

A celebration of the life of

Lee Grant Joseph

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Cambridge Crematorium

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Conducted by
Vanessa Dennis
Accredited Officiant of the
British Humanist Association
Tel: 01487 843845

[e-mail: vanessa.dennis@btinternet.com](mailto:vanessa.dennis@btinternet.com)

(Entrance Music:)

Good Afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen

We meet here today to celebrate the life of Lee Joseph. We are here to pay our respects to him, say our formal good-byes and to try and bring some comfort to you 'his family and friends who have gathered here today shocked and saddened to have lost this good and well loved man so tragically from your lives. We must also remember that Lee did not die alone and another family is mourning the loss of a well loved person as a result of this tragic accident. Our thoughts are with them too. As well as you that are here, there will be others who have known and loved Lee who are not able to be with us here today, but who will never the less share in your sense of loss at this sad time. Together we must commit Lee's body to its natural end with perhaps some comfort in the knowledge that he has lived his life to the full and that he is now at peace.

Lee's family has chosen in accordance with his beliefs to have a simple funeral ceremony today that celebrates his life and recalls the unique and very charismatic man that he was. Members of Lee's family and friends have worked hard to ensure that this ceremony will be a fitting and appropriate tribute to him and I am officiating here today on behalf of the British Humanist Association.

As you may know a Humanist funeral ceremony is the chance to join together in taking your leave of someone you have known and loved, but it is more than that. It is also an opportunity to remember together Lee's life and a chance to say thank you for the precious time that you have all shared with this unique and outstanding man.

Of course I am quite sure that nobody here needs me to tell you that this is a sad day. We are naturally saddened when we have to attend the funeral of someone we have known. And it is right and quite natural that you should grieve for Lee, because your sorrow is a reflection and a measure of the love, 'the happiness and the friendship that you have each shared with him. Our grief is so much more keenly felt because Lee was still in the prime years of his life and had so much still to live for and look forward to.

When an older person dies we may quite rightly grieve, but we can accept more easily then that a full life has been lived and drawn to its inevitable conclusion. We see death then as a natural event, like the sunset dissolving into dusk as night falls. But when somebody like Lee dies, who was still in the prime years of his life, it is more like the sun has been blotted out by a sudden eclipse; It does not seem right at all, and we mourn not only for the life that was, but also for the life that should have been still to come.

Untimely deaths always remind us all how precious our days are and underline the importance of living life fully and well.

The final parting signified by death is bound to bring shock and sorrow whenever the ties of love and friendship are involved. Those of us who feel deeply will grieve deeply and that is a wholly natural reaction of the human heart. But for those of us who believe that death brings the end of an individual existence, life's significance lies in the experiences and impact we achieve in that time; its permanence lies in the memories of those who knew us, and any influence we have left behind. It is to be hoped that the friendships and love that filled Lee's life will live in the memories of his family and friends much longer than your present shock and sadness over his death.

The comfort of having Lee as your friend - a son, a brother, an uncle - may indeed be lost. But the joy of having had that relationship and the delight and comfort of your memories will never be lost. To match the grief of losing Lee, you have the real pleasure of having known him, and perhaps some comfort in the many happy memories of him that I hope you will all cherish.

As the great Russian novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn put it:

Some people are bound to die young. By dying young a person stays young forever in people's memories. If he burns brightly before he dies, his light shines for all time. Although I never had the pleasure of meeting Lee myself I did meet recently with some of those closest to him and they told me a little about his life

and his personality. It is now my pleasure to begin the tributes to Lee by reflecting briefly upon his life with you all.

Lee was born in Primrose Lane hospital in Huntingdon and was the eldest child of parents Gary and Ruth Joseph. He spent his earliest years growing up in Southoe and was joined in family life by his three younger sisters Heidi, Laura and Hannah.

Lee's first school was in Buckden and from all I heard about him in his younger years he was a typical boy, always out and about and up to something. He was always outgoing and from a young age always liked to have some kind of hat on! His love of cars may have begun with the first go-kart that his dad built him using a lawn mower engine, which was quickly superseded by several bigger and faster models.

