

I'm not a Steven. I will never be a part of that wonderful Wichita family. I only know they are one of the greatest things about my hometown. Especially a guy named Joe Steven ,.....

In 1994 I moved back To Wichita, and joined a small health club at 13th and West street called Genesis.

It was near my parents house,.....and I remember clearly the first time I ventured downstairs to work out.

Within 10 minutes, a friendly brown haired guy with a big smile asked me if I played basketball.

They needed one person for a game he said, and asked if I would join them. Little did he know I LOVED basketball.

He could of told me they were playing blindfolded and I would of said "OK".

The guy introduced himself as Joe and the next thing I knew I had laughed, sweated, and been introduced to 4

other guys who were simply great to hoop with.

Over the next 8 years I played in the Genesis 6 foot and under team, on Tuesday and Thursday nights,

and early Saturday mornings along with regular games at Maude Carpenters courts with Joe Steven. While we won the league almost every year, it was the life lessons I saw from Joe that have stayed with me as I carve out a career here in LA.

Joe Steven cared. I believe Joe had a heart bigger than the state of Texas.

I remember one year in our first league game, that a guy who played with us,...had some,....maybe "ratty" is a good word,..basketball shoes. When he showed up for the next game

Joe asked him to come over to the bench for a second. There Joe pulled a box out of his large gym bag and produced a new pair of basketball shoes for him.

It meant the world to our teammate who has little finances for things like that. All of us couldn't believe Joe would do that. Actually, I was just starting to see the way Joe saw the world and his willingness to give to others.

Joe never introduced himself as the owner of Genesis those years,...or that he was a doctor. Joe wanted to simply be one of the guys,.....always wanting to do his best on the court and be a good friend.

In all my years of playing basketball or seeing Joe at the club I never heard Joe use profanity, or talk badly about someone. Hold that. If WSU, or Carroll lost there might have been some bad things said. Joe was always the first to say "hello",...ask how you were, and usually end up laughing about something he would share, or the way he could make the world seem a fun place to be. That was one of Joe's gifts.

Joe loved his family. And Joe had a big family!!

Ask most people and they will quickly tell you there are some people in their family they have a hard time with. You would never hear that from Joe.

He was extremely proud of his Mother Esther, and Father Joe Sr., and each of his brothers and sisters. Tom, Rod, Craig, Brad, Dale, Glenn, Sissy, Diane, Rene, and Duane were always talked about in the best way possible. Everytime.

Jasmine and Shae?

I don't know of a Father who loved his kids more. Every event, every chance to do something with them Joe loved. I recall Jasmynes senior year when they played at a little school across town named Kapuan. Kapaun was loaded with several highly recruited players and were looking to show Carroll just how the game was played. The gymnasium that night was beyond packed for the girls game,..and Jasmine Steven and her team not only upset Kapaun on their home court, but Jas dominated the boards,..held Kapaun's star center to almost zero points, and hit several crucial free throws to put the game away. I spotted Joe as I was coming off the floor from officiating and could see he was the happiest guy on earth. He never tired of telling anybody who would listen how great his two daughters were.

His wife Sandra. Where do you start? Joe loved everything about you. Joe would start into a story about you two and even though we had heard it 4 months before none of us wanted to tell Joe to stop. I must of heard the 25th anniversary story 20 times. It never got old. You held Joe's heart in your hands Sandra, and he

loved you so.

From watching Joe, I learned the importance of loving and being loyal to your family 100%, and later as my Mother bravely fought and lost her life from cancer those lessons became very important to me.

Joe was a giver.

In a world dominated by the greed for money and attention, Joe instead saw opportunity to make a difference. Ask his patients what they liked most about Riverside Dental and I bet every one of them would say it was because they were treated like "family". I don't know about you but going to the dentist was one of the most feared things in life and even the toughest kid i knew growing up would act sick on dentist day. Not with Joe. From the moment you arrived Joe and his staff treated you as someone special. And in fact,..you were.

While his books were always full,..if Joe found out that someone needed dental help, Joe would find a way to quietly help them out without drawing any attention to the help he was providing. I witnessed this over and over from the guy with the smile that never stopped.

I don't know why God takes home the great ones early.

I have a feeling that sometimes God sees how truly special these people are and wants to be around them too. We will miss Joe. We will miss the way he made you feel important no matter what you were in life. We will miss the laughter he brought, and the way he cared so deeply about others. Most of all we will miss seeing a man who loved his wife and children, and made the words "Husband and Father", mean something.

Joe Steven,.....thank you for being my friend.

Brad La Fever