

## **In Remembrance of JQ Johnson**

Although Sue and I had been across-the-alley neighbors with JQ. Jennifer and their children for many years, our paths of interest and occupation did not bring us close together in a social way—until recently.

However each New Year's time brought an invitation to their Holiday Party, and we did have an opportunity to visit in the home and discern some of the family's interests.

I remember being impressed by the extensive book library in the lower floor, and the great collection of classical music CD's in the living room, and thinking: this is a well-read and deeply musical family!

Our relationship changed significantly some two years ago when we learned that JQ had been diagnosed with extensive, far-advanced abdominal cancer! Sue had faced a similar diagnosis, and its miserable prognosis, some three years earlier so we were intimately aware of the heavy burden placed on JQ—and the entire family!

While Sue's advanced cancer was treated initially with a large 'de-bulking' surgery followed by chemotherapy, in JQ's case it was determined that there was no place for surgery. The cancer was too extensive.

Fortunately, initial chemotherapy produced immediate favorable results, with the reduction of abdominal fluid and improvement in how JQ felt. The family took a chance and made a vacation trip to Spain. Jennifer is happy that the trip was made—for they had a wonderful time! After a period of remission, however, the cancer escaped the treatment effect and began to produce more symptoms.

Sue passed away in March 2011 after a four-year period of intermittent chemotherapy and remission. Our family is grateful for that ‘extra time’ for we had many enjoyable events together. Oncology physicians have extended the lives of many patients, and for that ‘extra time’ we are very appreciative.

Lately it became apparent that JQ was failing rapidly, and not responding to treatment. The decision had to be made as to whether the family should remain with JQ, or travel to New York State to celebrate son Theo’s long-planned wedding. JQ insisted that they should go, and I also felt it was the right choice.

I volunteered to move in and stay with JQ while they were gone. It was extremely difficult for Jennifer to leave at that moment, but again I felt strongly it was the best decision.

JQ passed away quietly some 12 hours after the family’s departure. JQ fought bravely and with great effort to live as long as possible. He was clear mentally to the end, never complaining.

Just a few days before his death I saw JQ, by himself, reclining beneath a large cedar tree that borders the alley between our homes. He was slowly clipping away and removing ivy that was surrounding the tree's base. The visual effect of his efforts are now quite pleasing, Even during his last days he was busy improving on nature!

I'll always remember JQ as a quiet, productive, concerned, friendly person for whom I have great respect and admiration.

Glenn M. Gordon

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