



John Paciorek

June 1, 2004

- Paciorek, John T. Age 58 of Coon Rapids, MN, bravely and gracefully passed through Heaven's gates and into the arms of Jesus from complications of Scleroderma on May 30, 2004. This was the toughest journey of his life and John accepted the journey courageously, knowing God has a plan for everyone and had been guiding him throughout his life. Jesus Christ was the 'wind beneath our wings.' John traveled the hills, valleys and curves of this journey with dignity, strength, courage, and kindness found in only a few. He was an astonishing man. Throughout his journey, John found time to comfort others, putting himself second and insuring their every need was met. It was such a great comfort to be able to fulfill John's last request and bring him home for his final days. He was cared for by his devoted family and was able to say goodbye to everyone who meant so much to him. What a great joy it was to see the sparkle in his eyes when those he loved visited and once again touched his heart. What a tribute to John that so many men were able to tell their good friend 'I love you.' This experience has etched an everlasting mark in the hearts of his family. A welcome Home reception was held for him as he entered the Kingdom of God, hosted by his mother, Ruby McNiff, father, John Paciorek, stepfather George McNiff, stepbrother Charles McNiff, half brother Donovan McNiff and sister-in-law, Marsha Statezny. The passions of his life were Jesus Christ, his family, cooking, British comedies, classic comedies and slapstick, westerns and fishing. John was born to John and Ruby (Anderson) Paciorek on January 23, 1946 in Minneapolis, MN. He attended Edison High

School (Class of '64) but graduated from West High School in 1966. He was a proud American and served in the Army, defending our freedom in Vietnam during the years of 1967-1968, where he was exposed to Agent Orange. John was a friend to thousands, cherished by hundreds, loved by many and a champion to one, his wife, best friend and soul mate, Orpha. John also is survived by his daughter Jody (Brett) Gamble of Fridley, MN and son John T Paciorek II of Minneapolis, MN, grandchildren Chelsi, Justus, Ashley, Leanne and John, Godson Tom (Nikkie Bang) Paciorek of Apache Junction, AZ, special friend Sherry Bangsund of Coon Rapids, MN and lifelong friend Ed (Vivian) Blaido of Fridley, MN, his 'family' from Summer Breeze (Bradley's) Resort, Farm Island Lake, Aitkin, MN, sisters Ruby Bartlett of Minneapolis, MN, Kathy Paciorek (Inez Montgomery) of Brooklyn Center, MN and brothers Tom (Lois) Paciorek of Murphy, NC, David (Peggy) Paciorek of Arden Hills, MN and Earl McNiff of Rutherfordton, NC, father and mother in law, Melvin and Carol Statezny of Crandon, WI, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and many friends. John was a member of the Twin Cities Carpet, Linoleum, Resilient Tile Layers, Terrazzo Workers and Finishers Union, Local #596 and was employed by Ziem's Carpet Work Room in Bloomington, MN. Thank you to all at Ziem's for the difference you made in our lives. What a great bunch of guys! John loved each and every one of you and you touched our hearts in ways you may never know. Thank you to American Family Mutual Insurance, particularly Sherry Bangsund, Jeff Holte, Tracy Meyer, Maria Sather, Bruce Thomas and the Catastrophe Claims Department, for your support, understanding, encouragement and kindness during John's illness. A special thank you to Dr. Lex Nerenberg and his staff for over 12 years of phenomenal care. Your understanding of John and the way you cared for him was heart-warming and will never be forgotten. Another thank you to the following doctors and their staffs: Jeffery Wilson, Clare McCarthy, Robert Lager, Kathleen Whitley, Michael Somermeyer and John Gray for their dedication to their professions, the care they gave John and the compassion you had for the family. What rare gems you are in today's world. Thank you to Dr. Sherry Crispen for upholding

her motto 'I am always here'. She was here for every hill and every crisis, always aiding in John's care in every aspect. He was comforted by your touch, voice and understanding. Another thank you to the apheresis & dialysis nurses from Fresenius Medical Care including Marti, Cathy, Terri, Rebecca, Shannon, Dan and Ivan. Every day, you brought us a little sunshine. Our last thank you goes to the staffs at North Memorial Medical Center, North Home Care, especially Jean Johnson, the police and fire departments of Coon Rapids, and the ambulance crews from Allina Health for their kindness and terrific care to John throughout this journey. It is in giving that we receive and the lives of those who cared for John shall be enriched greatly. Private Interment, Mass of Christian Burial 6 PM Wednesday at OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC CHURCH, 1 Lourdes Place, Minneapolis. Visitation 5-9 PM Today with a Rifle Honor Salute at 7 PM in the funeral chapel parking lot. Also, visitation 1 hour prior at church on Wednesday. Washburn-McReavy Seman Chapel 1827 Coon Rapids Blvd 763-767-1000.

Tribute Wall



“ I think of him and the whole family. I'm sorry for your loss. He was very family oriented. He knew what was right and was never quiet about the wrongs. I'm sure he is smiling and proud of everyone he has known. I wish he could've met his Great Grandson John Thomas Paciorek VI. I can see his Great Grand-Dad when he smiles. He likes seeing the picture of his Great Grand-Dad. He ask me about him. I tell him about the John I knew. I hope the family is all well in these scary times. Never forget the ones that are gone. I send the family my prayers and best wishes. I'm glad to had known him.....



