



## Jason Stephens

August 3, 2020

“If you love someone, love 'em with everything that you got.”

On August 3rd, 2020, Jason Stephens—beloved son, father, brother, partner, and dear, generous friend to many—died peacefully but tragically, and far too soon. He is grieved fiercely by his parents Pat and John, his partner in life Nikki, his children Toby and Ruby, his sister Jenny, and many more. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.

There is a town in North Ontario  
With dream, comfort, memory to spare  
And in my mind, I still need a place to go  
All my changes were there

Blue, blue windows behind the stars,  
Yellow moon on the rise,  
Big birds flying across the sky,  
Throwing shadows on our eyes.  
Leave us

Helpless, helpless, helpless  
Baby can you hear me now?  
The chains are locked

and tied across the door,  
Baby, sing with me somehow.

Blue, blue windows behind the stars,  
Yellow moon on the rise,  
Big birds flying across the sky,  
Throwing shadows on our eyes.  
Leave us

Helpless, helpless, helpless.

# Tribute Wall

BF

“ I am in shock that this special human has died. I had not seen him in 15 years after I moved provinces, and always wanted to look him up when I came back to Toronto to visit. Too late now, that hurts. I considered Jason my best friend when I was living in Toronto in our early 20's. We worked at Second Cup together and then at Princess of Wales Theatre, and we were roommates. I have still never met a better conversationalist; he was so smart and funny and had a charm about him that I can not describe. I remember staying up all night talking and listening to music, watching old VHS tapes. I remember how he always cared about people close to him. His love for his family was obvious. We were coming back from his parents cottage on Sept 11 2001 listening to the radio describe the attacks. He was always generous with people, and he could always make me laugh. I wish I could see him again. Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

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**Bill Fraser** - November 19, 2020 at 10:30 PM

JB

“ Warm Jason! I would always try to prolong our conversations. I felt better whenever I saw him. How many people can I say that about? Jason would twinkle when he talked, and I would delight in his warmth, astuteness, humour, kindness, and light. Love only!

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**Jack Breakfast** - October 08, 2020 at 01:48 PM

DD

“ I met Jason at Mezzrow's, and we hit it off instantly with our mutual love of all things music.

He made myself and many others feel welcome in his presence. He was a rare, beautiful soul. His memory will live on within' the hearts of us all.

My deepest condolences to Jenny and his entire family.

He made Parkdale special.

Rest.

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**Derek Downham** - September 10, 2020 at 11:16 AM

KG

“ Dear Nicky, Ruby and Toby,

*I first met Jason at CTC in grade 5 we were the 2 kids from Kettleby. Jason was a big part of my childhood and teen years for that I will always be so grateful.*

*Jason was someone we all gravitated to with his kindness and witty humour. He always made me feel so comfortable and I felt like I could talk to him about anything. I was always so lucky to have him as a friend.*

*Wow could he light up a stage. I was always impressed with his talent.*

*Nicky and Jason there was no doubt even from a young age that you two were kindred spirits and soul mates.*

*Seeing you their beautiful children is such a blessing. You look so much like Nicky and Jason and I know your Dad's good spirit and kind nature will always be alive in you.*

*Hugs to your beautiful family. I am here for you all if you need anything at all.*

Love ❤️

*Kim Gentemann*



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Kim Gentemann - September 06, 2020 at 07:32 AM



“ Jason

*Oh, honey, I just don't know how this happened. You wanted so much to recover your health and relationships. You just wanted to get better. I miss you so much I can't find enough words to tell you the depth of my grief. I will hold you in my heart, forever wrapped in my love. I was always so very proud of you ... your ready smile, your warmth, your humour, your loving heart and and strong values. Your love and dedication to Nikki, Ruby, Toby, and to Jenny. To Dad and I. You enriched our lives in so many ways.*

*I remember the first time I held you in my arms, the amazing little person you were. The stories of your childhood. You grew up to be a remarkable man, one who took joy in your wife and children. You once told me you didn't know what you were meant to do with your life, your purpose. Then Ruby was born, and Toby. And your purpose was absolutely clear from that time on. And what an amazing father you were!*

*Jason, I will always see you in the storms over Georgian Bay, in the August nights filled with shooting stars, on rainy days you'll be beside me sitting undercover of the porch and we'll talk about the smell of rain. On bitter winter days I'll picture you standing out on the ice, drunk with the beauty of the icy landscape (which is so different when you're out on it). Most of all I will see you standing face to the wind anywhere, anytime, any season, with that beautiful smile of contentment it brought you. I will see you in the hearts of all those who loved you, but most of all I will see you in Ruby and Toby. My dearest son, I will continue to love you forever.*

