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## Sean Strong

University of Dayton

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# NEWS



SELECT LANGUAGE

*Monday June 15, 2015*

## Sean Strong

Sean Ferguson, who was struck by lightning April 8 as he walked across a campus parking lot, says he's ready to get back to the University of Dayton in the fall and finish up his degree.

Released from the hospital May 11 and still undergoing intensive treatment and therapy, the senior marketing major from Pittsburgh says the experience profoundly changed him, deepening his faith and

giving him a glimpse of how the University community extends beyond the boundaries of campus.

"I had a strong faith going into the accident, and in the last few years my faith has really branched out," said Ferguson. "But what I've been through made me realize you can lean back and lean on your faith."

What has deepened his faith has been what he calls "God moments," coupled with firsthand experience of the power of prayer.

One of Ferguson's most important God moments happened several days before the accident, when junior mechanical engineering major Matt Lickenbrock was looking for something to do while waiting for a plane in the Dallas-Fort Worth airport. He decided to spend some time learning CPR from the only automated training kiosk in the country located in an airport.

So, when Lickenbrock saw people rush to Ferguson's side after the lightning strike, he was ready. He stepped forward and started the CPR chest compressions that most likely saved Ferguson's life.

Ferguson doesn't remember the lightning strike or Lickenbrock or anyone who responded and transported him to Miami Valley Hospital. In fact, the last thing he recalls is thinking that he could go to KU for dinner or to his house on Trinity — a decision that changed his life forever.

He regained consciousness 24 hours later, at the same time his family was in Chaminade Chapel with members of the campus community for a prayer service dedicated to him — another God moment, he says, testament to the power of prayer.

He's grateful for all those God moments, and more, including the rainbow that stretched across the sky above that same campus parking lot on the day he was discharged from the hospital.

Cari Zahn, a first-year student, took the photo five weeks nearly to the hour he was struck by lightning and shared it with him on social media, describing it this way: "The most vibrant and complete rainbow I've ever seen appeared in the parking lot outside of the RecPlex on the day you were discharged. If that's not a sign of God, I don't know what is."

Ferguson has been astounded by the hundreds of people from around the country who have reached out with messages of support, prayer and encouragement. They have touched him deeply and given him a new perspective on just how far the UD community extends.

"I always thought of the UD community as the people I knew on campus," he said, adding that he thought he would leave that community behind after graduation.

"But I've had so much support and love from alumni and people I didn't know, I realized that the UD community expands far beyond campus after you graduate and the UD pride and spirit will carry on.

"It makes me happy to know there are so many good people out there. It's made me feel loved and blessed."

Keep up with him on Facebook at Sean Strong