Paula (DeMars) Bahner

Paula Bahner - November 27, 2021 at 04:36 AM



“ I miss you

January 06, 2007 at 12:00 AM



“ ~

Jody Paciorek-Gamble,

Fridley

Contact Me

Jody Paciorek-Gamble - January 06, 2007 at 12:00 AM

OP

“ Once again this is the weekend of the John Paciorek fishing contest on Farm Island Lake held at Summer Breeze Resort. We are so fortunate to have such wonderful friends. The fishing contest itself is a tradition that is over 20 years old and last year was the first year they dedicated the contest and honored John. We sure had a great time at those contests and how proud and happy was John when a Paciorek won a category. We'd put in long hours on the water, trying for the largest fish and often take the kids to the docks we knew had rock bass and sunnies so they could catch a boatload of fish and have a blast. What great memories. Always a highlight of the contest was the presentation of awards and the entertainment. As I wrote in the entry last year on August 7th, John played many characters in these skits. This year, I have attached several photos of those characters. He was such a trooper, never refusing to be whoever we desired him to be. As I write this entry my heart is heavy with sadness for all that I have lost but grateful for all that we have had over the years. Our friends at the resort are priceless. I shall love you all forever. Thank you for continuing to honor John. As time goes on and life continues, two things are for sure. I loved my Champion with all my heart and I miss him very much.

~

Orpha Paciorek,

Coon Rapids, Minnesota

Contact Me

Orpha Paciorek - August 07, 2005 at 12:00 AM

OP

“ Another holiday without my Champion and another 24 hours of heart break. There is a sportswear logo that says "There are many contenders, but only one Champion". John had a t-shirt that expressed that statement but how true the statement was for him. Life goes on but it is not the same, nor will it ever be. I miss you, my Champion.

~

Orpha Paciorek,

Coon Rapids, Minnesota

Contact Me

Orpha Paciorek - July 04, 2005 at 12:00 AM

BC

“ John, today the whole nation is remembering all the fallen soldiers. We as a family are also remembering a great soldier and friend. We didn't get to spend a lot of time together but when we did I have never forgotten it. Every time I make pasta I hear your voice "Don't rinse it"; I giggle everytime. Everytime Jerry eats a "Cheeto"; I laugh and everytime I think of all the great times and things you have done for my family, I thank God for allowing us the time, though it was short, to have you as a major part of this crazy family. For that John, I will never forget. Take care of my family that is with you.
Love always,

~

Bea Collin,

Fort Walton Beach, Florida

Contact Me

Bea Collin - May 31, 2005 at 12:00 AM

CS

“ John, it's been a year since you were taken away from us so quickly.

This would have been the first big weekend for the trip to the Lake. You would be sitting out by the camp fire telling jokes, just listening to the sound of the water against the shore, and having a grand old time.

I know the folks up there are missing you as much as we are here. Yesterday I was alone most of the day and I had alot of time to think of all the good times we had together, just talking, going grocery shopping, and just sitting watching the FOOD Channel on TV. Oh, what fun!

We miss you very much and know you are in a better place with no pain!

Love you and will met you again someday.

Love, your Wisconsin family

MOM and DAD

~

Carol Jean Statezny,

Crandon, Wisconsin

Carol Jean Statezny - May 30, 2005 at 12:00 AM

OP

“ Today marks the 365th day since my Champion went home to be with his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Some days it seems like yesterday, others days it seems I have been alone for an eternity. I miss my Champion. As I have said many times before, I am very fortunate. I was fortunate enough to find someone who loved me with unconditional love and loved me with all that he had to offer. I am also very fortunate that I was able to find someone that I loved with conditional love and that I loved him with all that I had to offer. Sometimes, fortune is not all it's cracked up to be, because when you lose your fortunate someone, you have lost something that is irreplaceable. Today as I think about my Champion, I have many thoughts.....happy memories, sad memories and hard times. I wouldn't change my life with John for anything in this world. We had been through it all. And, it is with great happiness in my heart that I can say, I would do it all again, in a heartbeat. Memorial Day is the day the United States observes the bravery and heroic measures of its Armed Forces. John was a very proud veteran. He served his country in the Vietnam War a service that contributed to his death. John would want his fellow veteran to know how proud of them he is, how much he appreciated what they had to do and how honored he was to be in their company. What a great presentation his fellow Vietnam Veterans portrayed at his memorial service. The 18 gun salute was fabulous. For today thoughts, I have enclosed John's service picture. You will be able to see how very young he was when he was drafted. I miss my Champion.

~

Orpha Paciorek,

Coon Rapids, Minnesota

Contact Me

Orpha Paciorek - May 30, 2005 at 12:00 AM

CS

“ Dear Orpha and others who loved John; I am so sorry to hear of the death of John. It is certainly evident he was greatly loved, and missed in equal measure. My only brother, Jerry, passed on at age 58, in 1995, June 11. His 4-by-passes gave him three extra years, but the problem with having no component in his blood called Factor Five (to prevent excessive clotting) became too great a problem. You are in my prayers and thoughts; I will look forward even more-so to seeing some of your siblings August 6. Sorry you will not be there, Orpha.

