



Justin Thomas Lentz

April 26, 1982 - December 25, 2017

Justin Thomas Lentz, resident of Kansas City, MO, formerly of St. Paul, MN, passed away on December 25, 2017, at 35 years of age, after giving pancreatic cancer the middle finger for 6 months. Justin was born and raised in the Twin Cities, attending DeLaSalle High School in Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota-Duluth. Justin passionately worked in healthcare, in various capacities since college, and ended the daily grind with HCFS, Inc. as their national Director of Account Management.

When he wasn't slaying the slopes, Justin was at home with his wife, Dana (Fischer), enjoying his sons, Hendrix (6) and Jagger (5 mo). Justin was a proud father, passing on his love of skiing to Hendrix at an early age, which is probably what he would have listed as his greatest life achievement. The little time he spent with Jagger was precious and filled with smiles and serenades. Justin made friends wherever he went; he loved to talk, to read, and to travel. He will be deeply missed by his parents, Thomas & Barbara (Stadler) Lentz, of STP, MN; sister, Meleah DesLauriers (husband Mick, children Theodore, Bennett, Eloise); in-laws, David, Christy (Burchfield), Patrick, & Jackie Fischer, of Robbinsdale, MN/Lenexa, KS; aunts & uncles Sue Brighthouse (Mike McManus), Charlie (Jane) Lentz, Bill Lentz, Wally Lentz (Susan Nixon), Mary Lentz (Kelly Murphy), Chris & Leslie Lentz; Ray Caron, Carol (Craig) Christoffersen, Jo (Dan) Arrigoni, Thomas (Elizabeth) Stadler. He is preceded in death by his grandparents, aunts Anne Lentz, Jeanette Stadler, & Joyce

Caron, and uncles Charles & James Stadler. Good friend and fellow DeLaSalle grad, Eddie Mullin, was surely there to greet Justin at the pearly gates.

Funeral services will be held on Friday, January 5th, at 10:30 (visitation at 9:30), at St. Therese Catholic Church, at 7207 N State Rte 9 KC, MO 64152.

There will also be a celebration of life held in Minneapolis, on January 27th; details to follow.

The heavenly mountains called our Christmas Angel, and he had to go.

I have known Justin my whole life. Literally. And I think we have always been pretty fond of one another. Aside from the time he said to my parents, "When are you bringing her back to the hospital?" In his defense, I was a colicky newborn. For those of you who may not know, I am Justin's little sister, Meleah. His one and only. And that is constantly how he treated me. He made me feel special, welcomed, loved, and adored. He wasn't like most big brothers I hear about. He never acted like I was a nuisance or that he didn't want me tagging along. In fact, he regularly invited me to be a part of whatever he was doing. And Justin was always doing something fun. He was so full of life, it just radiated from him. A dear friend of mine described him as magnetic. And I couldn't have come up with a better word. You were drawn to him and you wanted to be a part of his world. I think this is because he lived his life passionately and with no regrets. He dove in to every challenge whole heartedly and encouraged us all to do our best with the cards we were dealt. When he was young, he was shy and had some quirks about him that to this day make me giggle. He didn't like eating pancakes because he hated smelling like maple syrup all day, he would melt down if his socks weren't on

straight (i.e., the little line at the bottom didn't line up with the start of his toes), and if he got dirty, he would want to change immediately. This sounds like I am describing a neurotic little boy, but I think it has more to do with that he always knew what he did and didn't like. He had a strong self-awareness even from a young age and I have always wanted desperately to be more like him. Justin had a sense of direction and purpose because he knew what he wanted. And I don't mean that he was good with directions, because many of us know he would get lost in St. Paul without his Maps app, even though he lived there for more than half his life. What I am trying to say is that he always had his priorities straight. Through grade school, he loved playing sports, especially football, and he was a gifted athlete. Justin was also incredibly bright, like the kind that would catch you off guard sometimes, but he didn't love school, so he figured out how much effort he had to put in to pass and he did just that. He saved his energy for the people and things he loved like downhill skiing. I mentioned earlier that Justin was shy when he was young, I can't put my finger on when he grew out of that, but once he did, he was exactly the opposite. A total extrovert who was friends with everyone. And I mean everyone. He didn't care if someone wasn't "cool" or "popular", he just cared that they were human and he was the best at making people feel heard, understood, and loved. He wasn't about the status quo or going along with whatever everyone else was doing. A prime example of this was when it came time to decide what high school to attend. We went to a private Catholic kindergarten through eighth grade school. So that means you go to school with exactly the same kids for nine years. And back in 1997, if you went to St. Mark's, when you graduated, you went to Cretin Derham Hall. This is just how it worked. But not for Justin. He was always open to trying new things and willing to take a risk. So, he checked out a little school called DeLaSalle on Nicollet Island in Downtown Minneapolis. It was still a private Catholic school, but smaller than Cretin and much more diverse. He was immediately drawn to it. I think he was excited to meet new people and he resonated with the

