

While at McNicholas, Justin continued to develop his passion for photography. He credits his teacher, the late Marge Stowe as a great teacher and artist, but also as a mentor and friend. "I am very conscious of the fact that I literally developed a mindset of expressing creativity through science in that darkroom. In fact, it was because of a project that I completed in Mrs. Stowe's class that I set the life goal of 'filing a patent.' " Even during college, Justin had maintained his interests in photography. "From the time that I left McNicholas, I had been moonlighting as a portrait and landscape photographer. I used photography to develop some chops as an entrepreneur".

Justin felt that McNicholas prepared him well for college and graduate school. The Advanced Placement courses prepared him more than he appreciated at the time, but they were an excellent way to prepare for life beyond high school. Like many Rockets, what Justin remembers most fondly are the people. He cherishes the friends that he made at McNicholas and the lessons that have served into adulthood.

When asked what advice he would give to the current students, Justin said, "I would encourage current students to start by identifying a set of core values for themselves, and then devote themselves to preparing themselves to accept unexpected opportunities as they open up to them. Rather than trying to map out the rest of their lives while still in high school, I would suggest job shadowing and interning over the summer. See what you like/don't like about careers that you might be considering. Take on challenges that you feel passionate about. Find someone who is willing to mentor you and continue to express a desire to learn from others. Our life's work will be most meaningful when our goals meld our interests with our values. In the end, our professional lives do not have to be straight lines. We each possess the capability to learn new skills, be innovative, change paradigms, and be disruptors within our professions. I believe that this is especially true as new graduates and young professionals."

Justin attended the University of Cincinnati. At the time, there was new professor setting up what he called a bioacoustics laboratory, and from that point on, Justin was hooked on acoustics and audiology. Soon after, he met Dr. Pete Scheifele and joined his team in the UC FETCHLAB. There, he began to test the hearing capabilities of exotic animal species and fit hearing aids on dogs who had lost significant amounts of their hearing abilities. This work led Justin into his career as a researcher for a medical device company that makes hearing aids. He took the job immediately after leaving graduate school in 2014. Almost immediately after joining the company, he started plucking away at fulfilling the life goal that he had set while at McNicholas of - filing a patent. As of today, Justin has 17 patents pending and is currently writing another dozen or so. The first patent will officially be granted on April 23, 2019.

I asked Justin to explain some of these patents. This is where it starts getting technical. I guess this is why I do not have any patents, but it is fascinating. Many of his inventions are related to ways of leveraging health-sensors and artificial intelligence to

improve balance and to help prevent people from falling. Related to that, his company just released the Livio® AI hearing aid, which is the first hearing aid with the ability to automatically detect falls and alert others. [Click here](#) to learn more about this product.

This work led Justin to get involved with the Bluetooth® Special Interest Group. Bluetooth® is a communication protocol (i.e., a set of universal rules) that allows electronic devices to communicate with each other, even if the devices themselves were developed and manufactured by different companies. Periodically, it makes sense to update the language, so representatives from the major electronics companies get together to agree on what the common language should be.

Because of his involvement, he has been able to advocate for the interest of patients who could benefit from specific new features that the group is exploring. He has also been able to leverage these experiences to educate his colleagues about the exciting developments that are in the making. Over the past year, he has been co-presenting with the National Consumer and Hearing Accessibility Advocate for the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA).

Justin currently lives in Minnesota, His parents are retired, and love to go up and spend time with him. He is the uncle to nine nieces and nephews, and loves coming back to Cincinnati to spend time with them. He tries to get back to Cincinnati several times a year. In 2017, he helped to curate the Star Wars toy exhibit at the Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal! Some of the connections that we have strike me-- remember it is called Connecting the Dots! In my days as a Rocket, I took two years of photography. I dabbled in my own wedding photography business. I am an absolute Star Wars fan, and I can say I went the opening week of the original movie! Sorry Justin, you cannot match that one, and I do have several patent ideas in my head. Maybe I should learn something from Justin's example and get busy with my ideas!

Justin has done, and will continue to do many great things. We would like to thank him for staying connected and getting involved in the Alumni Connectors program. According to Justin, "It is a great opportunity to open students' eyes to professions that they may never have considered before." Justin said his proudest moment as a Rocket was when he was invited to return to McNicholas as a speaker for the induction of Science National Honor Society members in 2014.

If you have a story to share, please contact [Shawn Young](#). If you would like to get involved in the Alumni Connectors program, please [click here](#).