

Remembering John Ott, Jr.

by Niloo E Sarabi

On September 22, 2005, John William Ott, Jr., an inspiring and prolific ObesityHelp (OH) volunteer, passed away due to complications of his obesity. Only 44 years old, John had undergone weight loss surgery two days before. With sad hearts, hundreds of members on the OH message boards read his last poem, 'Mortality,' posted by John's dear friend Luana Ball at his request.

Mortality

Is it my time to go?
Will I lose the fight?
I will pass on the baton,
If you will it.

While I want to stay,
I know that isn't your way.
You know what's best for me,
This I know.

So my arms are outstretched my Lord,
Do with me as you will,
Take me home to you,
Or let me stay on Earth.

So that's your word Lord,
You're taking me home.
I'm ready to go,
As you know.

For those still here,
Fighting the battles.
Keep the faith,
and stay, the path.

©9/21/2005 by John Ott, Jr.



John wrote:

I dedicate this to all who are trying to control the disease of obesity by using that wonderful tool known as weight loss surgery. I wrote this one while thinking about my impending surgery and considering the possibility that I wouldn't make it. If this poem is posted on the ObesityHelp message boards by anyone other than myself, it means that I did die in the attempt, whether it was on the table, or afterwards.

For my brothers and sisters still struggling, keep the faith. This disease does not have to be fatal. I am looking over you all from my place in Heaven and if God allows me to do so, I will lend you the strength you need to persevere.



For many months, members had found solace and strength in John's frequent and inspirational posts on the OH message board, and now his last words conveyed to them yet another encouraging message of faith and perseverance.

A loving son and affectionate brother, uncle and friend, John always enjoyed being surrounded by his loved ones and never failed to lend a helping hand whenever it was needed. He harbored a lifelong passion for music and poetry; he often wrote songs that he sang with his beautiful voice and loved to play the guitar. He was a member of the parish at St. Andrew Newman Center, where he sang with the choir for many years. His students at the Badger Springs Middle School in Marino Valley, California, knew him as a passionate teacher and recognized his kind and compassionate heart.

John's great love for nature's beauty and its creatures made him a dedicated member of the Boy Scouts of America and earned him the highest rank of Eagle Scout. An extensive list of the things he aspired to do after his weight loss surgery revealed his enduring interest in spending time being active outdoors. Surfing, skiing and scuba diving were his primary dreams. The people who had the privilege of knowing John during his lifetime remember his caring and gentle spirit as much as his remarkable personal strength and resolve. He refused to surrender to fear, but instead chose to live and fight his obesity until the very end. He will be greatly missed, but his words and the great example of kindness and courage that he set will live on. ♥

For my best friend, my brother John...

Just A Moment

by Terri Ott-Norris 10/5/2005

I knew you all your life,
It seemed like just a moment.
We Laughed
We Cried
We Fought
We Celebrated
We Argued
We Agreed
But you were always there,
Always.
You were a Constant in my life,
My Rock, My Strength
And in just a moment
You were gone
I hold you in my heart now
As tenderly as I can
But Please know I would give up
Almost anything
For Just A Moment More

To discuss this article in an online forum, or to view a special photo memorial to John, please visit:
www.picturetrail.com/gallery/view?p=999&gid=8387411&uid=1444166