LaSallian ministry which was focused on helping others. I should mention that after Justin went to De, more and more St. Mark's alumni made the same decision, including myself. Let's be honest, he often forged a path that others were inspired to follow. Justin valued being an Islander and continued to make lifelong friends throughout high school. His engaging and dynamic personality had something to do with this, but as his dear friend Phil reiterated to me, it was also because he was incredibly loving and loyal. The greatest way I can describe it, is that when he loved you, he loved you HARD. He made sure you knew it with his words and his actions. He would drop everything at a moment's notice if he thought you needed him to. He always showed up when it mattered most and did so without being prompted to. And because of his amazing sense of humor, he could always make you laugh, even when everything else was falling apart. His dark sarcasm brought light to some of the most challenging moments.

After graduating from high school, Justin went to the University of MN Duluth. He created yet another unwavering group of friends and continued to show all of us how fun life can truly be. I must admit that some of my favorite memories of tagging along with him come from this time. While UMD brought Justin many nature walks and entertaining times, I am certain he would say that the best thing that ever happened to him was meeting Dana his freshman year. Let's be frank, Justin was incredibly charming and he never had a hard time with the ladies. But she was different. She was the one for him. And he loved her so much. I will always remember the way he looked at her. It was pure adoration. And they definitely brought out the best in one another. Dana taught Justin about fashion and turned him into one dapper dude. And Justin taught Dana about life's simple pleasures like downhill skiing and turned her into his little ski bunny.

Over the next several years, their love grew deeper and deeper in the frozen tundra of Duluth. That is where they made their first home and had their first parenting adventures with Riese, the dachshund. And just for the record, Dana bought Riese for Justin so he is Justin's dog. After they graduated, they

lived in the Twin Cities for a couple of years. I think our family will forever hold this time as special in our hearts. It was pre-marriage and kids so we took a cue from Justin and lived life to the fullest. My mom, dad, Justin, Dana, Mick, and I enjoyed trips to Mexico, eating out, and simply spending quality time together.

While clearly Justin was absolutely head over heels in love with Dana, it took him a few years to propose. They moved to Kansas City shortly after getting engaged to be closer to Dana's family. They were married in October of 2009. Justin was so excited to make Dana his bride. He was grinning from ear to ear all day. This is a memory I can't wait to share with Hendrix and Jagger. I want them to know the unique love their parents shared and how sacred it was. A little less than a year later, Hendrix was born. And he was a game changer. Justin was incredibly proud to be a dad and really quite good at the baby stage. He had a magical chest where he could cuddle a baby and instantly put them to sleep. As Hendrix grew older, he began to look more and more like his dad. I think Justin enjoyed having a mini me and took the responsibility seriously. He taught him about all the things he loved and showed him how fun they could be. He specifically passed on his passion and love for skiing. As Dana said, this probably is what he would have listed as his greatest life achievement. And Justin shared with us that his trip with Hendrix skiing in Utah was one of his favorite life moments.

I haven't mentioned yet what a remarkable career Justin had professionally in healthcare or how hard he worked. He poured his heart and soul into everything he did. He was incredibly successful and adored by all he came in contact with. I especially loved hearing stories from co-workers about how he made everyone laugh.

Justin was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer the same day his second son Jagger was born, on July 7th. Jagger brought with him a light of hope and healing. It was as though a higher power knew this baby needed to be perfect and that was exactly what was given to their family. Although Justin's time with Jagger was far too short, the time they spent together was

full of love, chest cuddles, and serenades.