Some people are such a blessing to have known. They will always be remembered with gentle smiles, good stories, laughter, and happy feelings in the hearts of all who loved them. This was so true of Jerry; I'm sure it is true for John also. God Bless You All.
Much love, Colleen and Larry Schnur

~

Colleen (Marsh) Schnur,

Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

Contact Me

Colleen (Marsh) Schnur - May 10, 2005 at 12:00 AM

DB

“ *John,
I am sure that you are cooking up a big feast for you, Marsha, Gram
& all the other angels. We never got together that often for Easter
but I know you always made it special for Orpha & friends.
We miss you so much. Take care of my sis & gram. Until we meet
again.
Love, Deb & family*

~

Debbie Brass,

Argonne, Wisconsin

Debbie Brass - March 27, 2005 at 12:00 AM

“Every day life amazes me. When we wake up each morning, we never know what the day holds in store for us. Some days life is fabulous while other days life is pretty hard. We are observing Holy week and today the Christian world observes Good Friday, the day of Jesus Christ’s crucifixion. There is a wonderful contemporary Christian song, written by David Phelps, called “The End of the Beginning”, which signifies this event and the life of Christ. Without that event, we would have no hope. Today I think of that song and it’s title and it reminds me that today, for me, marks the beginning of the end. One year ago today, John was rushed to North Memorial Hospital after calling 911 and really, he never returned home again. I remember when he was first diagnosed with scleroderma, how the doctors advised us as to the seriousness of the condition. Who would have guessed that a little over a month from that diagnosis, we would be in a downhill spiral that would be fast, furious and last only three months. Every day I miss My Champion. Every day I hear John’s voice when I finally reached him and had to call 911. Every day I remember the pain and suffering he went through with the treatments. Every day I recall how he would call to me “Hello my Dove” when I arrived home. Every day 20 years of memories flood my mind. Every day I am still amazed at how brave he was and how strong his faith was. John truly was an incredible man and I loved him with every ounce of my soul, every part of my heart and every fiber of my being. With an empty heart I say these things and still God amazes me. He allows me to remember and even through my pain and heartbrokenness He reminds me that tomorrow may be a better day and that my life is controlled by His plan, not mine. I have lost My Champion and therefore I have lost a part of myself. Celebrate the Easter holiday and know that God is awesome, ever knowing and has a plan.

~

Orpha Paciorek,

Coon Rapids, Minnesota

Contact Me

Orpha Paciorek - March 25, 2005 at 12:00 AM

OP

“ Today is the day John would have celebrated his 59th birthday. Really, what a young age. As I sit and remember his birthdays of the past, I remember many times of happiness, times of sharing friendship, times of fellowship and mostly, times of love. I remember the surprise parties we had, the parties with our friends and family and I remember the times it was just the two of us. As I remember those times, I miss them more than ever but I miss my Champion most of all. We were so fortunate to have so many memories. Every day we were together brought a new memory, held a new surprise and brought us closer together. Was life easy? Was life simple? Was life always happy? Obviously life was not. I cherish those moments, every single one of them. Memories, what would life be without them. For this entry, I have included the picture of John cooking at the Viking range, a place he was very comfortable and a place he really loved. John was a fabulous cook and he would spend hours watching the food channel, reading cookbooks, shopping at the supermarket and then, behind the stove, grill or smoker. He loved food and he loved sharing his gift, knowledge and craft of cooking. As you think of John today, remember the good times, the gifts he shared. I will remember all of those, as I miss him as much today as ever. I love my Champion and miss him, in every way possible.

~

Orpha Paciorek,

Coon Rapids, Minnesota

Contact Me

Orpha Paciorek - January 23, 2005 at 12:00 AM

CS

“ Today would have been John's 59th birthday-I guess the Lord had better plans for him than we did-So he took him away from us on May 30, 2004 and we miss him very much-We believe John is doing a very good job for the Lord, probably cooking meals as he so liked to do-We miss you and love you very much!
Mom and Dad and your Wisconsin family

~

Carol Jean Statezny,

Crandon, Wisconsin

Carol Jean Statezny - January 23, 2005 at 12:00 AM

“ It is with every breath I take that I realize just how much I loved and just how much I have lost. The months, the hours, the days, and minutes, they all blur together. And really, what do they matter. One minute, one hour, one month or several, it really doesn't matter, I miss my Champion as much today as I did on the minute he took his last breath. It was those last three weeks of my Champion's life that he showed the courage that many would never be able to portray. It was his love and faith in Jesus Christ that enabled him to complete his life with dignity and honor. Many don't seem to understand the true bond that my Champion and I experienced. Sad but true, many will never understand, for the type of love and bond that we were fortunate to share will not be experienced by many, but rather, only a precious few. We lived together, we relied on each other, we shared together but most importantly we loved together. My Champion was my inspiration, he was my breath and he was my reason for living. He made my heart smile. He is why I loved to live and he was why I was able to live. He allowed me to be me. To be free and to be confident, and without him, I am lost. Our love was as deep as the ocean, as high as the mountains and as long as the eyes could see. I knew we had a love that would last a lifetime; I just didn't know a lifetime would be so short. I miss him more than many will ever understand. With in the past few weeks I attended a gathering with our family from Farm Island Lake. It was the first time I saw most since June. It was a fabulous gathering of friendship and love but also broke my heart into the millions pieces once again. And while my attendance only lasted several minutes, it was by far, the most difficult gathering I have attended. I can only imagine what the summer will be like when, once again, I return to the lake and that ever-important part of our life. These people mean so much to me as they did John, and it warms my heart to know they understand how broken and crushed I am, even to see their faces. I want to be with them, but not alone. I know there will be a time in my life when tomorrow will continue and the pain will be less, but not today. I love you and I miss you, My Champion.