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**Patricia Stephens** - August 29, 2020 at 11:55 AM



“ *To Jason's family*

*I don't have to tell you what a wonderful man Jason was. I'm sure you already know that. But I'd like to say that I'm saddened because there's just not enough guys like him in the world these days. We could really use more like him and when we lose one, we are diminished with the loss of his special brand of kindness.*

*It's comforting to know that this will be bestowed upon you to carry on having been so close.*

*Roxy*

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**Rich Roxborough** - August 28, 2020 at 12:01 PM

SM

“ Dear Ruby and Toby;

*Your Aunt Jenny and I have been friends for many years and one of the the greatest benefits of that friendship was meeting your Dad. Like most everyone I was immediately taken with him. He had that effect on people, once you met him you just wanted to be part of his circle.*

*We weren't really alike at all your Dad and me but we still bonded over working together, our different tastes in just about everything and baseball. Mostly baseball. Most people are fans of a team and we were certainly die-hard Blue Jays fans but more than that we loved the game. Its symmetry, its poetry and its grace. A great man by the name of Walt Whitman once wrote "I see great things in baseball...it will be a comfort to us and repair our losses."*

*While nothing will ever repair the loss of your father I hope that as you go through life you can find the time to catch a game here and there and remember Jason, how much he loved the game and that he loved you both more.*

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**Sean McLellan** - August 27, 2020 at 05:06 PM

MF

“ Right now the world feels lesser without Jason in it. But I know our years of friendship has made my life so, so much richer - his wit, his intellect and, mostly, his profound kindness are with me now. And through the sadness I will remember how lucky I was to have known him. Jason was one of the good people.

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**Mary Fox** - August 22, 2020 at 01:16 PM

TT

“ Jason reminds me to lead with kindness, to find the lovable in the least of us & to make a terrible amount of fun of the best. Without hyperbole one of the finest people I've known & one of my greatest friends. Talking with Jason was to dive into an endless buffet of curiosity, intelligence & humour. It was my great privilege to waste late nights failing to unravel the mysteries of the universe with this man. To be made fun of by Jason was a gift & to be loved by Jason a profound honour. I love Jason, without reserve, being part of this good mans life has made me a better person & his death leaves the world a lesser place. Funny, passionate & empathetic to a fault our last conversations were as fulfilling, joyful & occasionally confusing as our first. He loved his family dearly & fiercely & I am so fortunate to have lived in the periphery of that warm glow. A Good Man, a rarity, a goofy, brilliant gem. I love you Jason. There's a spider on your shoulder. xo

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Tracey Thompson - August 21, 2020 at 06:31 PM



“ Jason was a mystery to me for some time, as neither of us was much for initiating conversation. Finally, one day at the P.O.W. when I was writing instead of minding my aisle, he backtracked a couple steps and asked what I was doing. I said "Writing." He said "Oh. Cool." He walked away a bit and then asked what I was writing. I told him it was a play. He said "Too bad." I asked "Didn't you go to theatre school?" And he said "Yeah." That was the first time I remember laughing with him. He was an honest and brilliant soul.

My love to all who loved him.

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Tara Beagan - August 19, 2020 at 12:01 AM

IG

“ I will always remember the weekend Niki brought Jason to North Bay to meet her northern family. He was so very handsome, articulate and very sweet . The love they had for each other was so very apparent. Niki was with her soul mate. We shared lots of laughs and I was so proud to think Niki brought her Jason to meet us. It was a great 2 days.  
Irene Govis

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Irene Govis - August 18, 2020 at 08:19 AM

SH

When Jason and Niki got married I was giving him a hug just prior to the ceremony and spilled a bit of wine on his suit. I was mortified but he was, as I always found him, gracious. Someone rushed off to get soda and got it out quickly. Relief!  
I also want to mention that, as a bartender, he was always attentive and fun to talk to. His music was also second to none.  
A quick mention of his delightful Jabberwocky recitation which I luckily talked him into doing one night.  
Love to all his family and everyone else who loved him!!

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SherryMcLaughlin - August 20, 2020 at 11:21 AM

JH

“ I feel all the heartfelt tributes already say how I felt about Jason. In my mind' eye I'll always see him wandering up from your cottage to ours wearing as always his infectious grin to meet up w Emily for whatever adventure they might dream up on any particular day. I'm sure the entire Cedar Point extended "family" are like me, inconsolable.