As many of you know, Justin fought cancer harder than anyone. He pushed for chemo treatments week after week after week. He advocated for himself and pursued an aggressive regimen for as long as humanly possible. He was willing to try anything that may work and had successful results for several months. He inspired me every day how he chose to focus on only the good and the things that really mattered like quality time with family and friends. And despite all of the grueling treatment he received, he never complained. The main thing I think everything boils down to is that Justin loved life like no one else. He never let things scare him or veer him off course. He knew what he wanted, and he did it, no matter what anyone else thought. He was fearless in the most inspiring way. He always looked for the silver lining and chose to celebrate the fact that we were alive and that we loved one another whole heartedly. He rejoiced in each and every special day we got to spend together.

As I look at all of you, I see family and friends who adored him. And it is heartwarming the number of you who traveled many miles to be with us today. My ask to everyone here is that we work together to celebrate the magnetic person that Justin was. And that we commit to keeping the memories and light of him alive. So, share your favorite stories with one another and record them in a way that you don't ever forget the magical life he lived and the amazing gifts he shared with each of us. Of course, Justin's greatest priority was his family, so my final ask would be that we all rally around Dana, Hendrix, and Jagger and provide for them the way we know Justin would want. With unending love, support, and humor.

Now, I would like to read a letter to you all that was written to Justin by a good family friend. It captures what many of us admire most about him.

Why I Don't Like Justin Lentz

Growing up, my family and I would always "vacation" to Minnesota for two weeks. The first week we would stay at a lake with my mom 's side, and the

second week we stayed at my grandparent's farm. The first night of the vacation, though, was always spent at our family friend's house in St. Paul, the Lentz's.

The Lentz family have been dear friends of ours and they have two kids, Meleah, who was one year older than me, and Justin, who was three years ahead of me in school. There were a lot of reasons why people liked Justin. I did not like him for those reasons. I didn't like Justin because he was popular or the homecoming king. I didn't like Justin because he played quarterback. I didn't like Justin because he could drive us to Dairy Queen. I didn't like him because he enjoyed skiing or was funny. I did not like him because he was a sports fan. I didn't like Justin because he had a job and earned money. I did not like him because he listened to cool music.

The reason why I liked Justin was because of the way he treated my brother, Mike. Mike has severe autism and has some unique needs. For some reason when we stayed with the Lentz's, Mike loved being with Justin. It would have been easy for Justin to leave after a quick hello or ask for some space.

Instead, he spent significant time with Mike the night we stayed with them, watching videos, reading a book, or making him laugh by quoting movies.

There was no girl there to impress, no teacher he was trying to get a letter of recommendation from, or an employer where he could earn a raise. There was nothing in it for Justin, but he treated someone with the upmost respect, someone many people would rather not spend time with because it was too much effort.

As I write this, I periodically look at the monitor into my son Mack's room as he sleeps. I wonder about what lessons will be important for me to teach him throughout his life. Like all parents, I want the best for him, however, I am not as concerned about his grades or him being the best athlete. I hope that I can teach Mack to have Justin's character, to be kind and decent when no one else is watching, because it will always mean something. When the time comes to teach my son about kindness and resiliency, I will tell him about my friend Justin Lentz. Like many people, I do not just like Justin; I respect the

hell out of him.

See you on the slopes.

Patrick M. Duffy

Previous Events

Service

JAN 5. 10:30 AM (CT)

St. Therese Catholic Church
7207 N State Route 9
Kansas City, MO 64152

Tribute Wall



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Justin Thomas Lentz.*



January 04, 2018 at 03:58 PM



“ *Your friends and co-workers from Station 12. purchased the Sentimental Dreams for the family of Justin Thomas Lentz.*



Your friends and co-workers from Station 12. - January 03, 2018 at 10:02 PM



“ *Mary and Kelly, and Chris and Leslie. purchased the Ringed by Love for the family of Justin Thomas Lentz.*



Mary and Kelly, and Chris and Leslie. - January 03, 2018 at 05:38 PM



“ *Sapphire Skies Bouquet was purchased for the family of Justin Thomas Lentz.*



January 03, 2018 at 04:55 PM



“ *The Holschuh Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Justin Thomas Lentz.*



The Holschuh Family - January 03, 2018 at 02:33 PM



“ *Crystal Cross Bouquet was purchased for the family of Justin Thomas Lentz.*



January 02, 2018 at 09:54 PM

JA

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



Jo Arrigoni - January 02, 2018 at 09:42 PM

JA

“ *Justin remembered - sweet, adorable, and precious..... AND LOVED. So many memories!*
Auntie Jo

Jo Arrigoni - January 02, 2018 at 08:22 PM

JA

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



Jo Arrigoni - January 02, 2018 at 08:20 PM

JA

“ 4 files added to the album *New Album Name*



Jo Arrigoni - January 02, 2018 at 07:08 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket* was purchased for the family of Justin Thomas Lentz.