~

Orpha Paciorek,

Coon Rapids, Minnesota

Contact Me

Orpha Paciorek - December 30, 2004 at 12:00 AM

CS

“ Today it was six long months since you left us so peacefully. We know that you are finally without the pain that racked your body for so long and that none of us could feel. We miss you and think of you every day. A prayer is said more often than not at least a dozen times a day for those who loved you and miss you. We have a gapping hole in our chest that was once your laughter and smile. We love you and miss you more than words can say!
Love, Mom and Dad Statezny

~

Carol Jean Statezny,

Crandon, Wisconsin

[Contact Me](#)

Carol Jean Statezny - November 30, 2004 at 12:00 AM

“ This is the time of year that most people stop, think and give thanks for the blessings they have received. This year, as hard as it is to do, I still give thanks for the many, many blessings received throughout the year. I, myself, choose to give thanks every day, even with a broken heart. It's what keeps me going, knowing God is good, looking out for me and blessing not only myself, but also those around me. We, My Champion and I, had many blessings and therefore were very grateful. We had our faith in Jesus Christ and the knowledge that through His sacrifice, we would enjoy everlasting life. This faith made it possible to endure the horrific events of this spring and early summer and it is this knowledge that holds me together today. I know where My Champion's heart was, and therefore I know where his soul is today. We had our undying love for each other. Yes, throughout our life together we had additional trials, but we stuck together, through thick or thin. We always knew we could count on each other no matter what. We were what the other lived for. We had our families. Supportive, sharing memories, you have no idea what that is worth. We had our friends, our many, many friends. I wish there was another word that could be used for most of our friends besides the word 'friend' because they are so much more. I am lucky to still enjoy these blessings and look forward to the days when I can face life without restrictions, the way we did in the past. I have not reached that plateau yet, as I need to struggle with life on my own, in my own way, my own time. I miss My Champion more than I can express but I am very grateful, more than you know, for these many blessings. Wishi ng you all a multitude of blessings throughout the year.

Orpha Paciorek,

Coon Rapids, Minnesota

Contact Me

Orpha Paciorek - November 26, 2004 at 12:00 AM

LL

“ *The leaves have all fallen and the holidays are approaching. I can't believe summer came and went without John. Our time at the lake this year, just wasn't the same without our "Good Neighbor". We missed his cooking every weekend and his jokes and laughter at every campfire.*

As the holidays approach I cherish my memories of John even more. We loved to get together over the holidays and share special times with John and Orpha. Card playing on cold Saturday nights was a barrel of laughs and never a dull moment.

This year my thoughts and prayers turn to Orpha. As tough as it's going to be on me to miss John this year, it will never compare to what Orpha will be going through. However, I know her Guardian Angel, "Her Champion" will be looking after her from above and that makes me feel good.

~

Lisa Long,

Fridley, Minnesota

Lisa Long - November 15, 2004 at 12:00 AM

DB

“ On Oct. 30th, we met together for mom/dad's 50th anniversary (Nov. 8). Denny surprised us with a very short visit. We met at Wolff's Inn for supper. Bea couldn't make it this time but the rest of us did. We had a good time, & missed you, Marsha & Gram so much. Until we meet again.

~

Deb Brass,

Argonne, Wisconsin

Deb Brass - November 07, 2004 at 12:00 AM

“ There are times when I sit down to write these messages that I am sure I know what I am going to write and then there are times that the messages write themselves. We are approaching Halloween, a holiday that John enjoyed because he loved seeing the kids dressed up and he loved being a kid himself. He would buy much more candy than we would ever need and sometimes he would dress up but always he would scream “boo” when answering the door and scare the trick or treaters. He loved the time with the kids and I loved watching him. Many thoughts come in and out of your mind when you lose a loved one, especially one as special as My Champion. This month we would have closed up the lake after sharing so many wonderful memories, celebrated many birthdays, including his daughter and son-in-law’s and looked forward to celebrating the 50th wedding anniversary of my parents in November. We have shared so many special memories with our family and friends. We are so lucky to be loved by so many. My Champion had very strong beliefs. First was his love for Jesus. John knew God loved him with unconditional love and gave His only Son that he, John, shall have everlasting life. Second was his love for his wife, which was me, and how lucky could a girl be. How lucky was I that he loved me more than life itself, no matter what, no matter where, no matter when. Next was his love for his family and then friends. He adored his daughter and her family. Lastly was his love for himself. He put others first and sacrificed much. I can’t tell you how broken my heart is because there are no words left to express it, only tears. I miss My Champion every day, every hour, every minute, every second. Our lives were so intertwined..... I breathed for him and he for me. When he smiled, I smiled. When he cried, I cried. Our walk became one, each step paced by the other. Our love was deep and not everyone finds that love. We were inseparable until the day of the final separation. With every day that the illness overcame him, my heart cracked with devastation until the day he breathed his last breath, and then my heart broke into a million pieces. For the past 153 days I have awakened in search of a piece of my heart, hoping that today may be the day I find a piece that can be picked up and placed in a spot it will stay. Each day I

pick up that piece, only to have it slip through my hands and tumble to the ground, breaking even more. For the past 153 days I have cried a multitude of tears. I can still hear his voice, smell his presence, feel his touch and see that ever-present sparkle in his eyes. For the past 153 days I have returned home and longed for his voice proclaiming "Hello My Dove". For the past 153 days I have awakened knowing that I am not going to be with My Champion today, in this life. For the past 153 days I have missed the man I married, the man I adored and the man I chose to spend the rest of my life with. I know how very much we loved and cherished each other. But then again, who's counting.