After moving on to the Hinchingsbrook School Lee found that school was not always to his taste and indeed there were often times that he didn't bother to go at all. To be fair it was not realised for many years that Lee needed glasses and so school work was a bit of an uphill struggle for him. As he grew older he developed a great love of music and had a wide circle of friends with whom he loved to socialise. He was the kind of fun-loving and out-going person that others naturally warmed to and many people remember him for his ever-present smile on his face. He had a reputation as something of a trend-setter and certainly invested a lot of time in making sure he looked good.

After leaving school Lee's first job was an apprenticeship to train as an electro-mechanical engineer. He turned out to be really good at it and qualified in just 3 years, rather than the usual 4, but sadly soon after he qualified he was made redundant and had to rethink his career options.

Lee opted to return to college in Bedford and train as an electrician. Again he got on really well in this job and moved into working on the maintenance team at Papworth Hospital. Although Lee liked this job and made many good friends among his working colleagues he was not keen on having to do on call duty and so decided to have another change of direction. After re-training again as an IT technician Lee started working for Cambridge University and has remained in that job for the last 8 years. Although Lee found that Cambridge University was a very different world to the working environments he had been used to, he loved his job and put a great deal of effort into. He was very well liked and respected by his working colleagues and we will hear from one of them in a few moments.

Those who knew Lee well tell me it would be fair to say that he got bored easily and it seemed that as soon as he had mastered one thing he was looking for the next new challenge in his life. For example he taught himself to play both the saxophone and guitar but once he'd got the hang of playing, then he rarely did so again.

In his early 20's Lee was briefly married to Rachel who he had known since he was at school. Sadly that marriage did not last. In 2001 he then met Lawra through friends of hers who were Lee's neighbours and soon started to develop a close and happy relationship. They married in 2003 and during their years together shared a lot of laughter and many good and happy times with their large circle of friends. Lawra told me that some of her happiest memories of Lee were when they were in his car, with the music on loud, both singing along at the top of their voices. In their time together they both changed and grew and they shared 7 incredibly happy years together and remained always the very best of friends.

It was through Lawra's dad that Lee started to get involved in the spiritual side of life and alternative therapies. He learned to meditate and went onto qualify as a hypnotherapist and ran a busy private practice where he got great satisfaction from helping people with problems like weight-loss, giving up smoking and phobias. He particularly liked working with children but his loving nature meant that he found the work terribly emotionally draining and he therefore reluctantly had to give it up.

It was in designing his own web-site for the hypnotherapy practice that started Lee into the business of web design for others. It was something he was really talented at and he was building an excellent reputation for his work.

Away from work Lee loved his music, socialising, snowboarding and of course his cars. He loved to drive something fast and flash, and as with everything he wanted to drive to the best of his ability and he was an exceptionally good driver. So Lee was a man with a very enquiring mind, who always had some interesting project on the go and usually had an eye out for something new to be interested in as well. He had tremendous energy and whatever he did he threw himself into it 100% and had an exceptionally positive outlook on life, always expecting to achieve the best results.

Lee was also a man with a very big heart. He adored his family, remained close to his mum and dad and sisters and was a wonderful and adoring nephew to Tyla, Lewis and Seth. He was amazingly generous with his time to his friends; open and friendly he seemed to have a way of reaching out to people. For many he was their first call when their computer went wrong and needed some problem solving. He willingly sorted things out for people and cheerfully gave of himself and his time. He was also generous and giving with his money and continued to support a family in Sri Lanka who he and Lawra had met on their honeymoon. He always made time for others, listened and supported them and liked to make people laugh and feel good about themselves.

I know that Lee's sudden and tragic death has left you all shocked and saddened to have lost this terrific man. I know that such a big character is bound to be sadly missed by all of you who have known him, but I'm sure our thoughts will remain with those who have

lost the most through his untimely loss. I hope that all of you will continue to be comforted through this sad time by your happy memories of Lee and all the good times that you have shared with him.

I would now like to invite some other people forward to pay their own personal tributes to Lee and first are colleagues from work, Pat & Julie.

(Pat & Julie)

(Mark King)

There are only a handful of people who come into your world, and touch your life in a dramatic fashion. Some of the people are just flickers of light during a long life, while others are a constant glow for years. For me, Lee was my constant glow. He was my best friend.

