

Leo's Legacy

When Leo was taken from us, a quiet, gentle spirit and a man of justice was taken. I can think of no one for whom he ever spoke sharply and, conversely, I cannot name a time in his life where someone complained about him. Leo welcomed us all into his life and his heart with open arms. He didn't pass judgment, nor give focus to our limitations, or worry about labels that others put on us. He appreciated our aptitudes, overlooked our flaws, and loved us anyway. Leo accepted everyone for who they were.

When you lose a child, there is a part of your heart that goes with them. The only way that we are surviving this devastating loss is through God's love and strength. We are blessed with a multitude of people praying for us daily during this time. We are overwhelmed by the amount of love and support shown to us by our family and friends throughout this process. We continue to ache for Leo's presence on a daily basis. We especially miss him at our many traditions, such as annual family gatherings and holiday celebrations. We miss Leo's big smile, friendly, fun and loving spirit that touched anyone who met him. We long to hear him play his music on the piano, violin, guitar, drums, or harmonica. We know he is at peace; safe and happy in his heavenly home. God blessed us with Leo for 22 wonderful years and we will live out his memory until that day when we are reunited.

The loss of Leo to the extended family and friends was evident in the 970 people who attended his visitation. The University of Minnesota feels the loss of a promising young student, an idealist who was set on making a positive impact with his degree in Electrical Engineering with a focus on renewable energy. Leo was a quiet leader. He was one of the founders of the Innovative Engineers, a group in which he was the leader of a project to build a hydro turbine in Nicaragua. Other members are nearing completion of the hydro turbine and they are naming it after Leo. We have been invited to join them and turn on the turbine when it is installed.

Leo was well known for his music. He wrote lyrics, composed original songs, sang, and could play just about any instrument. Through learning music and his constant dedication, he became a scholar. Leo did make a difference in this world with his interest in electrical engineering and renewable energy. When he returned from Israel, the impact of that trip was clear. Something meaningful could be done for our world, and he was going to focus on improving people's lives. Leo wanted to use his education and love of travel to help build sustainable communities in developing countries; thus, providing an improved quality of life to many who've known little but suffering. We will never know the positive impact he would have made.

In this tragedy, taken from us was: a pioneer of social justice, a devote Christian, an exceptional musician, a humanitarian, an idealist, a dreamer, and a young man who had an often uncommon understanding of what is good, what is true, and what is just. His talent, ethics, and kindness of spirit characterized both the person Leo was and how he lived his life.