~

Orpha Paciorek,

Coon Rapids, Minnesota

Contact Me

Orpha Paciorek - October 30, 2004 at 12:00 AM

OP

“ Another month as gone by and as I think of My Champion on the "last weekend of the summer", my heart is filled with tears. For us, this meant a wonderful weekend filled with fun at the lake. The Tom Morris Bradley Board Tournament, with everyone attending, was always a highlight as well as the food and friendship. The other big event for this weekend that meant a lot to us was the International Off Road Races in Crandon, WI. While we didn't attend these races often, we always kept an eye on the event because of the participation of Fay (racing or not) and the rest of the family that worked at the races. Marsha loved this event, and as always, was ever so proud of the winnings of Fay. The picture attached to this entry is of Fay securing John in his race car, the day he took you on a "ride" around the track. I remember what a memory he created for John and how thrilled he was when it was over. As you can see from the picture, I think my Champion was a little nervous. I miss you every day and wouldn't trade one second of our love, memories or this heartache for only knowing happiness. I LOVE YOU MY CHAMPION.

~

Orpha Paciorek,

Coon Rapids, Minnesota

Contact Me

Orpha Paciorek - September 04, 2004 at 12:00 AM

“ Today, as I think of MY CHAMPION I can't help but think of our “family” from Summer Breeze Resort on Farm Island Lake. Today is the day of our annual fishing contest and we are humbled to have this year's contest honor John. The contest starts at midnight Friday night and concludes at 4 pm on Saturday. Since the first contest (closing in on twenty years now) we not only fished the entire day but we had to be the first boat on the water. In the earlier years, you would see our boat leave the dock at 12:00 midnight and head out into the darkness but in the later years, John would just head down to the dock, make a few casts and return to the campfire. It was important to him to maintain his title of "first fisherman out". Trophies and prizes are awarded in several categories both for kids and adults, along with every child receiving a gift and many adults receiving additional “awards”. We have participated every year in the contest with our children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews along with their friends. Our family has won many awards in this contest over the years but the main attraction of the contest for us was the friendships. The kind of relationships we enjoy with this group of people is second to none, rare and everlasting. We are very blessed. We love everyone at the resort and they loved John. The other main attraction of the contest was the “skits” we performed every year. John was always the “main character” of the skits. From the TY beanie baby “crab”, Scooby Do, Pokemon, Mimi from Drew Carey, the big bad wolf and most recently Sponge Bob Square Pants (among many others) John entertained the masses, bringing many to tears from laughing so hard. John was a fabulous main character. No matter the weather, be it heat or rain, John willingly put on the costume, played the part and did whatever we asked to entertain the troupes. It was a fabulous time and I'm not sure who enjoyed the skits more, the kids or the adults. It certainly was a highlight of the weekend. With the entire resort (and others from around the lake) taking part in the contest, the potluck meal and then the awards and show, this weekend was extra special. John loved participating but most importantly, John loved everyone that participated. He loved everyone at the resort. This “family” stood by us during and after the brain aneurysm John had in 1992

and they have been by us every minute through this illness. Our "family" at Summer Breeze Resort is closer than many families might possibly dream. This "family" accepts everyone as they are; no expectations, no preconceived notions, no preconceived expectations. That is a rare and unusual trait for any "one" to have, let alone "manyone" to have. It certainly is a wonderful place. John enjoyed the fishing, nightly campfires, the luncheons at The Girl's Diner, the occasion night alone, the card games and the Bradley' board games. John loved it all. It was the some of the happiest moments of his life. Some people never experience one love, one happy moment or one happy place. We have been fortunate to have many. As I close today, I thank our "family" from Summer Breeze Resort, for our memories of the past, the memories of today and the memories of the future. I can't tell you what today has meant. Although I am not there physically, I am there in spirit and you will never know how you have touched our lives.

~

Orpha Paciorek,

Coon Rapids, Minnesota

Contact Me

Orpha Paciorek - August 07, 2004 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ Hi John,

Just wanted to let you know that Orpha laid the carpet in the house today. She came last night and worked all day today with some of Fay's help and a little of mine. Dad had some Lion's Club business to attend so he didn't help much. We went to watch Christopher race but she stayed right here and did her work as usual. When we got back she was on her way back home. We all miss you and love you so much and it hurts to see Orpha in so much pain and I hope and pray that someday she will be able to talk to us like she used to when you were at her side. I know I don't feel the pain like she does but it sure hurts to see what she is going thru.

We have a candle in the window just for you and it shines extra bright.

Love you and miss you.

Mom and Dad

~

Mom and Dad Statezny,

Crandon, Wisconsin

Contact Me

Mom and Dad Statezny - July 18, 2004 at 12:00 AM

JR

“ John, I am glad that you have no more pain and suffering and are finally at peace. When I get to heaven I will say "John Make a Pizza tonight!" I hope you can meet me at heavens gate, so I can give you my hugs. We miss you at the camp fires, but know that you are with friends at the Big camp fire in heaven. I miss you so much and it comforts me that we will meet again someday in a much better place.

I Love you, Jason

~

Jason Remme,

Bloomington, Minnesota

Jason Remme - July 10, 2004 at 12:00 AM

TL

“ Hi John I sure do miss talking to you on the phone. How we enjoyed the happy hours together. You sure did look handsome when I saw you last.

