



Peanut Butter Cup Man

OPENING DOORS THROUGH MENTORED RESEARCH

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The 14th annual Mentored Student Research Conference was a success, with 542 students and 78 faculty mentors working on 250 posters. The conference is hosted by the Mary Lou Fulton Endowed Chair to honor Fulton's passion for educating and elevating student aspirations. The following is an excerpt from sociology professor Dr. Mikaela Dufur's talk on the importance of mentored research.

Mentored research has opened new doors for you at BYU, and as we celebrate your accomplishments today, I invite you to think about your future. Now that you and your mentors have created science, what's the next step?

To outline your future, let's return to the past. An enduring memory of mine from September 11, 2001, is sitting on the ratty couch I'd dragged from graduate school, glued to the news. I remember one family of adult children showing a flyer to the camera while looking for their father. The flyer read, "Please come home—we have peanut

butter cups for you." I always wondered what happened to the peanut butter cup dad and hoped he made it home to his family. Part of my annual observance of September 11 is to have and to share peanut butter cups, but Googling "9/11 Peanut Butter Cup Man" never brought up useful results.

Fast-forward 16 years to September 11, 2017, as I watched the news while brushing my teeth. By some small miracle, my morning routine aligned with a recitation of names of those lost. I turned to the TV just as family members finished reading names and

paused to share memories of their own father. They closed by sharing that a recently born grandchild was named Reese after their father's favorite candy. Peanut Butter Cup Dad had not made it home after all.

This was painful—I'd convinced myself a happy chocolate reunion had taken place—but now I was armed with a name. Peanut Butter Cup Dad was Ronald Fazio, and Google could find him. Mr. Fazio had

nearly made it to safety, but he stopped to hold the door for his coworkers. In those awful moments, he chose to hold the door for others to make sure they would reach safety. Mr. Fazio's family started the Hold the Door Foundation in his memory, devoted to helping people move through tragedy.

What does this have to do with your future? Someone held the door for you through mentoring, guiding, and teaching you. Now that you've moved through the door and are sprinting into your exciting lives, don't forget to hold the door for someone else. I especially urge you to look around for people who tend to be left behind—such as women in STEM fields, people of color, and people with disabilities—and to not only hold the door for them but shout to let them know you're there. Marry the technical skills you learned through mentored research to a determination to hold open the door by reaching out, teaching, and mourning with those who mourn. **Q**

