

Teen Quadriplegic Follows 'Soul Surfer' Dreams

Scripps Ranch High School graduate Patrick Ivison's dream came Tuesday night in the electric atmosphere at The Viejas Arena, San Diego State University, as this young man who was paralyzed from the neck down at age 14 months was able walk across the stage, receive his diploma, and celebrate with his fellow classmates.

Ivison's story of overcoming his injuries has amazed and inspired not only his classmates, but a watching nation. As a quadriplegic he has become a member of his high school surf team, a leader at his school and has been accepted to the University Of Southern California Film School.

"Patrick has a truly courageous faith! He has taken a tragedy in his life and used it to encourage, challenge and motivate others to grow personally and spiritually," says Jim Marian, Ivison's youth pastor at Rancho Bernardo Community Presbyterian Church in San Diego. "His smile is contagious, his attitude is infectious, and his determination is an example to us all."

As pleased as any parent would be with her son's perseverance, Ivison's mother, Jennifer Kayler, said, "I am so proud of Patrick and all that he has accomplished. His life has been so blessed by the support of his friends and family. It has been through his faith and determination that he has made such a tremendous recovery."

Ivison's story is chronicled along with those of other 2012 graduates from Ohio, Alabama, Texas and Guatemala on the ConGRADulations! Class of 2012 Music and Media Grad Gift. In addition to student video stories, the project features original music from Grammy Award-winning bands Switchfoot and

TobyMac and electro-pop sensation Owl City. Also participating is Hawaiian Surf Champion Bethany Hamilton of *Soul Surfer* movie fame. They all have a message for the Class of 2012. It's a powerful message of hope, friendship and faith to this year's 3.2 million graduates.

"We are thrilled to help share Patrick's story with tens of thousands of his fellow graduates," says Allen Weed President of interlinc and executive producer of the project. "His story of determination and personal faith blows me away."

Iverson puts it this way: "I want to show the class of 2012 that truly anything is possible with faith and hard work."

"Technology is the primary means of communication for the YouTube, Facebook generation," continues Weed. "We are utilizing music, videos and the Web to encourage them to make wise choices for the future."