Love and miss you. Auntie

P.S. Hope you and Gram and Marsha are together.

~

Thea Lamond,

Crandon, Wisconsin

Thea Lamond - July 09, 2004 at 12:00 AM

“ I started this entry on June 30th, the month anniversary of my Champion’s death. Is the date significant? I have determined not, because it is only another day that I have been without a significant part of my being. I have experienced a loss beyond my wildest dreams, especially having recently experienced the loss of my sister, and as hard as each day is, I must carry on. I must admit, my pride gets the best of me during the day because I cannot let my heartbreak determine my future; I know what John would expect. During the day, I hold my head up high and carry on business as needed, making sure my continuing heartbreak is undetectable. My nights are filled with the fact that the one person on earth that I lived my life for is gone and that, my friend, is overwhelming. The 4th of July is here and the past few days have been more difficult because throughout our lives we took our vacation, along with many of our friends (we prefer to refer to them as our family from Summer Breeze Resort on Farm Island Lake) for the past 20 years. The days of vacation were fabulous and filled with happiness, pleasure, joy and memories. Not only do I miss my Champion but I also miss the friendship and camaraderie that we have had for the past years as I have opted out of the lake experience for this summer. I am blessed with so many memories of the lake, not only our weekends but also our vacation and all the “special events” we have throughout the year. We are so fortunate to have experiences that many never know. Our lake family share a friendship and love beyond the average bond. I wouldn’t give that up for anything in the world. Independence Day has multiple meanings for me. John served his country and was a very proud patriot, as am I. Independence Day will always stand for the freedom our troops fight for and all Americans enjoy. But “Independence Day” has another meaning for me as it represents the independence John now has from his suffering and pain, something that was extremely difficult to live with but something he accepted and courageously dealt with. He was so brave and these illnesses required him to make difficult decisions, but once they were made, he stuck with them and lived through them. These decisions were very heartbreaking and required great faith. Not everyone could have accepted the diagnosis, made those

choices and followed the journey. His spirit was strong and his faith was without compromise. He was by far, the bravest, most courageous man I have ever known. Today, I pray for peace for our nation as well as peace within my soul. I pray for the face of God to shine upon all who love John and all that enjoy our freedom. I love you and miss you my Champion.

~

Orpha Paciorek,

Coon Rapids, Minnesota

Contact Me

Orpha Paciorek - July 04, 2004 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ Today it's been a long month since you left us. We know that you are finally without the pain that racked your body for so long. We think of you every single day and say a prayer for those you loved and left behind.

We love you and miss you!

Love, mom and dad

~

Mom and Dad Statezny,

Crandon, Wisconsin

Mom and Dad Statezny - July 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

SH

“ Even though we were not blood related. John will always be my uncle, and I am sorry I did not visit him as often as I should have, but I want Orpha, Jodi, Johnny and family to know that they are in my thoughts and prayers. love always sheila.

~

sheila higgins,

ham lake, Minnesota

sheila higgins - June 30, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ I miss you, My Champion.....

~

Orpha Paciorek,

Coon Rapids, Minnesota

Contact Me

Orpha Paciorek - June 19, 2004 at 12:00 AM

CW

“ I am so fortunate to recently have had the opportunity to meet John. It is difficult to part with someone we love and with whom we have shared our life and dreams. Orpha, I know you are suffering because of your great loss. John is no longer suffering and is with his God in a beautiful and peaceful place. I hope the comfort of that and your many friends will be a help to you. John was very fortunate to have shared time with you.

~

Carol Wiggins,

Maple Grove, Minnesota

Carol Wiggins - June 13, 2004 at 12:00 AM

TH

“ Dear Orpha, I want you to know that you are in my thoughts and prayers. I am so sorry for your loss. Teri H.

~

Teri Hassemer,

St Louis Park, Minnesota

Teri Hassemer - June 03, 2004 at 12:00 AM

LL

“ Today we said Good-Bye to one of our dearest friends. Our hearts break to know that we will not enjoy John's jokes and laughter at our campfires this summer. John was a man of integrity and honesty. We knew we could always call on John when we needed help.

John had an impact on many lives, including the younger generation at Farm Island. He treated all of them with respect and always included them in our fun. At times he was nothing but a big kid himself. Tonight we saw many of those young people grief stricken over losing a mentor and a wonderful friend.

We will miss playing cards with John, cooking with him, fishing and just hanging out and talking. We can only imagine the campfire he is sitting at tonight. The many angels that are with him include Tom Morris, Jeanette Doty, Dave Curless, and Sandy Dyer. We can hear them laughing all the way down here.

We love you John! We look forward to seeing you again. You are in our hearts forever.

~

Lisa and Lori Long,

Fridley, Minnesota

Lisa and Lori Long - June 02, 2004 at 12:00 AM

KW

“ I only met John one time and that was a wonderful time at the Christmas Party with American Family in Madison where his lovely wife, Orpha is currently employed. I also met John through my many conversations with Orpha. What I know is that Orpha has been a wonderful, supportive and loving wife who was there for John. That is the most wonderful memory there is. God has taken a special person to be with him. May he rest in peace and may Orpha heal in her heart.

~

Kate Wickens,

Eden Prairie

Contact Me

Kate Wickens - June 02, 2004 at 12:00 AM

TM

“ Orpha...We send you our deepest sympathy. John will be remembered by everyone he touched in life. He was so special to us. My memories will always be of our small talk about where the fish are biting. He would lower his head and look over his glasses at me, stare straight into my eyes and smile the entire time I was leading him astray. He knew and I knew the wonders of being a friend. We again send you a wish for peace in your time of loss. John lives on in all of us...