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john hinrichs - August 17, 2020 at 09:58 AM

AM

“ Kindness is what comes to mind first when I think of Jason. How he had great reserves of kindness, even toward people who could try others’ patience. Other things come to mind too: his wry grin, his perfect music for the moment, his ability to recite Jabberwocky by heart, his pure and beautiful bond with his sister, his helpless love for Nikki and the kids, his sensitive eyes. How you could always trust him to meet you with warmth and an unspoken sense of camaraderie in the human predicament. Heart of gold.

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**Alayna Munce** - August 17, 2020 at 07:47 AM

EB

“ I had the pleasure of being Jason’s friend for almost 20 years. He had exquisite taste in music, books and movies and if you ever had a mixed tape made by Jason, you know what I mean. He was one of the first people to come see Andrew play at a little bar on Ossington, and every week he would come and we would sit and listen together, sometimes he’d bring John, or Jenny -and years later they’d make the trip to far flung music festivals to hear those same songs. I got to know his beautiful family at their cottage and hear stories of “putting in the dock” where John would generously give Jay the top half of the wet suit for the cold water. Maybe my favourite memory is when we worked together ushering at the princess of Wales. The shifts were long and it was hard not to get discouraged some days, Jay started drawing silly cartoons on small pieces of paper. I don’t even remember what they were but they were just supposed to make me smile and he would always find a way to slip on into my hand when I was feeling down. After a few weeks my pockets were crammed with them.

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**Erin Brandenburg** - August 16, 2020 at 10:39 PM

CK

“ My deepest condolences to Jason's family and fellow friends. He was such a lovely person. I also worked with him at the Princess of Wales theater and enjoyed his wicked sense of humour and trying to make him laugh when we were able to play music before we opened the doors to the public. I would dance like Ed Grimley from SCTV to songs by "The Doors" just to watch him crack up. I think that was my favourite memory with him. We'd also hang outside just talking about life in general. I never got the pleasure to meet his sister Jenny, but he clearly had a strong bond and great admiration for which I thought was just beautiful. I saw him a few years ago walking in our Parkdale neighbourhood as I was picking up my daughter from school. As he was walking towards me he looked up, we stared at each other and we both had the same reaction of surprise smiling and hugging each other. He mentioned he was visiting Jenny at that time. I pointed our house to him and told him if he was ever nearby to come visit. This was my last moment with him and while brief, I'm glad it included hugs and happiness in seeing each other again.

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**Clara Kim** - August 16, 2020 at 02:02 AM

SE

“ Jason was kind to me at a time in my life when not a lot of people bothered to be. It's been a very long time since we last talked, but I'll always remember that.



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**Sarah Elliott** - August 15, 2020 at 02:25 PM

NH

“ Jason made you feel cooler just by being in his presence. We grew up in Kettleby and have a shared childhood experience of what feels like a much simpler time. He was my sisters best friend and spent a lot of time at my house. A time when kids played outside and went on adventures. The Kettleby creek and valley are magical places to learn and grow. Jason wrote my mom a letter when she was terminally ill about 2 years ago which I read again last night. He didn't have to but he took the time out of his busy life with two young kids to write it. It was witty and funny but grounded with the most genuine love. It would have taken me days to write. That letter lifted her spirits. She treasured it. I think it is the most beautiful thing I have ever read. His final paragraph read:

*“and I feel all that past tense loving reflection deserves a current address:*

*to my mind you are loyal, grand, humorous, tender, lovely and strong.*

*But for me, it is your grace that is the most profound.*

*I look forward to the next time we meet.*

*You have a home in the very best part of my heart.*

*I love you Mrs. Hobson.”*

*We love you too Jason. Until we all meet again.*

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**Noah Hobson** - August 15, 2020 at 01:28 PM

JE

💔 *my heart....I couldn't read it again. So thank you my loving brother for saying what my heart can't express right now. A piece of my heart went with him.*

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**Jessica** - August 17, 2020 at 09:44 PM

ER

“ I met Jay in the spring of 2000. We were ushers at *The Lion King*. Looking back it was a coming-of-age time for a lot of us working there. Jay was the coolest guy I ever met. He was the O.G., the Mack Daddy, wore a long coat just like Judd Nelson in *The Breakfast Club* and smelled of English Leather and Belmongs. We laughed so much, hung out at his pad on Baldwin Street till sunrise and watched the same films over and over. Our fav films were *Last Night* by Don McKellar and *Big Night* by Stanley Tucci (I still have *Big Night* on VHS, not sure if I stole it from him). I remember us randomly watching *Gilmore Girls* and being surprised it was pretty good.

