

A Tribute to my son, Paul McManus Jr.

Paul lived 29 years, 9 months and 25 days. He was a successful, intelligent, driven and loving man. On July 21, 2006 he was tragically killed in Charlotte, North Carolina while crossing the Brookshire Freeway, by a drunken driver, after a party his long time college friends had given for him. Paul had just moved back to Charlotte only 3 weeks before his death for a new job at a very large insurance brokerage firm. Graduating cum laude in 2000 from the University of NC at Charlotte with his degree in Business Finance, was scouted by many companies in the industry.

He was very torn with his decision to relocate, as he had been away at college and a previous position in Tampa, Florida for 8 years, but decided the job offer was "too good to pass up,"

His thought was that he could make great strides in his career and then move back home again after a year or two.

In 2004, he was working in Washington, DC and felt a strong desire to be back home in Rochester, as he "had been away too long, now." He moved back.

During his 2 years back home, he worked from a home office and felt very isolated. Though he re-connected with the family and we shared incredible quality time, there was a part of his heart that was still connected to the south.

He missed many of the close relationships he had built in Carolina, including a retired minister who mentored him and showed him how to develop a strong faith and practice Christian values.

Paul became a Christian and read the bible everyday after that. He shared his love of God with me and lead me on the path that he was traveling. We wanted to become better people and share that with others. We deeply cared about each others well-being and happiness.

He lived his life so fully; enjoying diversity in people, all music, sports, traveling and learning something new everyday. His quote was " I know of no two things that betters a person more than God and education. They both transform a person from the inside out."

Paul made friends instantly wherever he went; and kept in touch with people from all over the country.

After his funeral on July 28, I received many emails, cards and letters telling me how Paul had touched their lives somehow; by his smile, his laughter, his sense of humor, his patience to listen, his generosity, his sense of adventure and spiritual nature. These amazing tributes, of a man that lost his life so young, comforted me so much.

The memories, the photos, the college letters, the emails and the unconditional love of Paul will be a gift in my life that I will cherish forever.

The "WHY's of tragedies like this can never be explained. He had SO much left to do. I miss him very much. I am stronger than I had ever wanted to be in my life, because there are only 2 choices-and I have to choose the one Paul would choose if he were me.