



Matthew Paul Brester

January 19, 1972 - February 19, 2008

Matt Brester was born in Cozad, Nebraska on January 19, 1972. Matt spent his childhood in Dodge, Nebraska. From the beginning Matt loved sports. He was an avid baseball fan and played while he was in grade school and high school. While growing up, a friend of the family introduced Matt to the Pittsburgh Steelers and Pirates. He became an instant fan and cheered for them his entire life. The team he loved more than any was the Nebraska Cornhusker football team and his love for them began early in life and never ended. Later in life, Matt insisted that his first son's middle name would be Thomas, named after Tom Osborne.

Some of the happiest times in Matt's young life involved his years at Mt. Michael. He loved playing football for Coach Kane and met some of his best friends, including Pete, Eric and Jason, at Mt. Michael and those friendships helped Matt through good times and bad. At Mt. Michael, Matt formed a special relationship with Fr. John Hagemann. Fr. John was a trusted adviser over his years at Mt. Michael and after. Matt graduated from Mt. Michael in 1990 and joined the United States Army and served his country for four years as a medic. This experience reinforced his passion for medicine and his desire to help others. Upon completion of his service, Matt enrolled at UNO and began working at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC). It was there that Matt met Michelle. They both quickly knew they were meant to be together and were engaged within months of dating.

Matt's diagnosis of cancer came shortly after he was engaged to Michelle. Matt and Michelle planned their wedding in record time and were married on December 26, 1997. Following his diagnosis, Matt had his thyroid removed and endured radiation with the hopes his cancer would be put into remission. Matt continued with his studies, graduated from UNO and was accepted to Medical School at the University of NE Medical Center. Undeterred by his diagnosis, Matt vowed to live life to its fullest and pursue his dream of becoming a doctor. For the next several years, Matt would endure surgeries to remove cancerous lymph nodes in his neck and lungs. While this may have deterred some, it only made Matt's resolve stronger.

Matt began medical school in the fall of 1999. Throughout medical school, Matt's Christmas and spring breaks were filled with surgeries and radiation. There were happy times too - during Matt's time in school, Matt and Michelle were blessed with the birth of their first two children Abigail (Abby) and Joshua (Josh) born on February 25, 2002. Their son Caleb was born on August 11, 2003. Matt graduated from UNMC in the Spring of 2003 and made a decision to leave the Husker state behind (temporarily) for Matt's residency in Winston-Salem, North Carolina at Wake Forest University. Matt quickly made friends in North Carolina and adapted to life in the South -- while making it clear to all who met him he was, is and will always be a Husker. Matt could easily work sports into any conversation -- in fact, it was the rare conversation you had with Matt where sports weren't mentioned. Matt "owned" fantasy football and fantasy baseball teams and enjoyed watching his teams play and talking football and baseball with his close friends. Matt loved his electronics too -- he was never far from his ipod. He loved music and enjoyed listening to some of his favorite bands, including his beloved U2, whether he was in his car or at home. He loved his computer, particularly the new MacBook he got for his birthday this year. It allowed Matt to keep in touch with friends, catch up on his sports scores or just surf the web.

Loving Nebraska like Matt did, he felt a pull to return home upon completion of his residency. He missed going to Nebraska football games and also being in Nebraska during the College World Series. Matt spent many June days sitting in the bleachers of Rosenblatt watching baseball. Matt was recruited to work for a practice in Omaha and began his career in earnest, doing what he loved to do -- helping others and giving back. It was important for Matt to give back since he was so grateful for the wonderful care he received from many of his doctors along the way, especially Dr. Bill Lydiatt and Dr. Su. Upon his return to Omaha, his battle with cancer intensified. He underwent internal and external radiation and chemotherapy.

On February 2, 2007, Matt and Michelle were again blessed with two more children, Owen and Emily. Matt's kids meant the world to him -- he was happiest when he was playing with them and teaching them about sports.

Throughout Matt's 10 year battle, he lived a life that many aspire to -- he was a loving, sympathetic and caring husband and father, a devoted, hard-working and patient doctor and was a survivor -- never giving up hope, never asking for favors or special treatment. He lived his life to the fullest extent. He realized his life-long dream of becoming a doctor and gave back to so many in countless ways. Matt cherished his family and was happiest in the presence of his devoted wife Michelle and their five children. Matt passed away peacefully in the presence of his wife Michelle on February 19, 2007. Matt is survived by Michelle and their five children: Abigail, Joshua, Caleb, Owen and Emily.

Tribute Wall



“ *Matthew Paul Brester*

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