

Recovering graduate feels lucky to walk

Dan Bishop temporarily paralyzed from wrestling

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AMHERST, N.Y. (WIVB) - More than 5,000 students walked across the stage on Sunday to celebrate years of hard work.

U.B. held its 164th annual commencement ceremony at Alumni Arena.

Among the thousands of graduates, UB wrestler Dan Bishop walked across the stage on his own to receive his diploma.

He's not only celebrating his graduation, he's celebrating his mobility and remarkable recovery.

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When the accident happened, he was in serious condition from injury to his spinal cord

Dan faced many obstacles in his long road to recovery

He was determined to walk again and made incredible progress

The wrestler took many steps and is hopeful of walking again

Walking across stage alone was a goal he set for himself after a wrestling accident left him temporarily paralyzed two months ago.

"At first my therapist said, 'well you might have to get pushed across the stage in a wheelchair' because we didn't know if I'd be up and walking at all within a year," Dan explained.

But Dan, being the fighter that he is, was determined to leave the wheelchair behind.

"I was like, I'm gonna do it, watch, I just kept telling them," expressed Dan. "I'm gonna walk across on my own two feet, smiling, and getting that diploma."

Dan said physical therapy, support, and prayer helped him meet that goal.

"Today is one of the best days of my life," he exclaimed.

A far cry from the way he felt back in March, when was competing at the Mid-American Conference Wrestling

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Tournament in Michigan. He was dropped on his head and remembers not being able to feel his arms or legs.

"When I was on the stretcher, I tried to give a thumbs up to the crowd and I couldn't do it or move anything!"

His father said had it not been for the quick medical attention, he could still be paralysed today.

His father explained, "It's a sport and anything can happen to anyone at any given time."

Dan spent weeks at Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital near his home in Schenectady.

He started walking on his own in mid-April.

He and his family said the support they've received is overwhelming.

"This is a huge family, from basketball, softball, baseball. Everybody supported him and kept telling him to hang in and keep striving."

Dan recalled, "I had a girl from South Korea message me and say she had a 400 person prayer group in South Korea!"

And they said thank you to God for this enormous feat.

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