

In recognition of the impact Todd Eagen made on our experiences as NAAOP fellows, we wanted to share some memories and express gratitude for having the opportunity to meet him.





Meeting with the OPGA & VGM group in June 2018

“I was blessed to have spent such personal time with Todd while visiting OPGA in Iowa during my NAAOP fellowship and meeting his wife Val and daughter. Todd was such a kind man and an incredible host when I visited. Todd knew that my Mom grew up in Marshalltown, Iowa, and went out of his way to make the visit special. While visiting, Todd took me to have a Taylor’s Maid-Rite sandwich, which was a local staple and one that my Mom talked about all the time as the place they’d go as kids. We then visited the home where she grew up (which I had never seen before), as well as her elementary and middle school. It was so very kind of Todd to go out of his way to re-live these memorable moments! Such Midwestern hospitality. He also pulled out all the stops at OPGA/VGM, making sure it was a unique, professional, and valuable learning experience for me to better understand the inner workings of O&P as well as state-based policy. It was an experience I’ll never forget. Later, when I asked Todd if OPGA would consider sponsoring me for paratriathlon, he never hesitated. Of course, every time I saw Todd, I could always count on being greeted with a big smile and bear hug. He will be missed in all the ways he shined his bright light on this world and his immense advocacy for O&P. He is sorely missed.”

-Nicole Ver Kuilen, NAAOP Fellow 2018

“Todd was one of the kindest and most genuine humans that I have ever met. During my time as an NAAOP Fellow, he was always there if you had a question, was a wealth of knowledge in orthotic and prosthetic advocacy, and was ready to share his knowledge with you. His smile and laugh were infectious. He will be greatly missed!”

-Alicia Carver, NAAOP Fellow 2019



Outside the VGM Ranch in June 2019



OPGA office visit in June 2019

“I first met Todd during a visit to OPGA as part of my NAAOP fellowship. Out of all the visits I did that summer, this one has always stood out in my mind because of the incredible effort Todd made as a host. He really went out of his way to create a great educational experience by sharing the wisdom gained throughout his own career, but also by arranging introductions to many of his colleagues. I am sure this took a lot of time to organize, and I always appreciated his generosity in doing this. Todd was also such a welcoming host and made sure we all had fun while we were in town! I was lucky to run into Todd at several conferences later, and without fail, each conversation began with him offering a hug and ended with him offering to help me with anything I ever needed in the future. I feel lucky to have met such a caring man and I know he will be missed by many.”

-Susannah Engdahl, NAAOP Fellow 2019



OPGA visit in June 2022

“I am so grateful for the time I was able to spend with Todd last week in Iowa. While in Iowa visiting OPGA, Todd went out of his way to create opportunities for me that would help shape my NAAOP fellowship. I felt as though he was feathering my nest with resources, mentors, and support, he encouraged me to use my voice and invited me into conversations that he knew I would learn something from. In the past 2 years I have had many great meals and many great talks with Todd, he told a great story and he laughed from the heel of his boots, he lived out loud and was not shy about letting you know that you were important to him. Todd always asked about my sons, he followed along in their team sports and made a point to call or message me if he knew one of them made it to state in wrestling or to the playoffs in football, his interest was genuine, and he loved to see pictures of them enjoying themselves. Todd Eagan wore a lot of hats; he was a father, a boss, a teacher, a mentor, and most of all, a friend. Todd touched so many lives in so many ways I am honored to have called him my friend and I'll carry his spirit until we meet again.

In honor of Todd, I am sharing a quote from my favorite architect, Daniel Burnham. I think this quote says it all and reminds us to love big, and to make Big Plans!"

*'Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir your soul and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble plan once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency.'*

-Nikki Grace-Strader, NAAOP Fellow 2022