

## **Congressman Adam B. Schiff's Speech at Lauren's Funeral**

To Lauren's family, friends, and colleagues, thank you for inviting me to join in celebrating Lauren's remarkable life.

I first met Lauren when she served as an intern at my district office in 2006—the first intern we had from Immaculate Heart High School. Of course, Lauren excelled in our office, and when she came to study in Washington, DC, we were delighted to offer her an internship there as well. My staff and I recall her as a very bright and positive young woman with a thirst for learning and a dedication to helping others. None of us were surprised that she went on to succeed in every endeavor and chose to devote herself to bettering the lives of others.

Lauren's biking trip was in keeping with her courageous spirit, her open heartedness, her belief in the fundamental goodness of human beings at home and around the world. It takes a very special kind of intrepidity and curiosity to leave one's job and set off to a far away place, to endure the hardship of powering your own way down dusty roads and cold mountain passes, to put your faith in the kindness of strangers, to go on a journey where you cannot know precisely where or when the journey will come to an end.

This is not for the faint of heart. This is not for the fearless — for there is no such thing — but for the one who can overcome their fear, for whom there is something worth knowing despite the risk. Lauren wanted to experience the world and its people, and that was more powerful than fear, more valuable than money, more immediate and more essential than the allure of a predictable day, job or path.

Lauren's life and her story, and that of her boyfriend, Jay, have moved and inspired millions around the world, that have come to know them posthumously. Some may think that this is because of how they died, but that is just not so. Tragically, the depravity of those who engage in terror has claimed countless victims in the last twenty years, most of whom are known only to their family and friends. No, it is how Lauren and Jay lived that moves us. It is how their example jars us out of the lethargy and complacency of our lives, forces us to wake up and see the beauty around us, to take a deep breath and draw it in, to question what is really important and how we spend the moments of our day.

I represent Hollywood, and so I often think of movie lines which capture a truth about life. In *Joe vs the Volcano*, the doctor tells a supposedly dying Tom Hanks, that 90 percent of the world is asleep, and the other 10 percent walk around in a state of constant amazement. Lauren's life forces us to open our eyes and see the magnificence all around us, to be amazed.

I read that Jay did not believe in evil, and much has been made of the awful fortuity that he and Lauren would encounter its embodiment on that mountain road. I did not know Jay and do not know whether Lauren shared that belief, but I have to think that both understood their journey would not be without danger. If anything, they were simply not willing to presume that those they would encounter would be malicious. They chose not to live their lives that way. Quite the contrary, they approached life as good and courageous people do — with an expectation and belief in the goodness of others. And that is all any of us can do. We cannot determine what we will come across in life, what may be around the next turn in the road; but we can decide whether to live with the expectation of good. That is how Lauren lived, and that I believe is how she would have us live.

Life is short. Lauren could not know how tragically short hers would be, none of us can. But she was determined not to waste any of it, not to miss a moment to help others, to know others, to experience others, to share the love of life she had with others — from Los Angeles to Washington, DC, and from the savannas of Africa to the steppes of Asia. She left us, each, a different legacy. To me, her example impels us to step out of our routine, to place our hope and trust in others even when tragedy might chasten us otherwise, to see the beauty around us and in others, to live lives of constant amazement.