

Roadway Worker Memorial Scholarship recipient honors father through success

Lyndsay Sutton fulfills her and father's dream



It is news no one wishes to receive and a knock on the door no one wants to answer.

Being informed that a family member was killed in an incident while on the job is a fear of many people with a relative, spouse or friend who is a roadway worker. These women and men are expertly trained. There are advancements in safety technology to prevent crashes or other incidents at work sites but no matter how much precaution is taken there is

always the chance that something can go wrong—just as it did in Sarasota, Florida on Nov. 23, the evening before Thanksgiving Day, in 2011.

Lyndsay Sutton was in her junior year of high school and living in Daytona Beach with her mother. She was getting ready to celebrate her seventeenth birthday, which was only a week away. Her father, Steve Morgan, had recently moved from upstate New York to Florida so he could be closer to her. Sutton planned on living with her father in Fort Myers while she attended college at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU).

“The night of the crash my dad took a shift because my birthday was coming up and he needed the money to come see me,” Sutton said.

Morgan was part of a team of roadway workers, who were setting up a temporary work zone to contain a crash site along the median of a roadway.

Lyndsay said her father asked a state trooper at the scene of the crash if there was anything else he and the work crew could do to assist police. The state trooper requested Morgan increase the space between the cones outlining the perimeter of the work zone, which Morgan was in the process of doing when an 18-year-old motorist lost control of his vehicle, entering the temporary work zone and striking and killing Morgan.”

The first person to be notified of Morgan's death was his sister, Margo Storie, who lived in New York. Then around 11:30 p.m. is when a state trooper came to my house and notified me of the crash. After that, I was in shock and a wreck but my family organized for me to come up to New York so I could be with family and so we could have the memorial service there so that was really good, to just be with family.”

When Sutton returned to Florida, the company that her father worked for, DBi Services, had set up a memorial service as well.

Following the services, Sutton said “there were highs and lows and it took awhile to really sink in,” but with a lot of family support and structure, she was able to direct her focus on selecting and applying to colleges.



Lyndsay Sutton (center) and her Aunt, Margo Storie speak with veteran television correspondent and anchor Forrest Sawyer at ATSSA's 47th Annual Convention and Traffic Expo.

“FGCU was still in the back of my mind because that was me and my dad's plan,” Sutton said.

Sutton said FGCU was the first college she was accepted to and she and her family went to visit the campus.

“Once I saw it, I knew it was where I was supposed to be,” Sutton said.

Sutton moved to Fort Myers to attend FGCU. With the support she received from her family and from DBi Services, Sutton said she felt she overcame much of the grief she felt following her father's death.

“Obviously it's not an easy thing to do, but I definitely had a great support team and then just fulfilling me and my dad's dream was enough to pull me through it,” Sutton said. “I'm the first one in my family to go to college and that was so important to my dad.”

Growing up with financial hardships, Sutton said money for tuition was always a worry in her mind so she began applying to scholarships. She heard about the Roadway Worker Memorial Scholarship program through DBi's Safety Manager, Jim Conroy, who was also the safety manager at the time of the crash Morgan was killed in.

Conroy told Sutton and her family about the scholarship program and about how The Foundation provides financial assistance to college for dependents of roadway workers killed or permanently disabled in a roadway work zone.

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“We (DBi) met Lyndsay and her family through the worst of all circumstances,” Conroy said. “It still amazes me how strong she and her family are.”

Sutton said she simply went online to find the application and read more about The Foundation before applying. When she was awarded the scholarship, she was able to reapply each year.

“With the scholarship and The Foundation and other scholarships I received, I was able to attend and graduate college without paying a penny,” Sutton said. “It was definitely a blessing and I think that I have my dad to thank for that. He was a huge part in me graduating college as well as my family and people from The Foundation and the other scholarship programs.”

Sutton, who majored in communications with a public relations concentration, attended ATSSA’s Annual Convention and Traffic Expo while she was attending FGCU. In 2014, during her first year at college, Sutton spoke for the first time to attendees of the Golf Classic Tournament, which is an event hosted by The Foundation that is held in conjunction with the Annual Convention and Traffic Expo.

“It was great to meet the people who have been helping people like me, who are in my situation to be successful in school and to not have to worry so much about gathering the finances to be able to complete school.”


Sutton attended and spoke at two other Convention and Traffic Expo events. In 2015 and this year, she spoke at the Sporting Clays Event, which also is hosted by The Foundation. This year, Sutton also had the opportunity to sit down with broadcast journalist Forrest Sawyer, who was the host during the Expo’s opening general session, for a question-and-answer segment.

“It was really great to share my story with all of the vendors and everyone who attended the Expo,” Sutton said. “If just hearing a story that hit home was enough to motivate them to keep doing what they’re doing and keep coming up with these devices and other things that will improve roadway safety, then I’m beyond grateful I had the opportunity to speak.”

Additionally, Sutton said she enjoyed meeting staff from The Foundation.


“I have a DBi family here and that’s how I view The Foundation. [Lori Diaz, Foundation manager, and Tom Wood, Foundation president] were just so great,” Sutton said. “When we met we really connected and just to be able to see their passion for having fewer deaths on the roadways, fewer lives being affected by these tragic incidents was great and comforting and just supportive all in itself.”

Diaz had been working with Sutton since she applied to the scholarship program.



Camera View-02

Frame # 288 Time 0.288



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“The first time I met Lyndsay, it was bittersweet,” Diaz said. “The Foundation had invited her to speak at the golf tournament. I knew she was there because she had lost her father, but she was also there to tell her story and to thank the supporters of the Foundation’s programs, including the Roadway Worker Memorial Scholarship program.”

During her final year at FGCU, Sutton said she wanted to gain some practical experience before graduation. She and her aunt reached out to Conroy to ask if there were any internship opportunities available. Sutton was able to start working for DBi, taking on administrative duties, conducting research and helping the company delve deeper into safety guidance. She also coordinated with project managers and safety managers to organize outreach programs, specifically reaching out to young drivers in high school, who were beginning to take driver’s education courses.

“The high school students were just learning the basic foundations and principles of driving so to reach them then is really important,” Sutton said.

The internship, which began in January of this year and ended in April, turned into a permanent position. Sutton began working full time for DBi on May 1.

“[Lyndsay and her family] have truly become part of the DBi family,” Conroy said. “Lyndsay is now a full-time employee thanks to her

determination to enlighten people about the hazards in and driving through work zones. She has made an immediate impact speaking to our workers at annual training events and continues the outreach she started as an intern.”

Conroy said Sutton will be a guest speaker at the upcoming Association for the Management and Operations of Transportation Infrastructure Assets conference in Savannah, Georgia, in mid-September.

“I was elated when Lyndsay said DBi Services hired her after graduation,” Diaz said. “She is a very smart young lady who will do her part to change the world.”

Sutton got married in May of 2015 and currently is the safety analyst and outreach specialist for DBi Services.

“I’m grateful for The Foundation. I believe in its mission and what they all are doing there, especially the Experience Camps Travel Scholarship program,” Sutton said. “It was really hard during that first year that I lost my dad. I felt like no one understood so for kids to have that opportunity to go to a summer camp and meet other kids who share that same suffering is really important. Overall I’m really thankful to The Foundation and I look forward to being in the industry with all of The Foundation and ATSSA staff.” ●

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