

Remembrance of Owen Strong By Jody Durst

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We are here today to honor Owen Strong.

In a matter of a few short minutes, how does one capture the essence of an individual?

The objective is to present the distinctive elements that define him or her. Unfortunately, words will not do justice to the monumental character of this man and are certain to prove inadequate to describe the genuine, deep down to the core goodness of a soul stolen from us much too early.

For the past two years, Owen has been face to face and staring at the open jaws of a relentless, ruthless tiger.

Despite the specter of the challenge before him, he was always sure that he would beat this opponent, whose record was 96 wins and 4 losses.

Because he knew he was going to be fine, there was never a thought in his mind for negativity. I never heard one quip of bitterness, self-pity or doubt.

He pursued his life with the strength, dignity and grace few can possibly achieve. He has been an inspiration to all that had contact.

Owen gave us many gifts.

First and foremost, he made his disease so easy with which to deal for the rest of us. He never complained, or felt he needed to remind us. He was so approachable, never injecting even an inkling of guilt regarding our good health. He just wanted to be recognized as he had been before cancer. I need to emphasize this. He never made one feel anything but welcome and appreciated.

He allowed Ed, Laurel and Leda to be role models demonstrating the benefits of positive attitude. I only wish there were an award for family courage.

And Owen introduced us to Stacia, his significant other. And significant she is. I mean nothing short of an angel. She has been completely selfless, devoted to the welfare of Owen, and attentive to him beyond belief. She literally has been heaven-sent.

He also blessed us with his wonderful sense of humor-so quick. He recognized immediately when I made a joke at his expense, and without missing a beat, his retort would make me regret poking the bear.

He was kind and gentle, not belying his incredible inner strength, but confirming it to everyone around him.

Owen worked with us in the Transaction Department and was a bright, rising star, but admittedly, his first love was writing music and performing with his band, Evening Fools. He had a special gift in this regard and his creations were enjoyed by his band's ever-widening fan base.

Owen, if there is a Rock and Roll Heaven, I now am certain that they have a hellava band.