~

Tom McKenney,

Spring Lake Park, Minnesota

Contact Me

Tom McKenney - June 02, 2004 at 12:00 AM

KP

“ I'm so Sorry to hear of Johns passing. I would like to give my deepest sympathy to Orpha and Jodi, and to all of his loved ones. I am Johns brother (Tom) Stepdaughter. I've known John for many years and he always made me feel so comfortable and loved even when I was in some bad situations he made me smile and brought light to the situation. Thank you John. You touched so many. God Bless You and your family. Enjoy your life with the Angels I'm sure you'll make them laugh as you did so many!

With Love, Kate Pahl (Copen)

~

Katharine Pahl,

Shoreview, Minnesota

Contact Me

Katharine Pahl - June 02, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ *God has clearly blessed you and your family, the love that is expressed is clearly unique which makes the loss so unbearable. However, your time together and true love for each other is much more powerful than your grief will last. Both He and John are watching over you.*
- A caring reader.

Minnesota

June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

JA

“ We were very sad to hear this morning about John. He was such a wonderful guy! Even though we have moved so far away, all of you are still in our hearts. We remember all the wonderful holiday weekends at Farm Island Lake and all the fun we had with you.

Our sincere sympathies,

John and Cathy Artz

~

John Artz,

Phoenix, Arizona

Contact Me

John Artz - June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ Jodi,

My sincere condolences to you and your family. My prayers go out to you. You may not remember me, we were friends back in grade school. I hope you take comfort in knowing your Dad is with Jesus and is now your special Angel. It takes time, but Time does Heal. I know this as I lost a parent 2 years ago.

With Prayers

Vicki Benesch (Cantwell)

~

Vicki Benesch (Cantwell),

Blaine, Minnesota

Contact Me

Vicki Benesch (Cantwell) - June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

H(

“ Orpha,

John will be dearly missed by all at the lake. He always brought a smile to my face every weekend. I want you to know that you and your family are in my thoughts and prayers.

I will always remember the fun we had on the 4th of July.

God Bless!

Heather and Sean Moilanen

~

Heather and Sean Moilanen (Remme),

Shakopee, Minnesota

Heather and Sean Moilanen (Remme) - June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

JO

“ *John - We never met, but we are brothers. Welcome Home & I'll see you in Heaven. Johnny, USMC Vietnam 66 & 67*

~

Johnny,

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Johnny - June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

GH

“ Dear Orpha:

Mary and I were so sad to hear of John's passing. We shall always remember John's zest for life and the many things he taught us. We shall continue to keep you and John in our prayers, and we're always only a phone call away.

Greg & Mary Holmen

~

Greg Holmen,

Woodbury, Minnesota

Greg Holmen - June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

PD

“ So sorry to hear of your loss, but what a wonderful tribute!

Please accept my and my family's deepest condolences.

~

Pat Daun,

Mpls, Minnesota

Contact Me

Pat Daun - June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

KC

“ Orpha,
John will be deeply missed by all of us. He made each and every one of us feel very special, as he is in our hearts and always will be.

~

Kim Curless,

Andover, Minnesota

Kim Curless - June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

SB

“ Orpha,

We were so sorry to hear about your loss, especially Caitlyn, she was sad and she said, "That's ok mama, John gets to live in Heaven with Grandpa Bennett and Jesus"

You and your family are in our thoughts and prayers.

~

Sara, Mike, Caitlyn, Kayla, Sean, Elijah Bennett,

Spring Lake Park, Minnesota

Sara, Mike, Caitlyn, Kayla, Sean, Elijah Bennett - June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

ML

“ Orpha,

We are so sorry to hear about John's passing, and have been praying for the both of you during his struggles. Our sincere condolences to you and your family. We are all lucky to have this new angel looking over us.

With Love, Maria & David

~

Maria Sather & David Lee,

Eden Prairie, Minnesota

Maria Sather & David Lee - June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

JL

“ Orpha,
John is and will always be in our hearts. Those of us who had the opportunity to meet him are better today because of him. You both are wonderful people and my prayers are with your whole family. God Bless You.

~

Jason Lach,

Fridley, Minnesota

Jason Lach - June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

DR

“ Orpha,
*We had some very good times together, John will be missed by all.
You are a very strong person yourself, may God bless you.*

~

Doug&Sue Remme,

Bloomington, Minnesota

Contact Me

Doug&Sue Remme - June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

IF

“ don't grieve for me, for now i'm free. i'm folling the path of God laid for me. I took his hand when i heard him call; I turned my back and left it all. I could not stay another day. to laugh, to love, to work or play. tasks left undone must stay that way; I found that place at the close of day. if my parting hasleft a void, then fill it with remembered joy. a friedship shared, a laugh, a kiss; ah yes these things i too will miss. be not burdened with times of sorrow, i wish you the sunshine of tomarrow. my life been full i savared much; good friends, good times, a loved ones thouch, perhaps my time seems all to brief. don't lengthen it now with undo grief. lift up your heart and share with me. God wanted me now, he set me free.

