

Personal story about golfing, etc. from our friend and client Tom Warren, who delivered the eulogy...

Quotes from Joie:

"But after the amputations I said ' We're not going to cry over this' I don't need pity. I need understanding and compassion. Things always happen to the other guy. Now I'm the other guy. I am going to make something of myself. Something good will happen from all this."

"You can stay mad or you can swallow it and go on and make the best of it."

ezekiel 37:4-6 is a meaningful verse that Memaw and Joie had displayed at home to assist in Joie's recovery:

4 Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! **5** This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath ^[a] enter you, and you will come to life. **6** I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.' "

From birth, he was a big guy with a big heart. He was 9 pounds, 13 ounces and took two days to deliver. Even from the beginning, things were difficult.

We all know Joie was a big guy with a big heart. But some of you don't know that the day he came home from the hospital, he was already the same size as his cousin Chip, who was born three months earlier. While Joie continued to grow taller, Chip continued to look like his little brother.

Everyone who knew Joie will always remember his big smile and large laugh, especially when he and Chip were up to some of their mischievous activities. Like when they painted the tractor and each other white just prior to the Tom Thumb wedding at the church the same day. In order to get the paint off, Joie's mom, Memaw and Aunt Mary were busy scrubbing them until Joie's skin was as red as his hair. They still had bits of paint in their ears, but it only made the day more memorable.

He didn't usually have a lot of patience, but he did while he would sit for hours and build things out of legos with his little brother, Sammy. And then later when building models to assist with his physical therapy when recovering from meningitis.

There was also a time when he broke his leg playing football when he was 9. The very next day, he was out playing football in the cast. By the end of the day, he had to be taken back to the doctor to get another cast. This was a predominant theme in his life, as he surely never let anything stop him from what he wanted to do or accomplish.

Joie was always fashion conscious. He had his Aunt Gay go all over Atlanta to find a Michael Jackson jacket that he wore to the premier of the Thriller video that he and his cousins Chip and Jason attended. Little did he know that 25 years later, he'd be ordering custom veterinary scrubs and matching sneakers for each set of them.

Everyone knows Joie was a bit competitive and loved to win. He would try to force his sister Amanda and cousin Kristin into playing Monopoly. And once he had all the money in real estate, he'd say "aw, c'mon, let's play again". His gloating, to this day has scarred his sister and cousin to the point where they no longer want to play monopoly. And Kristie learned quickly too, as she'd always take the quick lead in the game and then Joie would mortgage everything he had and somehow manage to come back from nothing to wipe her out.

As a teenager, Joie helped Chip decide to become a fireman when he, Chip and Jason almost burned down the barn. A case unknown by the family until today. Of course, it was Joie who grabbed the fire extinguisher and put it out, but then again, it was Joie's idea to start the fire in the first place. They had set a cup of gas on fire. And then it was his bright idea to grab a broom to send the fire flying across the barn, setting the barn on fire as a result. Chip's childhood memory of him, his brother and Joie almost burning down the barn is one of the reasons he's a firefighter today.

(humorous) The three cousins had many times that were memorable, but some the family would rather not share at this time.

I'm sure you all know Joie did not lack self-confidence. One Christmas, he took his sister's Polaroid camera, took a picture of himself, presented it to her and said "hold on to this. It will be worth something someday".

There was more to Joie than boyhood mischievousness. When his cousin, Rachel, was born, she was sick for the first few months of her life. Joie would come home from high school early each day to take care of her. Joie always felt very close to Rachel as a result of this time they spent together. He felt he was blessed to have been there for her and would have had it no other way. He also felt that this experience was preparing him for his children one day, a dream he sadly would never realize.

You would think that children would be intimidated by Joie, who stood a towering 6'7" tall. Instead, his gentle and silly nature drew children to him. Any child he met seemed to immediately become enamored with him. He would play with them, let them climb and jump on him. They always became fast friends.

His cousin Jeremy remembers how Joie let him go jogging with him as a kid because he knew Jeremy liked being near him. Jeremy felt like a real athlete training with a big strong college football player. Running down Draketown Trail, Jeremy remembers Joie looking over his shoulder with a smile saying, "Catch me Buddy!" As soon as Jeremy would give his best effort, Joie was gone, gone, gone, and laughing the whole way. Jeremy remembers how afterwards they would jump in the lake in their boxer shorts and try to swim across. If a floating stick was ever nearby, Joie would always act like it was a snake and yell for Jeremy to swim faster. Even though Joie liked to joke with Jeremy, Jeremy always knew Joie loved him. Every time Jeremy ever did anything good, Joie would always slap him on the back and tell him good job.

