

Paul Donald Guenther was our intelligent, fun loving, kind, helpful, sensitive, gentle giant. He was competitive and loved challenges. Paul excelled in Math and problem solving. When he was in first grade and James needed help with a multi step problem in his own homework, James read the problem out loud and Paul immediately called out the answer. When Rubix Cubes were first popular, Paul was able to consistently and easily solve the puzzle. When he took the SAT exam, Paul scored a perfect 800 in Math.

In addition, Paul loved sports. He played baseball for 6 years, the first four years being coached by his dad. The last year Paul played, he vainly refused to wear his glasses! In addition, Paul played street hockey, his favorite sport, from ages nine through fifteen. Roller hockey was next when he was sixteen and seventeen. When Paul reached high school, he participated in the preseason football program. He enjoyed working out and lifting weights, but did not enjoy the violence of the game when the actual practices started. Luckily, one of his friends thought that he would be good at rowing and encouraged him to join the crew team where he finally found his niche. He rowed all four years in high school and one year in college at Rochester Institute of Technology. In his junior year of high school he was voted MVP. In crew he was able to use his strength, physicality and endurance. Crew challenged him. It emphasized the individual while also requiring teamwork.

As a young child, Paul loved to play with his brother, James. Their favorite imaginary play was being Ghostbusters. James was

Egon and Paul was Ray. When they played Ninja Turtles, James was Rafael and Paul was Michaelangelo. They also liked Bert and Ernie. I wonder if you could guess who was who!

Among Paul's many attributes was his stubbornness. When he was small and it was time for bed he would try to delay this by saying, "I'm hungry. I'm thirsty. I'm hungry and thirsty!" This would go on and on while we would implore him to go upstairs to bed. Eventually we had success by saying, "Whatever you do, don't go up to bed!" In defiance of our orders he would run right up the stairs with a triumphant smile because he had successfully defied us.

Paul was very helpful. In his teenage years he went up to his aunt and uncle's farm in Pennsylvania to help with the farmwork. Not only did he work hard, but he also enjoyed making hay forts with James and his cousins. When his mom had difficulty learning and understanding the computer, Paul was the family member with the most patience to teach her in a way she could learn. During the pandemic, it was Paul's turn to take care of us. To keep us safe he shopped for us, his grandmother, his mother in law and for Stephanie and himself.

As any of you know, Paul was quietly funny and fun loving. He laughed at his dad's corny jokes and came out with many of his own. He was the one who always made us laugh.

Paul loved playing video games, especially Golden Eye. The love of the games led to Paul taking four years of Computer Programming in high school and then getting a Bachelor's of

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Science degree at Rochester Institute of Technology.

Paul attended RIT with his best friend from high school , Erik Carlson. Together they continued to share their comeraderie during four years of college, playing video games, watching lots of movies and rollerblading with friends. They also had a tendency to stay up late. Paul was adamant that two to three AM was the best time for programming!

During Paul's sophomore year in college, on a visit back home, he was introduced to a beautiful, brilliant young woman, named Stephanie. They enjoyed each other's company and challenged each other's minds. They wed in the year 2014. Paul was her husband and companion . He loved her devoutly and when she was sick he cared for her.

Losing Paul has left a gaping hole in our hearts. He brought great joy into all of our lives. He will be loved and missed forever.

# A Eulogy for Paul Donald Guenther

Born Wednesday, March 20, 1985

Died: Saturday, April 24, 2021

He was 36 years and 35 days old. A total of 13,184 days.

Please bear with me. I coached Paul's baseball teams for 4 years. When he was 10, after the last game of the season I choked up and could not finish thanking the players for their efforts during the season. My assistant coach, Carmen Faia had to pinch hit for me.

I am going to do the best I can to get through this, but in case I cannot, my backup is my very good friend, former college roommate, and best man at my wedding, John Hendricks.

Here goes:

The last few days have been very difficult and totally unexpected. Daria, James, and I are feeling and sharing the pain and loss with our family and friends as well as with people we did not know, but who knew our Paul.

We have spent several days now, gathering pictures and mementos, writing down memories, talking to friends and family about what we and they remember of Paul.

The process has started some of the healing, but that still has a long way to go. Reviewing his life in pictures and words has reminded us that there has been lot of joy and good times together. Here are some of the things we remembered:

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Ever since he was an infant, [I]/[Don] would call him, “Tall Paul” or just “Tall”. That encouragement evidently worked well, as he grew to be 6’4”.

Paul and [I]/[Don] shared a lot of characteristics. Looking at our baby pictures, [we]/[they] are almost indistinguishable.

Paul’s eyes were often closed in many of the photos. Or he would hide his face during the photo.

A Guenther tradition developed that when unwrapping presents the person receiving the gift was to crumble up and throw the wrappings at one of the other (sometimes unsuspecting) participants. [I]/[Don] probably started that tradition, but Paul embraced and enjoyed perpetuating it.