~

i'm free a friend,

Minnesota

i'm free a friend - June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

GC

“ MY DEEPEST REGRETS AT THE LOSS OF JOHN, MY FRIEND AND BROTHER IN LAW. I REMEMBER THAT HE WAS IN VIETNAM THE SAME TIME AS I WAS AND HAVE MANY WONDERFUL MEMORIES WITH HIM AT THE LAKE AND HERE IN THE MPLS AREA. I WAS A GUEST AT HIS HOUSE WHEN I RETURNED FROM KOREA IN 1972 AND HE WAS A WONDERFUL HOST THAT SHARED HIS HOME AND HEART WITH ME AND MY WIFE. WE ALL HAD A GREAT TIME AT YOUR WEDDING IN LAS VEGAS. OVER THE YEARS WHENEVER I RETURNED TO MINNESOTA, I WAS GLAD THAT I HAD BEEN ABLE TO SEE JOHN, ORPHA, JODY AND JOHN JR. GOD BLESS ALL OF YOU.

~

GARY CLERMONT,

ANDOVER, Minnesota

Contact Me

GARY CLERMONT - June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

RC

“ Opha, Jody, John jr. I will also miss john, I am sorry I did not get to see john, but i will always have his memories with me. God bless all of you, be strong as Jonh would want you to be.

~

richard clermont,

andover, Minnesota

Contact Me

richard clermont - June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

BW

“ Orpha,
We want you to know we think about you often. You and your
Family are in our Prayers. Stay Strong.
Love, Bruce & Diane

~

Bruce & Diane Warburg,

Deerwood, Minnesota

Bruce & Diane Warburg - June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

SJ

“ Orpha,

I'm so sorry to hear about John's passing and the struggles you've both endured. I'm honored to have known John - however briefly. His courage and strong spirit shone through, as did the love you two shared. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

~

Susan Jordet,

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Susan Jordet - June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

SG

“ Orpha

I am sad to hear the passing of John. I met him once at this past year's Christmas party. He was a great man. A funny man too. My Prayers are with You and John.

~

Sheldon GreyWater,

Hopkins, Minnesota

Sheldon GreyWater - June 01, 2004 at 12:00 AM

“ I say “Goodbye” to My Champion with a heart so broken I cannot express it in words. For every tear I have cried on the outside, I have cried a million on the inside. Since I met John in 1984, we have rarely spent a day apart and for nearly 16 years, we worked together every day. The absence of his presence will stay with me always. Because we have been through so much in the time we have been together, his brain aneurysm in 1992, which required 3 months of hospitalization and this illness, requiring nearly two months in the hospital in addition to the home care, I’d like to tell you how proud I am of John and his courage, braveness and concern for others. These illnesses had taken a tremendous toll on John and through it all; he did what he needed to do. He is the bravest of all men. Within my sadness, I still have joy and peace, for I am grateful for many things. I am grateful we had the type of relationship and the courage to discuss the difficult choices that come with life. I am grateful for our family and friends. With close to 300 people visiting the last weeks, it was a great tribute to John and what he meant to people. We love you all and thank you for the visits, cards, calls, offers of help and more importantly, your prayers. I am grateful we have such terrific neighbors (as friends) and that we all rely on one another. You have been amazing and I will never forget what you have done. I am grateful for the owners of Ziem’s Carpet Work Room for believing in John when he didn’t believe in himself and for giving him a second chance. I am grateful for the great bunch of “guys” that worked with John at Ziem’s. You guys meant more to him than you will ever know and your visits really made his day. I am grateful for the terrific working relationship at American Family Insurance that made it possible for me to bring John home for his last days and fulfill his wish. I am grateful for Dr Sherry Crispen and her “I am always here” for John. You put him first in many situations and you brightened his day with your humor and caring. I am grateful for the terrific care given to him by his doctors. It was very heartwarming and heartbreaking to see these professions relay information, day after day that was not hopeful and to observe that they were visibly shaken. I would like to thank doctors Lex Nerenberg (John’s primary care physician since 1992.

We have been through a lot.), Jeffrey Wilson, Kathleen Whitely and her associates, Robert Lager and Claire McCarthy. Each of these doctors went far above their call of duty. I am grateful for the apheresis/dialysis nurses from Fresenius Medical Care, including Marti, Cathy, Terri, Rebecca, Shannon, Dan and Ivan. We shared some special times. I am grateful for the staff at North Memorial Health Care and the North Memorial Home Care professions, especially Jean. I am most grateful however, for the knowledge that John had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and will be spending eternity in Heaven. That knowledge made the last months possible. John always believed Jesus was the wind beneath his wings. While I will miss him every day that we are apart, I look forward to our reunion. I love you, My Champion.

~

Orpha Paciorek,

Coon Rapids, Minnesota

Contact Me

Orpha Paciorek - May 31, 2004 at 12:00 AM

MB

“ *Orpha,
We're so sorry for your loss, you & your family are in our thoughts &
prayers.*

~

Matthew & Karen Beecher,

St. Francis, Minnesota

Matthew & Karen Beecher - May 31, 2004 at 12:00 AM

BT

“ Dear Orpha,
Betty and I have had you and John in our prayers for lo these many
months. Whatever we can offer we do so with concern for you.
Your friends,

~

Bruce & Betty Thomas,

Roseville, Minnesota

Bruce & Betty Thomas - May 31, 2004 at 12:00 AM

KB

“ Orpha,
*Thinking of you & your family during this difficult time. We will
always be there to help in any way we can.*

~

Keith & Kathy Beecher,

Coon Rapids, Minnesota

Keith & Kathy Beecher - May 31, 2004 at 12:00 AM