal grandfather Bobby Harris Durham.



# Most people don't know this about Harrison

By Phil Waldron

It is not commonly known, but in large part, Harrison, our son, was instrumental in our coming to Honduras as missionaries back in 2009.

When Harrison was only 6 years old, we moved our family to Cozumel, México. Harrison started school in a small public school on the island where not a single person spoke English. In just three short months he was speaking with his friends in Spanish like he was a native-born Mexican. His love for dance started with this experience. It seemed to us that the school spent more time preparing for all of the festivals that are celebrated on the island than they did teaching other subjects. He became one of the lead dancers in almost every single folkloric dance festival that his school participated in.

The love for dance and theatre started there in that first year of public school and was with him until he physically couldn't dance any more. The other thing that the young Harrison fell in love with was being a missionary. When we returned from México in 2003 and took up life again in the US, Harrison would ask his mother every day, "when are we going back to the mission field?"

When the 2007-2009 Great



Recession hit the US economy, the real estate business that we were in failed, and it became clear that I was going to have to get another job other than construction or real estate. Donna and I sat Harrison and Laura down to tell them that our lives had just been upended financially and we were, by force, having to look for new jobs.

Harrison and Laura, our two

youngest, were the only two at home since Sarah, our oldest, was already studying at the University of Georgia. As soon as the words left my mouth, Harrison turned to Laura and said, "Well, it sounds to me like we are going back to the mission field." It took Mom and Dad a week or so to catch up with God and Harrison, but through the advice of several good men

that had been mentors to us over the years like Bob Brown, former missionary to Venezuela and Dr. Dan Coker, formerly missionary to Guatemala, Honduras, Uruguay, and México, we began asking God



to show us where He wanted us to spend the rest of our lives working for His Kingdom.

Through a series of "God incidences," we decided that Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras was the place that He wanted us to be. Now thirteen years later, with all that we have seen God do through Mission UpReach, we are convinced that we clearly followed His direction.

Harrison, upon arrival in Santa Rosa de Copán as a 16-year-old, immediately became a song leader for the church and the designated youth minister. He also served as

the audio-visual guy. He was with us for two whole years and served as one of the first teachers in our DESEO Program before leaving for Harding University in the Fall of 2011. It was there that he met the love of his life, Hayley Smith. The love story that these two have lived out in front of thousands of people while honoring God with every breath is something of which legends are made. If what happened to Harrison and Hayley had occurred six hundred years ago, we would be singing the ballad of Hayley and Harrison like we talk about Romeo and Juliet today. Theirs is an epic love story only better because not only did they love each other intentionally and against all odds, but they also loved God and honored Jesus as Lord like few people in life ever have the opportunity to do.

We laid Harrison to rest after his long battle with a traumatic brain injury on Wednesday, June

29th, 2022. He left the world a better place than it was before he entered it. I, for one, as his father, hope that I can live up to his shining example. I know if Harrison could speak from where he is now, he would want to encourage you and everyone else he could to look to Jesus as the Lord of Life. Harrison was tested like only a small percentage of men ever are and through his unwavering faith in Jesus was blessed with a "peace that passes all understanding."





## A note from Donna

We have chosen to take what we consider an appropriate pause in reporting this month in order to share our heartfelt

sorrow at the passing of our son Harrison on June 23rd. Harrison simply got out of his chair (his soul that is) and went on to his new life with the Lord for all of eternity. In March I noticed his “light” dimming. Hayley and I discussed this fact and both of us had a “feeling” he was getting very weary. Harrison, in the entire 7 years of his suffering, never, ever complained. When he managed, with great effort, to communicate with us with his iPad, he ALWAYS praised us and pointed us to Jesus. When I asked him one time how he managed to remain so positive and how is it he always encouraged others with his words, he typed (not exact words) “Mom, I get so few opportunities

to communicate, so I have decided to use my words to encourage others and point to Jesus.” I felt so humbled by those precious words. Even in his voiceless, broken body, he was leading us all towards victorious living in God.

Words fail us as we express the great honor it is to be chosen as Harrison’s parents. We can’t imagine him accomplishing any earthly success greater than what he has endured in faith over the past 7 years. Our ambiguous grief has become unambiguous. We grieve all we have lost. We watched Harrison suffer for 7 years and selfishly we wanted to continue to love on him, look into his beautiful eyes and care for him. But we are so thankful he has been freed and now is made whole.

Thank you for allowing us to share some of our thoughts and to honor our son. Some of you have donated to Mission UpReach in Harrison’s honor. We intentionally haven’t requested donations in his honor because we would never want to utilize such loss for gain. However, we do appreciate the kind gestures and gifts.

Thank you for your kind words, prayers, and support since the beginning of this journey in August of 2015. We will continue to need these things in the days to come.

## 2022 Brigade Season

- Feb. 26 - March 5 .....Tusculum Church Medical Team
- June 11-18 .....Pine Tree Church Medical Team
- July 2-9 .....Southside Church Medical Team
- July 23-30 .....Tusculum Church VBS Team
- September 3-10 .....Surgical Team

## Mission UpReach Board

- Scott Bedichek, Ft. Worth, TX
- Phil Berry, Coral Springs, FL
- Kory Cummings, Ft. Worth, TX
- Wayne Kellis, Gilbert, SC
- Dorris Gulley Shelton, Dunwoody, GA
- Jeff Simpson, White Oak, TX
- Adam Spencer, Longview, TX
- Donna Waldron, Santa Rosa de Copán
- Phil Waldron, Santa Rosa de Copán

## Other Giving

Mission UpReach is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. We can assist you to designate MUR in a corporations’ matching gifts program, or giving through a United Way campaign, or as you prepare wills for your estate.

## Please contact us:

Our mailing address is as follows:  
**Mission UpReach, Inc.**  
**3221 Dundee Road**  
**Longview, TX 75604**  
 Please send all checks, donations and correspondence to this address.

## You can correspond directly with Phil and Donna at:

Phil and Donna Waldron  
 Apartado Postal #255  
 Santa Rosa de Copán, Copán  
 Honduras, Central America  
 donna.w@missionupreach.org  
 Phone: 706-534-7060

-  facebook.com/missionupreach
-  twitter.com/missionupreach
-  instagram.com/missionupreach