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Be the Light. #OneLouder #OneBrighter

Everyone has a fire inside them. They come in all shapes and sizes. They're not exclusive to any particular lens through which we see the world, such as a political party. When we're little, we see a world full of possibility, hope, and dreams. Mine started right here in House District 5. Fortunately, I was one of the lucky ones, being raised by an entire community in Wellsville, Kansas (and *beyond*, to borrow my law firm's vivid mantra).

I could not only name every single one of my teachers and coaches in U.S.D. 289 to this day, but also give an example of how each and every one of them helped light my fire. From the stickers in kindergarten to painting Wizard of Oz to feeding mice (healthy food vs. junk food) to multiplication tables to attempting to tie knots on Halloween skeletons to the chicken dance in the 5th grade talent show to science fair experiments to dreaded 6:00 A.M. practices (if you're not 15 minutes early, you're late!) to written essays about the United States of Alcohol to Student Council and Future Business Leaders of America to representing Panama in our mock United Nations to prom and graduation to our Class of 2003 banner in the now-Kermit Deterding gym that proudly displays our alma mater.

I was able to learn from legendary educators, coaches, and other world-class citizens and business leaders in District 5. My all-time favorite, Mr. Jim 'Skeeter' Wright, now rightfully has the track named after him, where we proudly represented our Eagles in the Frontier League. My principal (and Mom's boss), Randy Renoud, is now our Franklin County Commissioner. I played my last-ever basketball game in a buzzer-beating loss at Central Heights to Coach Buddy Welch and his Vikings, the likes of which include my good friends Chris Woolery and Derek Brown (a fellow KU Law graduate, and now Franklin County Counselor). I've also had the pleasure of learning from my good friends from Anderson County, Osawatomie, and Jayhawk-Linn as well, ranging everywhere from my Pioneer League referee assignor, Eddie Clearwater, to educator and fellow referee Nancy Tooley (the guys in the front row at Wellsville High School might find this to be quite the impressive showing of "three blind mice"), to former high school

competitors and now educators Kyle Rush, Joe Sample, Brad Burkdoll, Kaleb Stoppel, and Kyle Wright.

For those who don't know me yet, I can't wait to meet you! We're doing our best to put together a collection of things on our website, www.marksamsel.org. From 2003 Ottawa Herald Citizen Scholar, 2003 Lawrence Journal-World Academic All-Star, 2003 Kansas Governor's Scholar, 2003 Kansas Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association Scholar (thanks Mr. Dressler, an educator now in Louisburg!), 2003 Ottawa Elks Lodge Scholar, 2003 Wellsville American Legion Auxiliary Unit #194 Scholar, and other high school milestones such as Boys State in Manhattan where I was inspired by Bill Snyder and other Wildcats, Hornets, Shockers, Ichabods, Gorillas, and Jayhawks alike. You'll find that citizenship, excellence, and helping others have long been standards to which I strive.

Of course, don't just take my word for it. I encourage you to reach out, get engaged in civil discourse, and do more than just vote. Our great State of Kansas needs us now more than ever. She needs us to remember that we're all on the same team, and our ships all rise or sink together. I've had the humbling experiences of listening to both President George W. Bush engage a crowd in Sedalia, Missouri and the same for President Barack Obama at Osawatomie High School (where it just so happens I earlier broke my nose while taking a "charge"—ruled a block by the referee). Neither were perfect, and neither am I, but I've learned that it's okay to respectfully listen to both. That's how democracy is supposed to work. I've interned for what our society deems conservative, moderate, *and* liberal public servants. All of them were just that—good, decent, Americans, human beings, and public servants, disgusted by the lack of cooperation and civility that too frequently permeates our governments, media, and yes, public discourse such as social media.

This leads to perhaps the overarching goal of OUR campaign: It's time to show the world, and *especially* the little eyes that are always watching, that WE are better than the current political imbroglio. It's time that WE inspire all ages. WE put our Kansas values to work, because WE must be the change we wish to see in the world. It's time to be the better versions of ourselves that we all know and love.

You see, we have the best and the brightest right here in House District 5. I know, because I've traveled our great State, country, and the world. I'm fully aware that the challenges ahead will not be easy. But surely you all know Dayton Moore's story, when the world told him he couldn't win in Kansas City with our Royals. Or look at Matt Besler and Graham Zusi, our hometown heroes turned Team USA and World Cup heroes. And our adopted hometown hero, Danny Duffy, who took the time in San Francisco to autograph a gold World Series baseball that now proudly sits on my mantle, inscribed by him with Colossians 3:23: Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart. He didn't have to spend 10 minutes of his day speaking with me just because he's a good person. But he did, and I'll always remember it. Do you think the roads were easy for Bill Self and Bill Snyder, two Hall of Fame coaches? Or what about my all-time favorite college athletes, Frank Mason (National Player of the Year) and Dean Wade (fellow Kansan on a superstar path), who both give countless hours working with and inspiring our youth?

