



Jason Robert Albrecht

March 5, 1970 - November 2, 2020

From a young age, Jason engaged whole-heartedly across the spectrum of challenges and delights that life set before him.

As a 7-year old, Jason was the first person known to be diagnosed with a rare and aggressive children's cancer, Pleuropulmonary Blastoma (PPB). He endured years of major surgeries, chemo, and radiation at Children's Minnesota - all the while reaching out to other children and families struggling with difficult diagnoses and treatments and bonding with his caregivers. His experience of those years shaped him indelibly to bring compassion, imagination, and innovation to patients, families, and medical professionals alike in his chosen career in the world of pediatric hospital healthcare.

Building on his experience as a Child Life Family specialist, he embraced the opportunity to be part of building a new, state of the art children's hospital with fervor and dedication and is now acknowledged by hospital leaders as being the core of the M Health Fairview University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital's "DNA." He developed, taught, and implemented principles for putting the patient and family at the very center of the care team, for treating the whole person rather than a mere disease. Whether focused on palliative care, end of life comfort measures for patients and families, bereavement, patient room design, technologies to support patient/family connections to home and the broader community, or building a distinct culture of patient-centered philanthropy, no barrier was a match for his passion to improve systems, processes, and resources to improve patient care and experience.

Jason was a quiet, introspective, humble presence among his colleagues, but his insights and ideas had an oversized impact. Child Family Life colleagues, nurses, physicians, chaplains, and many others benefitted from the mentoring that arose from the principles about holistic patient-centered care and human-centered design that he held so dear. It is no wonder that his voice and vision were welcomed at a broad range of national conferences, addressing everything from hospice and palliative care to hospital design to the imaginative employment of technologies - all to help adults provide effective and soothing care for hospitalized children. Even in the depths of his illness these last few months, his passion could not be stilled: when he was unable to speak, he shared notes about his own observations and experiences with the firm intention of continuing to contribute to the arc of process improvement in the hospital.

Jason's commitment to and success in the hospital world was solid - but that didn't overshadow the other parts of his life. His first degree was from the University of Minnesota's College of Natural Resources, a B.S. in Recreational Resource Management, a field of education that mirrored his extraordinary and enduring passion for anything outdoors. A man of all seasons, he loved hunting, fishing, skiing, and camping. Jason's father, "Popps," witnessed the glory of Jason's childhood recovery and determination when he took him skiing in Utah. Despite 1.2 lungs and the thin mountain air, Jason conquered every slope in front of him and progressed to blast through the snow with abandon. His wilderness excursions were all-or-nothing life experiences - especially when he could get off the trail in the Boundary Waters, such as for the ice fishing that required a backcountry ski traverse of 8 hours.

No matter how tired he might be from work, hunting and fishing could always spike his energy and imagination - much less provide feasts to gather family and friends to share the tales of adventures and misadventures alike. His love of wilderness was perhaps never so well engaged and expressed as it was when it also became the setting for his love of scouting, his passion for teaching the next generation survival skills and joyful respect for beautiful wild

spaces.

Along the way, Jason also built beautiful furniture and remarkable scale models of World War II fighter planes. He brought an old 1.5 horsepower outboard motor from his maternal grandfather back to life. He built and flew electric radio-controlled aircraft and was a great fan of autobiographical accounts by WWII pilots and biographies of wilderness explorers.

Jason's kind, steady, inviting demeanor -- as well as his keen intelligence and irrepressible sense of humor -- drew many into the circle of friendship.

Colleagues, neighbors, and acquaintances made in every sphere of his life became part of the great cast of characters he befriended and loved.

But at the center of all Jason's professional, wilderness, historical and other interests was the family he loved above all else. People in all the other circles in his life would see him light up again and again as he spoke spiritedly and often of his wife, Carla, and their three children Erika, Anneka, and Nicklas.

Family camping excursions - whether at a nearby destination or in far-flung state parks - brought him untold delight. Participating in scouting events and supporting the school musicals Carla, Erika, Anneka, and Nicklas all took part in amused, energized, and satisfied him deeply. Tales about experiences with his children were laced with pride at their initiative, courage, insight, and tenacity. He so enjoyed those occasions when Carla and the children were generous volunteer "actors" for various brochures or videos he produced for the hospital, relishing each time one of those hospital projects came across his field of attention at work as a precious moment to realize how much they were the stars in the story of his life.

