

[ajc.com](#) > [Metro](#)

Fallen son honored

By [ERNIE SUGGS](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Published on: 05/30/05

Almost every day, angels visit Carey and Sally Brown.

Figuratively and literally. Since their son, Tyler Brown, died last year in Iraq, the couple's mailbox has been overflowing with cards and letters from friends and strangers offering their condolences. Checks have come in. E-mails. Phone calls.



Last week, they got a quilt knitted by two sisters in Florida, and President Bush has written them twice.

But the angels keep coming.

"We have received dozens of hand-crocheted angel wings from ladies all over the country. Almost every day," said Carey Brown. "There is a passion in America, a patriotism among Americans that I had no idea existed before Tyler's death." (The angel wings are sent through the Web site www.angelsforhope.org.)

CHARLOTTE B. TEAGLE/AJC

Since their son died in Iraq last year, Sally and Carey Brown have experienced an outpouring of compassion from friends, government officials and strangers. Tyler Brown, whose photo is on the table, was shot by a sniper.

Today, the country will mark Memorial Day to honor America's fallen troops. For the Browns, it has special meaning.

Their youngest son, Army 1st Lt. Tyler Hall Brown, senior class president at Woodward Academy and Class of 2001 student body president at Georgia Tech, was killed in action last September in Ramadi, 70 miles west of Baghdad, Iraq. He was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery.

"I used to look at Memorial Day as another three-day weekend, with parades and flag waving," Carey Brown said. "Now, Memorial Day obviously takes on a very different meaning for us."

Last Friday would have been Tyler's 27th birthday. The family used the occasion to celebrate his life and to celebrate the wedding anniversary of Tyler's older sister, Natalie.

Like Thanksgiving and Christmas before, Tyler's birthday and now Memorial Day are first-time emotional experiences for the Browns.

"It's never going to be easy," said Sally Brown. "We talked to the parents of other people who have died, and they all tell us that the first of everything is hard."

"I am convinced Tyler's beautiful character is a direct reflection of you and your family." Wendy

At 7 a.m. on Sept. 15, 2004, the Browns received a knock on their door from an Army chaplain, informing them that their son had been killed in action the day before.

Tyler Brown was slain by a sniper as he led a reconnaissance patrol in an Iraqi town infested with insurgents. His Army unit, 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, had been deployed from South Korea in early September and had been in Iraq only two weeks when he was killed.

'Focused, determined'

Tyler Brown got the military bug from his father, who was in the Army during the Vietnam War, serving mostly as a military policeman at Fort Gordon.

At Georgia Tech, Tyler Brown joined ROTC and entered the Army in 2001.

"I didn't want him to do this, but he was focused and determined," said Sally Brown, adding that after leaving Korea, Tyler Brown could have joined the honor guard. "When Iraq took front page, he made a choice to go. He wanted to go command his platoon. I was devastated. But I knew he was very intelligent, strong and focused and made his own decisions."

Older brother Brent Brown agreed that Tyler was driven in whatever he did, although he wasn't clear what his future held.

"We always talked about that, but he didn't know what he wanted to do," Brent Brown, 34, said. "He kept his options open. He considered staying in the Army or going to graduate school. He wanted to do a lot of things. He had an open mind."

What has been most surprising for the Brown family has been the outpouring they have received from all over the country.

"We are still being contacted by so many people who have been so loving and tender to us," Sally Brown said. "We have been so blessed. The angels every day in the mail. We still haven't been able to get through all of the things."

"You have every reason to be extremely proud of your son. He was a hero in every aspect even before he went to war." Lisa

"As horrific as the past months have been in one respect, there is 'good news' within the outpouring of support, care and love we have received from many around the world we do not know and will never meet," said Carey Brown, who is the national president of the Georgia Tech Alumni Association. "It is amazing how America honors its fallen heroes."

Scholarship set up

When Tyler died, his family set up the Tyler Hall Brown Scholarship at Georgia Tech, to be awarded to a Woodward Academy graduate. The family donated the checks they received to the scholarship fund.

The first winner was named earlier this month at the academy's awards banquet.

"I was just so honored to be the first recipient of the scholarship," said Elizabeth Ward, 18, who will major in architecture at Georgia Tech. "I never knew him, but he was an outstanding individual and I don't even know if I can live up to him. I just hope that I can make a difference in the world like he did."

At 9 a.m. today, Woodward Academy will hold a memorial service in honor of Tyler Brown and all of the school's alumni who have died in battle. Gen. Dan McNeill, commanding general of Fort McPherson, will offer the keynote address.

"He died six months ago, so I think about it all the time — Memorial Day or not," said Brent Brown. "The thing that we want to be cognizant of as a family is that we absolutely honor and respect what he did and died for, but there are other families who have gone through what we have. Memorial Day is to honor them, also."