He introduced me to Tom Waits and Phil Spector, we both really digged Macy Gray's debut LP and I could always piss him off by singing Rod Stewart's *Downtown Train*. We wrote lots of songs about a girl named Shamayne and ate sooo much pizza. We did a fun road trip (with DeeJ and her sis) to Niagara-on-the-lake to see our friend Pete in *Lord of the Flies* and later couldn't remember how we got back to TO.

At the time, Jay was my family away from home. He was my brother. He took care of me. Last we spoke was at a party at the Penner's. We said we'd hang out more but he moved away and time passed by... way too soon.

My thoughts and prayers to the Stephens family. I will never ever forget him. He was awesome.

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Ernie - August 14, 2020 at 07:49 PM

DA

“ This is maybe my first memory of Jason.

*In our first year maybe even first month at Ryerson Theatre School we were asked to create a “happening”. (Excuse me if the details are muddled) It was something that would introduce us to the teachers and fellow classmates who we would be working intimately with over the next three years.*

*There was a variety of topics. Some people took it really seriously, depicting tales of abuse, grief from the loss of loved ones, discovery of their sexuality. I was very insecure and remember working really hard on something that would hopefully prove to my fellow thespians that it was not a mistake that I was among them.*

*Although, if you asked me today I couldn't recite a word of what I did...*

*Enter Jason. He walks, nay saunters up to the front of the room. Takes a beat and begins reciting the lyrics to AC/DC's You Shook Me All Night Long.*

*She was a fast machine  
She kept her motor clean  
She was the best damn woman I had ever seen  
She had the sightless eyes  
Telling me no lies  
Knockin' me out with those American thighs  
Taking more than her share  
Had me fighting for air  
She told me to come but I was already there  
'Cause the walls start shaking  
The earth was quaking  
My mind was aching  
And we were making it and you*

*Shook me all night long  
Yeah you shook me all night long*

*I was in awe. He always knew the right thing to do. And he was a hell of an actor.*

**Daniela** - August 14, 2020 at 12:16 PM

TS

“ *Jason always had an interesting story to tell. His smile lit up the room & his taste in music was amazing. He was kind & thoughtful.*



**Tarey Stone** - August 14, 2020 at 11:16 AM

JR

“ *I got to know Jason during the Mitzi's/Mezzrow's days—he was always extremely kind and perpetually in a great mood. It always lifted my spirits to see him. My condolences to Jenny and his family.*

*Justin Rutledge*

**Justin Rutledge** - August 14, 2020 at 10:31 AM

LW

“ *I worked with Jason at Costco and I always enjoyed our conversations about classic cult movies. Everytime I watch Trainspotting, I'll think of you. You always had a Lust For Life. Take it easy, Captain.*

**Lisa Wright** - August 14, 2020 at 12:01 AM

LW

“ *Lisa Wright lit a candle in memory of Jason Stephens*



**Lisa Wright** - August 13, 2020 at 11:58 PM

BF

“ Christmas Eve, the year 2000, at the Queen Street house with Jenny, Jason, Jason’s then girlfriend, my mom, dad, James, and me. We had such a great time. The conversation went on forever and I will always remember it as one of the greatest Christmas Eves ever.

Barb Farwell - August 13, 2020 at 08:35 PM

PR

“ I met Jason when I was around 21 years old at the Princess of Wales Theater. I remember him having a laid back cool and a sardonic wit that would make you laugh unexpectedly. I am so grateful I had a chance to hangout with Jason over many drinks and a lot of laughs. My condolences to his family and friends and anyone who had the pleasure of meeting such an awesome dude ! Remember you always my man ! Rest in peace.

Peter Rwankole - August 13, 2020 at 07:29 PM

JE

“ I loved Jason very much. He was a wonderful person, father, brother, son and friend. I still haven't processed this loss and likely never will. Hug my Mom for me my friend, and rest easy. ❤️



Jessica - August 13, 2020 at 05:44 PM

ST

“ Every memory I have of Jason involves a witty joke, and lots of laughs. He was always ready with the right turn of phrase at the right time. Usually the smartest one in the conversation. He will be missed, and always remembered.

Stacey - August 13, 2020 at 03:25 PM

JS

*i had been on tour for sixteen weeks... I came home and went into the Mezz (then called Mezzrows), my second home when I am home. this magnetic, kind and open man, whom I had not yet met, was working behind the bar, I ordered a drink... then I looked at the the regulars with whom I was sitting, and said who is that? They said as one voice Jason he is amazing...*

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**Jennifer Stobart** - August 22, 2020 at 07:27 PM