In early November 1995, Joie and Kristie met over the phone as she had been offered the opportunity to help Joie gain sponsorship for his endeavors in disabled sports. They both fell hard and fast. Joie was a charmer. And as soon as he called her "Darlin," it was all over. His deep southern voice, charm and humor swept her off her feet. They came to learn that their families had grown up together in South Georgia. They called it divine intervention. The Lord intervened again when Kristie was offered a contract to work for Coca-Cola during the 96 Olympics. Kristie left for Georgia on Christmas Day 1995. They were married November 7, 1998.

Joie was finishing his undergraduate degree and was working hard with Kristie to build the kennel business. He was actively hunting, travelling, going to school, working at home and building a life for him and Kristie. He worked tirelessly around the house and kennels, while still attending school, to make it the place he wanted to be. He was also sharing his testimony and story with churches, civic groups and schools on a regular basis.

He never once complained about the pain he suffered on a daily basis, even behind closed doors. Instead, he simply said things like "I've got to get my legs off". It was easy to take for his physical condition for granted, for he operated in life like his disability didn't even exist. There were many

people that met Joie who never knew he walked on prosthetics. There were clients that visited the kennels, had known Joie for years and who were shocked when they came by in the summer and saw him in shorts. They had just never known. Others who met him and noticed asked how he could perform surgery or do things around the house. He JUST DID. There was nothing he couldn't or wouldn't do. Very rarely would things take a little more time or be a little more difficult, and even that didn't stop him.

There were only two things he ever really asked for: Memaw's home cooking – biscuits, cornbread, country fried steak – was one. And the other didn't really matter who it came from... He like backrubs, leg rubs and hair rubs. He would bribe his cousin Jeremy into rubbing his back by letting Jeremy watch Ducktales in his room. And he would simply put on a sheepish grin for his sister, Amanda, to get her to do it. And he and Kristie swapped back and forth, negotiating each night for who had to go first because the 2nd person to get rubbed would get rubbed to sleep. It was a relief for his legs and tired body.

In the fall of 2003, he left to spend the next two and a half years of life in St. Kitts, in the Eastern Caribbean islands, at Ross University. His friends from school recalled how Joie wanted to be the first group done with their surgery one day in class. They were the last group out, but by only a few minutes. Joie was devastated. His friends reminded him that as a group they were short some fingers. And that brought levity. Joie laughed. But it shows how badly he wanted to excel at everything. And he JUST DID.

He drew admiration and respect from his professors and fellow students. He received repeated compliments on the completeness, detail and effort he put into his work, which led to his receiving several rewards presented by staff and peers. He made deep friendships both on the island of St. Kitts and at the University of Illinois, where he finished his schooling.

He was a loving husband, who would always do special little things to make Kristie happy. Kristie would find the laundry done and folded. After returning from a recent trip, Kristie came home to find that all the burned out lightbulbs in the house had been replaced. And when Joie came around the corner, he said "and I got YOUR milk, and YOUR cereal, and your... so on and so forth". He was always thoughtful in everything he did. And he did many things for his wife that most men would not do on a routine basis. And he JUST DID.

This past February, Joie finished school and began his career at Carrollton Animal Hospital. He was thrilled with his job and the opportunities Drs. Williamson and OS-ter-riker offered him at the clinic. He was so proud each day to come home and talk about the successes of the day. However, he was equally heartbroken on the difficult days. And some days came home quietly and was

saddened because he had to make difficult decisions that day to end the lives of one or more animals or just lost one despite his best efforts. It truly broke his heart.

He suffered greatly, but would never let any of us know it. In the last few weeks of his life, he had gotten weaker. And while there were upcoming appointments with doctors and specialists that he and Kristie were so looking forward to, he still went on as if nothing was wrong. He was a strong man who simply wanted to make everyone around him happy. And he JUST DID.

So many of you here have been touched by Joie and we hope that his spirit will live on in each of your lives, that you will share his story with others and remember him in your hearts forever as the man that JUST DID everything life presented him without complaint and with every last blood, sweat and tear he had.