Jason was the first known survivor of PPB. Thanks to the drastic therapeutic interventions that saved his life at a time when all the other children in his illness cohort died, Jason enjoyed 43 more years of life, including 28 years of marriage to Carla and 25 years of challenging, rewarding work as an employee of Fairview Health Services. But those lifesaving measures so many years ago also took a toll on his body that could ultimately not be

surmounted, even with the months of great effort and skill expended on his behalf at the M Health Fairview University of Minnesota Medical Center and St. Joseph's long-term acute care hospital.

Jason's heroic efforts over the last months to regain the health necessary for him to return to the life he cherished and longed for with his family came to an end the evening of November 2 with them at his side. He lived and died in the assurance of God's eternal love.

Jason is survived by his wife, Carla; his children, Erika, Nicklas, and Anneka; his mother Sue (Dan) Horsley; his father Bob (Marge) Brown; his sister Kim (Charlie) Handren; his niece Rachel Handren; his cousin Bobby Brown.

In lieu of flowers, these suggestions for memorials for Jason highlight 1) the ravaging Pleuropulmonary Blastoma he survived, 2) the passion he brought to his innovative and impactful hospital work, and 3) the welfare of his family.

1. The Pine Tree Apple Classic Fund provides vital information to cancer specialists around the world and supports the healing of the patient's whole body when receiving treatment at Children's Minnesota. Jason was an eager supporter of their efforts. To donate online with a credit card (VISA, MasterCard, Discover, American Express): www.ptacf.org.

Checks may be sent to Pine Tree Apple Classic Fund, Attention: Nancy Jacobson, 450 Apple Orchard Road, White Bear Lake, MN 55110.

2. The M Health Fairview University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital fund supports much of what Jason was passionately involved with: patient and family programming and services at University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital, including child-family life services, integrative health programs, patient/family events, and more: <https://makingagift.umn.edu/give/fund.html?id=11442#0>

Or go to <https://www.mhealth.org/childrens/giving-and-volunteering-pediatric> for other fund options.

3. The Jason Albrecht Fund at GoFundMe was one that Jason was particularly cheered by, given looming family expenses: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/jason-albrecht-fund>

Visitation will be held at Holcomb-Henry-Boom-Purcell Funeral Home, 515 Highway 96 West, Shoreview, Minnesota, from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM on Wednesday, November 11, 2020. Please wear masks and maintain social distancing guidelines. There is a 60 person max occupancy at a time due to COVID.

Funeral services will be held at 10:00 AM on Thursday, November 12, 2020 (Visitation 9 AM to 10 AM). Again, please wear masks, maintain social distancing guidelines. Due to COVID-related restrictions, attendance at the funeral services will be by invitation only.

Funeral will be on Zoom for those who may not be able or willing to attend:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83850226745?pwd=QkNwd2hNeDJlaHJmNHVDdmZlbnk9TZz09>

Meeting ID: 838 5022 6745

Passcode: 915378

To view recorded service:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/4hSY2DcBSbZp0C4GWTppyOjqKGg7CEyPjs9GejDrej3wvJfTJ_aFBuDEfLYzPkvB.5NoUpP1f-UYdNGpw Passcode:
!!tMBU0*

Tribute Wall

SR

“ Here it is -going on 3yrs late - and only just today I discovered you no longer grace this world with your kind presence and smile and laughter. How blessed I was to know you and call you my friend at work. You listened to me and even cried with me - and sometimes I to you. But you enabled me to put on a smile and continue working when I didn't feel I could. Thank you. I retired from work and I missed you. To Carla, oh how he loved to talk about you and your children and the great great joy he felt to be around you and them. God Bless

Sally Rector - July 19, 2023 at 12:00 AM

RB

To Nate - my dear friend- I never got a chance to see you or say goodbye.
I have no idea what had happened, for the Lord to have taken you so young... 🙄🙄🙄so sad. Love you brother always!!
Many times Nate, you and I would have long deep conversations about world events. Making fun of all the stupidity in this world and we would laugh and laugh and laugh.
Nate, you have most wonderful sense of humor and I found you to be a very delightful conversationalist.
I will miss this. I have been missing this. I will continue to miss it, often.
Sending my love to you brother.
You're passing has made this world very much lesser without you in it.
I miss you dearly as a friend as a father and as a wonderful human being... God bless you always
Robert Braun

