

English 100, First Place; Professor, Dr. Jacqueline Wilson-Jordan

## **Crazy Coach Carter**

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Coach Carter waves his hands and calls timeout right as I am about to step up to the plate. As I run over to the third base line, he pulls me in by my facemask and gives me a stern look straight into my eyes. “We need that run to score; we aren’t letting them win,” he says as he points to my teammate standing on second base. He pulls me in again and says, “If she scores, we walk away with the regional champion title; you got this kid.” He smacks the back of my helmet as I run back to the batter’s box. I know if I don’t score that run, I will never hear the end of it. The fans and my team are roaring and I know all eyes are on me. I tune everything out, waiting for the perfect pitch right down the center of the plate. I make perfect contact, sending the ball into the gap between left and center field. I hear the fans and my teammates screaming louder than ever. As I am rounding first base making my way to second base I hear Coach Carter screaming “YOU BETTER GET YOUR ASS TO SECOND BASE, KID!”

As I slide into second base, I hear everyone screaming at the top of their lungs. As I stand up, I see Coach Carter sprinting out to second base with my team not too far behind him. They embrace me in a big group, or as I like to call it, family hug. None of us can believe that we had just beaten our biggest rival in our conference. It was the perfect way to end my senior year softball season. Coach Carter walks over to me with the regional title trophy in his arms and hands it to me. “I couldn’t be prouder kid,” he says with a huge smile on his face, embracing me in a hug and smiling for a picture for the newspaper.

That is a rare sight to see; Coach Carter never smiles. I was filled with so many emotions. I could not control myself. I was crying tears of joy because of our victory and tears of sadness because I knew that would be the last high school softball game I would ever play. Knowing that Coach Carter would never coach me again really got to me. I have Coach Carter to thank for making me the player that I am today.

The enormous amount of leadership qualities and dedication to the game Coach Carter possesses cannot be found in another coach. If he is not in his classroom, he is either in the weight room with the team or on the field. He truly eats, breathes, and sleeps softball. His coaching is very consistent, and he makes his players want to improve every day. Even if he makes them do the same drill or workout a hundred times in a row, pisses them off and makes them want to walk away from everything they have been working towards, he keeps reminding them to push through and get the job done. He is the best coach any player could have on so many levels.

Coach Carter is the kind of man everyone likes to be around. He is serious when it comes to softball, but he's always a complete goof and knows how to make people laugh until they are on the verge of peeing their pants. He always wants his players to give 110% in everything that they do. He used to tell the team, "You give me your time and effort, and I'll give you mine."

Softball is everything to me, and I do not go a day without doing something softball related. When Coach Carter noticed that I was giving more effort than everyone else, he helped me out more. He was the one who got me to play on elite travel teams, and to play college softball. Along with endless hours of high school practices, college practices, decision making and sleepless nights over this past summer, he was there right

by my side for guidance. He was the one that got me to the skill level I am at today.

Without him there to motivate, push and coach me, I would not have fulfilled my lifelong dream of playing college softball.

Not only was Coach Carter there for me for help with school or softball, he was there on a personal level as well. Tragedy struck my life March 10, 2015. Two of my best friends were killed in a car accident going to our school's basketball game. They were both only 16 at the time. When I got the phone call from my friends' mother telling me what had happened, all I could do was cry. The first person I called was Coach Carter. He knew of my friends and he knew that we were all very close. For about three weeks, I shut the world out completely. Coach Carter let me sit and talk with him whenever I felt the need to. He was there for me more than anyone else was. Losing two of my best friends took a huge toll on me and it will for the rest of my life, but Coach Carter always had my back to give me the extra push to keep going when it looked like I was going down the wrong path.

Throughout my life I have had to make some tough decisions, go through some rough times and overcome obstacles just like anyone else does. When you have someone in life like Coach Carter, you will succeed. He taught me to never give up, always accept a challenge, to face my fears, not make excuses and always follow my heart. I am beyond thankful for Coach Carter, and I will never forget him or the things he has done for me on and off the softball field.