When Paul was small and misbehaved, we would put him in a timeout. Typically, this consisted of sitting on the bottom step (another Guenther tradition where [I]/[Don] also spent [my]/[his] share of time). As the period of timeout was about to expire, he would frequently say or do something that would cause us to extend the timeout.

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When Paul's older brother, James was a Cub Scout and then a Boy Scout, the whole family would go on the campouts. Some of them were overnight indoor "campins" at the Franklin Institute, Philadelphia Zoo, Natural History Museum, and the Camden Aquarium. Paul participated in and enjoyed Cub Scouts but had no desire to follow in his brother's footsteps into Boy Scouts.

He participated in the EHT PAL program. First playing touch football from ages 9-12. He enjoyed it so much that he returned the next year, this time a coach/counselor.

Paul grew his hair long in his early teens. [I remember]/[Don remembers] watching Paul playing street hockey at rink side and hearing the opposing players referring to him as Jesus.

When Paul was in high school, he told someone that if he could sing, he would have played Jesus in Jesus Christ Superstar

Both Paul and James were modifying and compiling programs while in junior high school for [me]/[Don] at [my]/[his] business that developed software for casinos. As they both got older, they were creating programs and writing special interfaces for the business.

While James and Paul were growing up, they would cringe at [my]/[Don's] "Dad" jokes. After Paul was a young man and would tell a "Dad" like joke. [I]/[Don] would pat him on the back and say, "That's my boy!"

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These are some of James' recollections and fondest memories growing up:

Paul and James would play video games for hours. Super Nintendo was a favorite, including Super Mario, Donkey Kong Country, and Super Metroid.

When Nintendo N64 came out Paul and James' favorites were Golden Eye and Perfect Dark. Paul practiced a lot. It was so very difficult to beat him. Minor victories felt winning to the to the rest of those playing.

[My]/[Don's] recollection of videos was that dinner was often delayed by, "We can't stop right now. It's in the middle and we can't save it. Just one more minute."

More of James' memories are:

Easter Eggs hunts in Pop Pop's backyard.

Dying Easter eggs with their cousins.

Getting up at 5 in the morning on Christmas Day.

The whole family watching Star Trek Next Generation.

Ocean City, NJ vacations with the entire extended family (Grandparents, parents, aunts, and uncles, and all of the cousins).

Paul and James getting washed in the large Miska, which is a Ukrainian name for the wash basin in the back yard after the beach.



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Flying kites with Pop Pop (badly).

Paul liked wearing his Goofy (Disney character) hat.

Building hay forts at Aunt Gretchen and Uncle Bruce Weikel's farm.

For several summers Paul and James would spend a few weeks working at the farm during the haying season.

Uncle Bruce sent us the following text:

"I always enjoyed visiting with Paul. He would laugh at my stupid jokes. I was never sure if he thought they were funny or if he just wanted to make me feel good! It was always fun having him stay at the farm when he was younger. Paul was a very good worker and seemed to enjoy helping. It was through these times that he spent at the farm that I got to know Paul. I will always have fond memories of Paul and I will miss him!". Bruce.

Daria and [I]/ [Don] watched him grow into a man who was intelligent, sweet, kind, helpful, sensitive, gentle, competitive. He loved challenges. He loved to laugh and had a great sense of humor. He was fun-loving. He was honest, honorable, fair, considerate, and loyal.

He loved us; he loved James. He loved his grandparents, his aunts and uncles, he loved his cousins.

He loved his friends.

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He loved Stephanie's sister and brother-in-law and her niece. He loved all her family.

But above all he loved Stephanie. She was his number one priority. He gave his head, his heart, his body, and his soul for her. He loved her above all else, even above himself.

Jessica Wolcott &lt;wolcottjm@hotmail.com&gt;

5/10/2021 12:53 PM

## Eulogy for Paul

To ddguen@comcast.net &lt;ddguen@comcast.net&gt;

Hey everyone. My name is Jess and Paul was my brother in law. I feel that that title does not do justice to the closeness I felt with him, as if I had known him since the very beginning of my life. Paul and my sister, Steph, started dating when I was thirteen years old, so my memories of and with him span my older childhood and beyond. Paul was, in the most meaningful of ways, my big brother. Someone I always felt I could talk to and be met with a smile, kindness, and balance. His love, compassion for all living things, and sense of calmness radiated through my life, and the lives of those he touched during his time here on this earth. His weekend visits from college, a six hour drive, home to visit Steph flowered into a closeness between my family and him as well, one that only strengthened throughout the years and turned into him becoming my family. And us loving his family. When I was young, I thought he was one of the coolest, funniest, smartest guys in the world, which as it turns out, I grew up and figured out that I happened to be right about that. I thought he had the most awesome taste in music, and he would make me mix tapes and CD's of anything he thought I'd like. He would lend advice when I needed it, helped with homework when I asked, and even gave me rides to places when I was young. I will never forget one late night when he picked me up from a friend's house, and on our route home a deer jumped out from the woods and hit right into his car. The impact left the side of his car with a broken headlight and a caved in side bumper, but the concern in his mind was \*if the deer was around and alright. That's who Paul was, forever thinking of helping others and showing compassion above his own needs and feelings. I remember being amazed by how calm he was, that he didn't blame me for needing a ride, because, I did feel guilty that he was only there because of me. He had a way of not letting those kind of troubles in life affect his kindness towards others.

