



## Curtis Carlson Nelson

January 7, 1964 - September 27, 2019

Curtis Carlson Nelson passed away of heart failure on Friday, September 27, 2019 in the Minnetonka home shared with his life partner, Amy Patiuk. He was 55. He lived a life characterized by a remarkable work ethic, persistence in the face of both opportunity and challenge, and love for family and friends.

Curtis Carlson Nelson was born January 7, 1964 in Minneapolis, Minnesota to Dr. Glen Nelson and Marilyn Carlson Nelson. He shared the name and the entrepreneurial spirit of his grandfather, founder of Carlson. From an early age Curtis took any job he could: weeding wild asparagus, selling merchandise door-to-door, and masterminding a legendary neighborhood carnival to raise funds for The Children's Hospital.

Curtis was making eggs Benedict by age nine and knew from a young age that he wanted to pursue a career in hospitality. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management from Cornell University (1986) and earned a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Business (1994). He later received an Honorary Doctorate from Johnson & Wales University. His early career included work for Hyatt Hotels and The Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts. He was recruited to join the family business, Carlson, where he made significant contributions across the portfolio: Carlson Hotels, Carlson Marketing, Regent Seven Seas Cruises, and TGI Fridays restaurants. He rose

to serve as President and Chief Operating Officer in 2003. For the past decade, Curtis was an independent investor who was deeply interested in the impact of new ideas and technologies.

Curtis was known for his big heart and his flair for "wow"—from creating outsized floral arrangements to conceptualizing innovative and ambitious business ideas.

His daughters Juliet and Jennifer were central to his emotional life. Their childhood memories include both his long hours at work and his ability to play at home: making homemade pasta, installing elaborate Halloween decorations, and creating vibrant firework displays. In their adult years, he offered counsel and a calm presence when they needed help. He taught his girls to dream big and fiercely believed in their potential. His life partner, Amy Patiuk, was a source of strength and joy, and he cherished their time together.

Curtis embodied the Carlson business and family Credo's final line, "Never Ever Give Up." His determination was defining as he faced significant health challenges caused by an early infection with Hepatitis C from a blood transfusion. He underwent a life-saving liver transplant at the Mayo Clinic in 2001. His family is deeply grateful for the subsequent 18 years that significantly exceeded the medical prognosis.

Part of Curtis's life included struggles with chemical dependency. His family and friends shared his journey with empathy and pain, but also with hope and a desire to mirror his persistence. In recent years, he used his experiences with addiction and recovery to help others with this disease.

At the end of his life, Curtis reminisced about his journeys: "As a kid, my favorite part of traveling was always coming home." Home is with his family and friends who will remember him with undying love.

Curtis is preceded in death by his father, Dr. Glen Nelson, and sister, Juliet Evans Nelson. He is survived by his life partner, Amy Patiuk; daughters Juliet Arleen Nelson and Jennifer Lynn Nelson; mother, Marilyn Carlson Nelson; sisters Diana Lynn Nelson (John Atwater) and Wendy Martin Nelson; nephews Alexander Muresanu, James Muresanu and Martin Nelson; and niece, Sadie Nelson.

Memorial services will be held at 11 a.m. on Monday, October 7 at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, 511 Groveland, Minneapolis. Following the Service, a reception will be held at the Carlson family home. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Curtis's memory may be made to the Mayo Clinic Transplant Research Center or The Menninger Clinic Foundation.

# Previous Events

## Church Service

OCT 7. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church  
511 Groveland Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55403