



James Alan Olson

September 25, 1971 - March 20, 2024

Life is a musical. If you don't spontaneously break into song & dance every once in awhile you're not doing it right.

James Alan Olson was born on September 25, 1971, in Ada, MN to Jim & Beverly Olson. He passed peacefully on March 20, 2024, in Minneapolis, MN.

James grew up in rural Twin Valley, MN with his five older siblings. He attended K-12 in Twin Valley where he was active in athletics, music & theater. He especially loved singing in the choir and had an incredible voice, winning numerous awards. James made many lifelong friends during his time in school and brought them along on his life's adventures.

Upon graduation he enrolled in cosmetology courses at Josef's School of Hair Design in Fargo, ND. His talents were quickly recognized and upon graduation he became an educator at Josef's in addition to becoming the stylist of choice for many in the area. In time, he opened his own salon in Detroit Lakes, MN, JJ Progressive.

In 2007, in search of continued personal & professional fulfillment, he moved to Minneapolis, MN. There he continued to educate & mentor new stylists and share his time and talents with his clients, most recently at Max Salon & Spa in Bloomington, MN.

Throughout his life James followed his passion for vocal performance & theater, most notably portraying the Cowardly Lion in The Wizard of Oz & the Skipper in Gilligan's Island.

In 2009 his world was forever changed when he met Mike Polston. They shared their lives and traveled the world together, marrying in a surprise ceremony performed by their good friend, Eric Berg, on October 16, 2017, on the Danube River in Austria.

James is mourned by his loving husband Mike, siblings, Jodele, John & Mick, Jarel, Jay & Linda, nephews Ethan & Seth, sister-in-law, Ellen Polston, his backup singers, Christy Delaney, Cindy Skaurud, Michelle Marks & Sonja Poer, extended family, colleagues & countless friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, sister Joannie & her husband Terry.

If you were fortunate enough to know James, you were very fortunate indeed. Although he would describe himself as an introvert, he made friends wherever he went. He left an indelible impression and his love, sense of humor & unforgettable hugs will be deeply missed. Direct remembrances to Open Arms of Minnesota, www.openarmsmn.org or The Trevor Project, www.thetrevorproject.org

Funeral services will be held at Wild Rice Lutheran Church, rural Twin Valley, MN on May 11, 2024, at 11:00am.

Inurnment will be at Holmesville Township Cemetery, Becker County, MN and at St. Mary's Town Cemetery in St. Mary's, West Virginia.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAY 11. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Wild Rice Lutheran Church
1507 County Road 36
Twin Valley, MN 56584

Tribute Wall

PT

“ James gave the best hugs.

Paige Turner - September 20, 2024 at 11:29 AM

TB

“ James or Mr. James as I knew him was a wonderful teacher and a grand friend. I was new to Fargo, an 18 year old straight off the farm and he made school so fun and purposeful. I do have a smile thinking back to 1991 and it just floods the mind with memories. I am so sorry to his family and friends for this loss. He will be missed so much!

Teri Lynn Bergquist - May 16, 2024 at 05:28 PM

KS

“ Growing up and living next door to James (and his family) was a blessing and a pleasure. He will be missed, but more importantly he will be remembered.

Kathy Spielman - May 08, 2024 at 03:34 PM

SL

“ My husband & I went to James back in the JJ Progressive says. He actually instructed our current hair stylist. He certainly was a talented nice guy. Sorry to hear of his passing. Sad.

Sandy Lia - May 07, 2024 at 02:42 PM

MJ

“ *Mick & John purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of James Alan Olson.*



Mick & John - May 07, 2024 at 01:06 PM

RP

“ *As a client of James for 18 years in Bloomington, I'm saddened by his early death. I looked forward to my appointments with this intelligent, kind, outgoing man. We both came from small towns and aspired to see more of the world. It made me happy that he, too, had the chance to experience new places. I really miss him.*

Renee Phelps - April 08, 2024 at 02:03 PM



“ *Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of James Alan Olson.*



April 07, 2024 at 09:34 PM

BR

“ *In loving memory of James, a beacon of kindness and warmth in our community. Though our paths crossed in the simple moments of camaraderie at a local bar, his impact resonates deeply. James possessed a rare gift of making everyone feel seen and valued, effortlessly weaving connections and banishing loneliness with his genuine presence. May his spirit of generosity and companionship continue to inspire us all. Forever cherished, forever missed.*



Meeting you was truly a privilege, and I am deeply grateful for the moments we shared. Thank you for gracing my life with your presence.

Brad

Brad - March 26, 2024 at 09:53 PM

HP

“ *Like so many I met James maybe ten years ago at the Eagle. We shared the far end of the bar almost every Friday thereafter. We solved the worlds problems from politics to sports but most the time was spent in humor. On many nights in the summer he would come over for swimming and drinks. Always naked, not because of anything nefarious but because in our private backyard, swimsuits just created unnecessary wet laundry. When my husband became ill, I leaned on James a lot for hugs and humor. Three years ago I moved back to NC and we texted and visited at Christmas. I am very sad that I was not there to support he and Mike in this chapter of there journey. The world is now less bright with his light missing. I will forever remember my dear friend with the amazing wit and wisdom that always picked me up during downtimes. Rest in peace dear man. I love you and will miss you.*

Hal Pickett - March 24, 2024 at 04:18 PM

ME

“ I was blessed to be one of James' clients at J and J Progressive in Detroit Lakes when he was there. James had such a kind, caring way of making us all feel special! Love his sense of humor, creativeness and spontaneous personality. I am saddened to hear that he has left us- but what a gift he gave to all of us- simply by being himself! He will be remembered with love, always! My deepest condolences to Mike and the rest of his family and friends! I hope to attend his service May 11th! Until we see you, again, dear James!



Melody S.

Melody - March 23, 2024 at 04:18 PM