I will always remember Paul's enthusiastic excitement for life, which shone from him in almost every setting, and of course made him the greatest uncle in the universe. My daughter, Madi, had many names for Uncle Paul, most often "Unco" or "Tio Nacho". He'd patiently play Minecraft with Madi for hours while they chatted on the phone, and the virtual world they built together in that game reinforced their real world love and bond. On Christmas mornings, he would be just as excited playing with Madi's presents as she was, and I will cherish the memories this past christmas when we all spent hours playing laser tag, chasing each other outside and inside the house. Everyone wanted to be on Paul's team, because, as you all know, he was incredible at everything he did. \*As a giant, you'd think he'd be an easier target to hit. But his army rolls across my dining room floor and fast reflexes made it, *\*truly*, impossible to win against him. Another memory that sticks out in my mind, was when Madi had gotten a set of stilts for Christmas. We walked down to the bike path to play with them, and, of course, Paul wanted a turn. So here we had an already towering 6 foot 4 inch giant, burly man, just walking through Northfield on stilts, on Christmas, the additional two feet of height totally unnecessary. We spent hours that evening, watching Madi test them out, counting her jumps on a pogo stick, and I remember thinking in those moments how lucky we are to have someone so patient, so kind, so happy to just be, there with us.

As I'm sure you all know, Paul found glimmers of humor in anything and everything in life. It didn't even take him being a dad to have endless "dad-jokes" in his responses, which always made everyone around him laugh and feel happy. I remember asking him one time where in the world does he think up all of his dad jokes, and without missing a beat he turned to me and said, "I pull them all from my dad- a- base, of course". Or how on Paul and Steph's wedding night we went to the casino to celebrate afterwards. In the hotel room, Paul pulled out, like a \$300 bottle of champagne that his coworkers had gifted him. I can't recall who accidentally spilled their champagne glass all over the glass desk in the hotel room, but instead of frustration or disappointment, I remember Paul laughing hysterically and siphoning the fancy champagne up through a coffee straw stirrer. He was sunshine to me. Talking to him left a warmth in my heart just as the sun's rays leave on the skin after a hot summer day. His gentle support and calming presence brought so much happiness and light into all of our lives. And I hope to carry his light within my heart, for all my days.

I have so many beautiful memories of days spent together and of eventful days vacationing with him. Our cruise day in Miami, walking along the shoreline and doing cartwheels in the sand, finding a nature conservatory containing a completely massive tree which, of course, Paul needed to climb. Memories of nights and days in New Orleans, in Indiana visiting family. I always loved those vacations not only because of the fun and excitement of everything else going on, but because I got to spend every day *with him*. We got to wake up early and drink coffee together, got to adventure and explore, I just couldn't get enough of being around him. For all my many, special memories of him, I think it was the simplest moments of my time with him that I will miss the most. The hugs that made the world feel safe, his incredible deep bellied laugh that I can hear in my mind with such clarity. Losing to him in I think every board game we ever played, our talks on the universe and life and nothing and everything.

I will always be amazed at how incredibly gifted Paul was. As if everything he touched was turned to magic. His quick ability to learn guitar, ukelele (which if I'm not mistaken he was able to play a beautiful song on, the very first night he had gotten it), and the solution to almost any problem in the world was something I always admired. He wanted to learn and grow and if there was something he didn't know, he'd figure it out. His unending desire to learn translated into him being an amazing teacher. If you asked him a question, no matter how dumb, he never made you feel less than for not knowing something. He was simply happy to explain it to you in a way that made any topic easy to understand. I think that that dissolves down to the fact that when Paul spoke, he spoke with intention and purpose, in a way that made us all want to listen. This made him magnetic, drawing people in with this quality among countless others, making them feel smart and loved and at peace around him.

While he is no longer in this world with us physically, the ripples of his life here on earth will be felt by all of us as we continue on through our lives, carrying the memories of him within our hearts. The warmth he made us feel, his compassion for all living things, the knowledge seeking nature in him, the helping hand he extended whenever there was a need. We will never "move on" from this loss, but we will *move forward* with his memory. He will live on through us, because his time here on earth has shaped each of us. When we choose to be calm within chaos, when we patiently and compassionately teach someone something, when we remember to find the simple joys of life, \*like getting exciting seeing a wild bunny, when we're loving and helpful, supportive and strong, Paul is there. While I mourn the un sewn memories we should have had so much more time to make with him, he leaves within my soul a vibrant light for having been, so lucky, to have gotten the chance to be his sister.

Thank you.