There are so many stories that I could tell you about Lee and the things he used to get up too. From walking to school together and stopping at his Nan's for sweets every morning until we were 16; to teaching me to drive at age 11; getting his first girlfriend and his first of many hangovers.

He always looked out for me as we grew up, giving me advice and pointing me in the right direction and that was the case right up until this day. He persuaded me to move house and also to find my wife, which I will be eternally grateful.

As we all know Lee loved a free meal, the thrill of winning and most of all, he loved cars. So much so, that on a recent drive he was by far quicker than me on his very first run on a track that I had been doing for a year or so now, but he still decided that he was going to 'Google earth' the road, so he could perfect it even more. That was Lee, always the best at everything he did.

Friends are like stars, you can't always see them, but you know they are there.

The most important thing in Lee's life was his family and that those around him were happy.

Lee, I love you. I miss you. You have graced my life more than you will ever know. God bless.

(Hannah)

A much loved and widely respected man, it is clear that Lee will be very sadly missed by all of you who have known him and shared his friendship, and I am sure all of our thoughts at this time will be with those who are most deeply affected by the loss this terrific man.

Ladies and Gentlemen: I would now like to invite you all to sit quietly for a moment so that you each have some time to spend alone with your own favourite memories of Lee. The music that we will hear now has been chosen by Lee's family for this occasion.

(Music: Imagine - Jack Johnson)

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have now reached the part of today's ceremony when Lee's body will be taken from our view, would you please stand. Here together in this last act, with great sadness but without fear with love and appreciation we commit that part of Lee that we cannot keep to its natural end.

Lee I am sure I speak for all of us who are present when I say to you now:

We rejoice that you lived

And we are glad that we saw your face.

We took delight in your friendship

And treasure that we walked life with you.

We will cherish the memory of your words,

your achievements, your character and your many fine qualities.

With love we leave you in peace

With respect we bid you farewell.

It is the uniqueness of each human life that is the basis of our grief in bereavement. Look throughout the whole world and there is not now and nor will there ever be anyone quite like Lee. But he still lives on in your memories. Although he is no longer a visible part of your lives Lee will always remain a member of this family or of your circle of friends through the influence that he has had on you and the very special part he has played in your lives.

Looking beyond our grief today, we rejoice that Lee was, and is, part of our lives. Hold onto him in your thoughts; there is no need to part from him too, quickly. Talk about him often, repeat the words and sayings that he used and the jokes you shared, and enjoy your memories of the happy times that you have shared with him. Although this is clearly a sad occasion for all of you here we should not forget the happiness that Lee himself spread and

we should be optimistic because of better days that will undoubtedly come again to you all. From all I've heard about Lee I feel sure that such an inspirational person would not want those he cared about to feel sad for too long after today, but would rather that you picked up your lives and kept on living them to the full. By doing that and by keeping alive the memories of what Lee has meant to you, you will be paying him the greatest tribute of all.

On behalf of Lee's family I would like to thank you all for being here today to remember his life and personality. They have asked me to invite you all to join them now after the ceremony back at The Old Bridge Hotel in Huntingdon for some refreshments and the chance to share more of your memories of Lee. Lee's parents Gary and Ruth would very much like to speak to everyone who has been here this morning and if any of you are not able to join them at the Bridge Hotel they ask that you make yourselves known to them outside now before you leave. Donations in Lee's memory are being made to the Salvation Army, a charity whose work Lee admired and who he always supported and those of you who would like to make a contribution are very welcome to do so.

We have been recalling here together with love and warm appreciation the life of Lee Joseph. Lee is now safe beyond fear, beyond harm and beyond any further pain. The memory of his life is already committed safe and warm to your hearts. In sadness for his death, but with thanks for his life and the many good times we have shared, we will always remember him. And finally, let us remind ourselves that the dead do not reside in

the grave or in an urn, but safe, as a treasure, within the hearts and minds of all those they have loved.

As we leave here now we will listen to a final piece of music that was especially chosen by Lee's friends.

(Music: Baggy Trousers - Madness)