

## Merry Christmas

### *From the Cottinghams*

Merry Christmas to all of our friends (and some of our mere acquaintances, we won't tell you which of you is which) Haley here, this year I'm taking over the Christmas card and thought it would be good to include a letter explaining why everyone seems to have a solo shot but me. Not bitter, but... a little bitter.

2015 was a ballin' year for the Cottinghams. Ben is finishing up his senior year of high school and towers above all of us at 6'3. He played varsity football this fall and will be playing baseball in the spring which is about all he'll be doing because he is DONE with his college applications and his senior thesis project! If you haven't heard (and I'm not sure how you wouldn't've because my dad posted about a million pictures) Ben planned and carried out a 432 mile bike ride from Charleston to Orlando with mom, dad, Carrie, and his thesis mentor/family friend Mr. Conway. The Peloton (fancy word for bike squad) completed the trip this summer and Ben presented his final research on the process this past November. As for college, we'll let you know soon if he ends up a Gamecock or a Paladin (or a Tiger but... probably not a Tiger).

Carrie graduated from USC in May from the Darla Moore School of Business with degrees in Global Supply Chain and Operations Management (ask her what that means because to this day I do not know) and Marketing. She's currently in a 2 year rotational program with Textron Aviation, the makers of Bell and Cessna, to name a few, and spent her first 6 months in Wichita, Kansas. In January she'll be moving to Lavonia, Georgia for her next rotation. "The highlight of my year," Carrie says, "was spending the whole summer with my favorite littler sister at home before I left forever." This is a lie. She did not spend the summer here; but rather had a European adventure with some of her best friends and got to visit her boyfriend, Matt who was co-oping in Germany.

Evan continues to put all of us to shame by being the coolest and most talented young professional out there. She's still working for GE and living in Greenville, but at this point I feel like she spent more time out of the country than in it between work trips in Europe and fun trips to Croatia (for "yacht week!") and Iceland. Yes Evan is thriving as a real adult while the rest of us are still calling mom to remind us of our social security numbers.

For the first time in six years, I was the only Cottingham in college this past semester. This summer I had an internship with Blackbaud in Charleston and had a great first semester of my Junior year at Furman. In October, I attended the Grace Hopper Celebration of women in computer science with 12,000 other students and professionals which was SUPER nerdy but also super fun and I was fortunate to snag a couple of internships out of the deal. This spring I'll be moving to Orlando to do a Professional Internship with Disney in Workforce Management (fancy word for running databases of employee info) and I'll follow it up with a summer in Houston with GE. If it sounds like you've heard all this before from Evan, you're not wrong. But hey, it seemed to work for her, right?

Mom and Dad continue to hold us all together while we run in a million different directions. As I mentioned earlier, they both rode with Ben to victory on his senior thesis bike trip for over 430 miles which is about 420 miles further than I've ever ridden on a bike. Dad is enjoying his job as the Trustee for the Zonolite Attic Insulation Abatement.... sorry I put myself asleep just writing that title... and flies all over the country to present at Home Inspector Conferences. I swear he says he loves it. Mom is still the queen and is still killin' the safe water game with Water Mission. She traveled to Honduras in February to work with the safe water systems firsthand and continues to love the Christ-centered mission of the organization.

So there ya have it folks, the story of me, my siblings and my parents this year. If you see us in 2016 we ask that you reference this letter only in APA format and with citations to the author. We wish you a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

*Haley*