

For JQ's Memorial Gathering, 30 July 2012
By Jennifer Freyd to be read by Pamela Birrell

I met JQ in 1979 on the Stanford campus. I was 21 years old, a new graduate student in Psychology. JQ was on leave from his own graduate program in Political Science so that he could run the Stanford educational computer system known as LOTS. LOTS stood for Low-Overhead Time Sharing system but we fondly knew of it as the *Largely-Overloaded* Time Sharing system, as it was enormously popular. You can probably imagine how utterly dependent Stanford became on JQ as he kept the DEC-20 computer system running well despite a tiny budget and a staff of brilliant but unruly undergraduates.

JQ and I may have had the first successful computer mail romance. If not the first, certainly one of the first. In those days there was not really an internet and the word "email" had not been invented. Nonetheless JQ had set up a mail program for his system and I sent a message to the systems manager using an application called "gripe". My message was simple: change the name of the application from "gripe" to "suggest." I received a witty reply from someone named JQ Johnson. We began exchanging messages. I was hooked. I looked for an excuse to meet this clever JQ Johnson in person; I came up with a bizarre excuse involving supposedly needing his advice on a kit to build a computer. I was not actually *that* nerdy but I must have thought the idea would appeal to JQ. In any case, I walked into his office where he was sitting at a desk. Due to the room arrangement it somehow worked out that the very first part of JQ I saw were his wrists. I fell wildly in love right then because his wrists were delicate and hairy, an irresistible combination.

We had a heady courtship of picnics on the Stanford hills and trips to Napa and Sonoma Valley. It took us a few years after that to sort out our interesting Northern California lives, but by 1982 we were living together in Palo Alto. In 1983 we took jobs at Cornell and moved to Ithaca, New York. We bought a house and then in June of 1984 we were married. We honeymooned in Italy and there got stuck in an underground parking lot in Rome, had our first taste of fresh mozzarella cheese which we at first thought was some sort of egg, and discovered we knew how to travel together.

In 1985 we had our first child, Theodore. We moved to Eugene in 1987. Our children, Philip and Sasha, were born here, in 1988 and 1993. We all cooked together. JQ and I raised a family and we picked a lot of blueberries. We made many quince pies and berry pies too. We camped in the Oregon wilderness, we spent many long weekends on the coast, and we hosted sugary holiday cookie parties. A few years ago our oldest son Theo brought Brian into our lives, now our beloved son. As a family of six we traveled together to New Zealand and then to Portugal and Spain. What joy we had on these trips!

We were and we are a family, not perfect, just pretty happy, blessed by talented and loving children, a beautiful place to live, and a warm and supportive community.

JQ was diagnosed with advanced cancer in April 2010. As soon as word of his diagnosis reached our family, colleagues, and friends we were surrounded by kindness and assistance. From meals to driving JQ to chocolates to loving messages to organizing this event today so that I did not have to, you have supported us. I cannot ever adequately express my appreciation for your help; it has held us for the past two and a half years.

To JQ's friends and colleagues I want you to know: you filled JQ's life with meaning and happiness. JQ cared so deeply about the UO. He always come home with stories of accomplishment and love from the people here. And you have helped our family immensely. Thank you for your friendship and generosity.

To my children I want to say: you brought JQ boundless joy and pride. He loved you far beyond words, as do I.

JQ was a brilliant and gentle man. He was a good colleague and friend to so many here at the University of Oregon and across the world. He was a deeply involved father. JQ was my handsome, witty, and loving partner.

JQ lives on in many ways, through his work, his loving UO family, his family, friends, and colleagues. JQ most especially lives on in the four best next-generation people in the world.