January 02, 2018 at 04:25 PM



“ *Guiding Light Bouquet* was purchased for the family of Justin Thomas Lentz.



January 02, 2018 at 10:38 AM

PE

“ Unfortunately you cannot hear Justin's sweet song to his newborn, Jagger, but you see the love. Love! This man is dearly missed.



Penny - January 02, 2018 at 07:56 AM

JF

“ Justin was like a brother to me and I will never forget the amazing time we had together. Whether it was staying in, going out to eat, or going on fun trips like to the cabin, Justin was a huge source of entertainment and happiness for everyone involved. I can't think of a time where he wasn't making me smile and adding his flair on everything we did together. He was the best brother-in-law anyone could ask for and he will be missed dearly. with love - Jackie



Jackie Fischer - January 01, 2018 at 09:59 PM

CF

“ More special photos of Justin. It is hard to limit to a select few. I'm grateful with have so many of him.

- The Fischers



Christy Fischer - January 01, 2018 at 09:11 PM

AH

“ Justin always had a smile on his face and could always bring humor to a tense situation. He loved Dana and the boys with all of his heart. He was a true family man that would do anything for those that he loved. We will miss Justin tremendously.

Love,
Kent, Amy, Ian and Logan



Amy Hayes - January 01, 2018 at 08:53 PM

CF

“ We loved this man so very much! The loss of his life will weigh heavy on us for a very long time. Justin was an exceptional individual. We could not have asked for a better man for our daughter. He was such a wonderful husband and father, and the best son-in-law. We will talk about him often with very fond memories. You should be so proud Tom and Barb for raising a wonderful son, and clearly he and Meleah also had a special sibling bond of love and respect for each other. Sharing a few special photos. I think some came from Dana, but I steal the good ones. Jackie loved the trip that Justin and Dana took her on to Universal Studios in Florida for her high school graduation. What an awesome memory for her.



Christy Fischer - January 01, 2018 at 08:06 PM

CF

With all our love, David, Christy, Patrick & Jackie Fischer

Christy Fischer - January 01, 2018 at 08:10 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Fionn Murphy - January 01, 2018 at 03:54 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Justin Thomas Lentz.*



January 01, 2018 at 01:22 PM



“ *Justin was one in a billion, a truly good man, son, father, husband, friend. He made the best of every situation often through laughter. He will be missed so much.*

Staci Hardesty - January 01, 2018 at 01:12 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Justin Thomas Lentz.*



January 01, 2018 at 12:06 PM



“ *You don't know me, but I've been prayerfully following your family's difficult journey....I'm so sorry for your tremendous loss of this vibrant young man....May God surround you with His healing and compassion to carry you through this difficult time...Hugs & prayers~Jeanne Langeslag*

Jeanne Langeslag - January 01, 2018 at 11:59 AM

JB

“ *Joanne Bajt lit a candle in memory of Justin Thomas Lentz*



Joanne Bajt - January 01, 2018 at 11:51 AM

CC

“ *Justin you were loved by many. Please help all who loved you through this difficult time.*

Carol Christoffersen - January 01, 2018 at 11:39 AM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Justin Thomas Lentz.*



January 01, 2018 at 10:04 AM

BL

“ *I was blessed to have been a part of Justin's journey with pancreatic cancer. He seldom complained about the side effects of chemo. He tried his best to be a good husband and father during his journey. Dana coordinated Justin's care and the care of Hendrix and Jagger. I am blessed to have her as my daughter in law. I will miss Justin dearly. Love, Barb/Mimi Barb*

Barb Lentz - January 01, 2018 at 09:36 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Justin Thomas Lentz.*



December 31, 2017 at 11:40 PM