Robert Braun - May 10, 2025 at 02:09 AM

DS

“ Thank you for your friendship of almost 40 years. God bless. b

Donnie and Telura Sapp - November 13, 2020 at 12:00 AM

LG

“ *Carla and Family - I am so sorry for your loss. We were so fortunate to have Jason working with us at the Pine Tree tournament. While he will be greatly missed he will not be forgotten.*

Laura Gilchrist - November 12, 2020 at 12:00 AM

DW

“ *Carla and family it breaks my heart to hear of your great loss. What a awesome man, husband and father he was to all of you. He can never be replaced but will live on in your memories and the family that you have all become and will continue to grow in who you choose to be in the future. Saddened prayers to you all. Debbie*



Debbie Walker - November 12, 2020 at 12:00 AM

RB

“ *Carla, please accept my condolences. My wish for you and family to find peace and comfort in the arms of God.*

RoseMary Burkhalter - November 12, 2020 at 12:00 AM

PC

“ *Carla and family - I am so sorry to learn of Jason's passing. During my nearly 6 years at Fairview Foundation, I frequently worked with him on patient assistance needs and funding. He was one of the best - always exceptionally caring, compassionate, and humble, with patients at the center of his work. Living in the same community, we often had fun bumping into each other at parent-teacher conferences over the years, too. He will be missed, and you're in my thoughts & prayers.*

Pam Chapman - November 11, 2020 at 12:00 AM

JB

“ *Carla and kids - I'm so sorry to hear about Jason. I worked with him for nearly ten years at Masonic. I always enjoyed my time with him. He was supportive and helpful for me as a photographer to the hospital and his department. Your family is in my thoughts and prayers.*

Jim Bovin - November 11, 2020 at 12:00 AM

NS

“ *I am so very sorry...this is a tragedy! I worked with Jason for many years at Fairview in Peds...we shared tears and laughter and I know how much he loved you, Carla, and the kids...there are no words for this sorrow...please know you are not alone and prayers and blessings will be with you always. Jason and I believed that love is the only thing that never dies. Love you all! Nan*



Nan Stevenson - November 11, 2020 at 12:00 AM

ZH

“ *I am so heart broken and shocked by Jason's passing. He was one of the people that I will never forget from my current employment at the U of MN. He was an inspiration to others and to me. "You may rest in eternal peace Jason! I will, for sure, miss your smile and enthusiasm and I will never forget you and the first telemedicine project I helped you with when I gave you the "Zoi 500" Polycom!"*

Zoi P Hills - November 11, 2020 at 12:00 AM

JS

“ Carla,
The story of Jason's life is inspiring and amazing. Jason lived an incredible life of love! I am so sorry for your family's loss.

Thank you for sharing his story.
Blessings,
Julianne



Julianne Schwietz - November 11, 2020 at 12:00 AM

JT

“ Carla and family, I'm so sorry about the indescribable loss you all are going through, especially at this extra-challenging time. Thank you for sharing this beautiful summary of Jason's extraordinary life. I'm grateful he had a life well-lived. I'm saddened that it ended far too soon.



Jennifer Tonko - November 11, 2020 at 12:00 AM

MH

“ Dear Carla and family,
I am part of the Spiritual Health Services team at UMMC. I feel so blessed to have known Jason in his role in Child Family Life, and to have seen him often in the hallways, where he was always a smiling, beautiful presence. I am thankful for this detailed essay about Jason's life; he was a light and an inspiration. I am so terribly sorry for your loss. May God's love hold and heal you and your family, Myo-O



Myo-O Habermas-Scher - November 09, 2020 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ I am heartbroken to hear Jason passed away.
I'm here for you, Carla and family. I pray Jesus brings you immense
peace, knowing that Jason is always with you, forever.
Love to you,
Diane

Diane Smith - November 08, 2020 at 12:00 AM

MN

“ Carla, Nick and family, We are so deeply saddened at the loss of
Jason. He was definitely one of the good guys in this world. Love
and prayers to you all. Mary, Barry and Leo

Mary Nicklawske - November 08, 2020 at 12:00 AM

AB

“ Carla, and family,
My deepest and heartfelt sympathy. goes out to you at this time of
great sorrow. i will continue to keep you in my thoughts and prayers.
Upon reading Jason's obituary I could only imagine how proud you
must be to have been a part of his life and his many
accomplishments.

Arlene Bettin - November 07, 2020 at 12:00 AM