

## Mother graduates in her quarterback son's place four days after he was killed in car wreck on his way home from prom

BY LYDIA WARREN | MAY 21, 2015

- **A friend who was driving has been charged with DUI after it emerged that 'he was under the influence of marijuana at the time of the crash'**
- **Another friend was injured and attended the ceremony in a wheelchair**

A mother has worn her son's cap and gown and walked the stage during his high school graduation just four days after the star quarterback was killed in a car wreck on his way home from prom.

Katherine Jackson was overcome with emotion as she took to the stage on behalf of her late son, Aaron Dunigan, at Thornton Fractional North High School in Illinois on Wednesday.

'[My son] knows his mom never walked the stage,' she told **NBC5**. 'I'm going to be his legs and he's going to be my wings and we're going to go up there and get our diploma.'

Her 18-year-old son was a passenger in a friend's car as they left a prom after party at a nearby hotel in the early hours of Saturday.

During the drive home, the car crossed a median and smashed head-on into a truck.

Both Dunigan and the driver of the other vehicle, 56-year-old Juan Rivera, were killed in the crash, and one of the teenager's friends, Mike Crowter, was injured.

He attended the graduation ceremony in a wheelchair and with a bandage across his head and wiped away tears as he hugged Jackson at the ceremony.

The students were being driven by another friend, David Peden, at the time of the crash.

The 18-year-old, who was allegedly under the influence of marijuana, was later charged with DUI causing death and reckless homicide with a motor vehicle.

All three classmates were scheduled to graduate on Wednesday, but following the life-changing event last weekend, only Crowter was there.

'It was prom night,' classmate Keshawn Harrison said. 'Just wasn't supposed to end like that.'

The graduation ceremony was a bittersweet event for many of the students, who remembered Dunigan as a well-liked and kind student. He was preparing to play football for Southern Illinois University in the fall.

'While our hearts are heavy and while we are experiencing death and anguish, it's still a time to celebrate because when tomorrow comes, you have to live,' school district Superintendent Creg Williams said at the ceremony.

'This has to be a moment of celebration and learning. Let their incident not be in vain. Be safe.' ■

## **Illinois Can't Afford Pro-Pot Policies**

**Be sober-minded; be watchful. 1 Peter 5:8**



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