Or just last week, Lansing native and KU senior Clay 'Claymond' Young #21, who inspired everyone in attendance (including my niece and nephew's first-ever KU game) at Allen

Fieldhouse with his story and the wise words of Rafiki from *The Lion King*: “To find it, you must look *beyond* what you see.” Indeed, that’s where our fires lie. Showing you how small our world really is, turns out his dad installed Wellsville High’s new football scoreboard (and at Arrowhead Stadium, too?!).

These are the people and stories that inspire us. To give our best, every single day. To be the light that fuels someone’s hopes, passions, and dreams. I see it every single time I work with children and our senior citizens alike. Kansas City is on the cusp of something huge. It’s getting its swag back. Well Anderson, Franklin, Linn, and Miami Counties, it’s time for us to step up to the plate as well! Whether it’s via our gravel roads, trains, planes, or highways, the 21st Century is coming fast, and our future has never been brighter!

Just check out your nearest public, private, or home school. Spend a couple hours speaking with our students. Or with our senior citizens. Or better yet, both, together. If you want to see a fire spark, simply watch a child’s face light up when visiting one of our farms here in District 5 and all the things we hold dear in rural Kansas. And as we enter a world of 21st Century education, we see it every time a student uses our new technology to learn just a little bit more about our remarkable world or a grandparent virtually connects with family although physically miles apart. We have exceptional people in our schools, but it will take a whole community to keep the American dream alive for our coming generations. There’s no better place to start than in OUR communities, and there’s no better time than NOW.

We see these fires in the eyes of everyone at high school graduations. We see it in our trade school and college graduates, millennials and non-traditional students alike. We see it every time our friends and neighbors buy their first homes, get married, and continue the circle of life. We see it as well in our farmers, school teachers, police officers, fire fighters, first responders, military veterans, manual laborers, oil field workers, health care professionals, and other hard-working individuals and families. Our seniors, too, carry this fire as they pass on their infinite wisdom, love, and affection to our younger generations.

But as Dr. Seuss teaches in the Great Balancing Act of Life, we all encounter things that douse our flames from time-to-time. For our kids, sometimes it’s right out of the gate, or perhaps a challenging situation, a loss, a bad grade, or an unsuccessful or uninspired first trip to college. Certainly we all encounter difficulties as we proceed through school and life, compounded by today’s wonders and challenges of smart phones and social media, more and more single-parent families or families with both parents working and frequently away from the home, and a rapidly changing world that requires us to think innovatively and focus on ideas, science, technology, engineering, and math, in addition to diverse languages, communication skills, and cultures. Today’s well-rounded education and citizen requires more community involvement and support than ever.

I hope we’ll meet soon over a coffee, Smokey’s or Brand’n Iron sandwich, high school event (be nice to the refs!), or campfire. More so, I hope you’ll join this movement and make us **One Louder** and **One Brighter**, as we tell the world loud and clear that Kansas House District 5 has had enough. I don’t pretend to be perfect or that we’ll always agree on every single detail, but I

do promise you my best, and to be honest, respectful, consider all sides and possible solutions, and then exercise my independent judgment each and every time I'm called to do so. This holds particularly true when we may later disagree on some of the smaller things, much like every time I have the honor and privilege of officiating basketball and soccer for our Kansas youth ("CALL IT BOTH WAYS, REF!"). Perhaps most important, I promise you my relentless work ethic that I hope will make all of us proud as WE work to inspire the world and be the light.

After seven years of solving problems for my clients as an attorney at Lathrop Gage LLP, including disputes and solutions all over the Sunflower State, United States of America, and *beyond*, I'm up to the challenge of now helping identify, evaluate, and solve the problems that impact our daily lives, future, and affect us the most. To do that, we need YOU, and your intelligent dialogue and innovative ideas and solutions.

I'm honored and humbled by this opportunity. House District 5, WE can be the light to ignite and spread the fire all over Kansas and *beyond*. We've got serious problems to solve, and there's no time to waste. You know it. I know it. So let's get the campfires burning, and bring plenty of firewood. And why not the hot dogs, football, yard games, and cooler while we're at it! The time is NOW.

Please get registered to vote, *especially* if this would be your first vote. Then please join us on **August 7, 2018** in the Republican primary election as WE make the world **#OneLouder** and **#OneBrighter**. As you can hear ringing loud and clear at your nearest high school sporting event, **#IBelieveThatWeWillWin**.

Very truly yours,

Mark

Mark A. Samsel