Good Afternoon everyone, I am Lleyton Ratcliffe, a former Batesville Basketball player who just graduated this past year. I would like to thank all of you for coming out and participating in the Batesville Basketball golf outing. In addition I would like to thank all of you for supporting and being a part of this astonishing program we have here at Batesville. Continuing on the theme of gratitude, I would like to thank Coach Garrett who invited me to share some words before the event.

What a journey we have been on this past year. After going from essentially empty gyms and questioning whether or not I would even have a senior season this past year, I am beyond elated that we are now able to resume and participate in events like the one we have going on today. As I look around and see the familiar faces of those who have been in the stands or those I have watched and idolized growing up as a young kid, it baffles me how I am now a part of this prestigious group of Batesville Basketball alumni or community members rather than a player. And Boy oh boy what a journey my 4 years were. I know that these 4 years I was a player in the program has provided me with an abundant amount of vivid memories that I will cherish for a lifetime. And that is all thanks to the players who paved the way before me, the coaches who put their heart, soul, and effort into the program, and the fans there backing me every step of the way. Without all of you, Batesville Basketball would not be where it is today. The culture, success, and atmosphere of the Batesville Basketball program was not created by serendipity but rather by a group of people striving to create something we all take pride in and are proud of.

To Coach Garrett’s dismay, basketball has and will always take a backseat to tennis as my favorite sport, but where basketball separates is all the extracurricular activity involved with being a part of this program, which I adore. When I first became a player in this program, I was shocked to say the least. I expected the intense and strict workload on the basketball side of things, but what amazed me was the level of community involvement with events like this throughout the course of season and offseason. This program has been and hopefully will always be constructed on the premise of making us superb basketball players and athletes, but more importantly better men. I feel I have grown insurmountably in both of those regards in my years in the program. The numerous lessons I have learned from the coaching staff and from others involved will continue to be implemented in every aspect of my life as I strive to become the best version of myself and I challenge all of you to do the same.

All of us in attendance today are a part and will always be a part of a special group and share an extraordinary bond as members of Batesville Basketball. For those of you who don’t know, we break down every huddle after practice with “Team on 3, Bulldogs forever on 6”. After 4 years of saying these words after every practice and paying it no attention, it is only now when I ruminate on the significance of the last part of our breakdown that I realize just how substantial those 2 words of “Bulldogs Forever” really are. Being a “Bulldog Forever” is something we all should figuratively and literally wear on our sleeves. We can all take pride in being a bulldog in the community or at the gymnasium due to the authenticity of the culture we have created throughout the course of all these years. I could not be more proud and ecstatic to be a

Bulldog forever just like all of you. Once again, Thank you all for supporting me and my fellow players in our journey for the past 4 years and thank you for attending and listening today, God bless.