

Brian Jacob Rottlaender

April 17, 1974 ~ August 11, 2023

Dear JaNae, I'm incredibly and deeply sorry for your loss. You and Brian both fought bravely during his ordeal with cancer. I'm so glad I got to meet you both. I could tell how in love you were...and still are. I can only hope there's life after death. Sending peaceful and comforting vibes your way. ■

- Nancy Trunnell

I only knew Brian in his last 2 years life, but it was Brian, you only need one interaction with him to know how unique and awesome of a person he was. I was introduced to him as he applied as a technician for my service department for Mercedes Benz. Brian completely undersold himself during his interview (shocker, I know!) Only after a few weeks I could see, Brian was a gift. I didn't seek him out, I just had an ad running for techs. And at that time, I would have hired a person that could fog a mirror. But I get Brian. The universe knew what I really needed in my professional journey, and delivered me a gift. Brian was a machine, in more ways than one! He was so smart at figuring out problems on complex cars. He was consistently reliable, good spirited, and a model technician for the younger guys on my team. He would lend tools, share knowledge, and he truly cared about the owner of the vehicle he worked on, making sure everything was safe to drive. All of those things are things you can't pay somebody to do. That was just who Brian was. Near the end, I discovered that Brian was also a fighter. Day after day he would show up to work, weakened from his treatments just days prior, and he would still amaze me and others at what he could accomplish. He still smiled, joked, he still kept his head down and quietly continued to be a valued member of our work-family. One day, in passing, I was telling Brian that I needed a tool to repair my motorcycle. I couldn't describe it so he wanted me to show him. So we went out behind the workshop in the parking lot and he looked at my bike and said very plainly "you need a bicycle wrench". Later that day, he was passing through my office and casually he handed me … a bicycle wrench, exactly in the size I needed (he eyeballed it from about 5 ft away previously in the parking lot), and told me to keep it, I might need it more than once. A gift, from a gift, how lucky was I? Beyond my memories of him, I will remember Brian in the form if this small, meaningful wrench he gave me, that I will keep forever. I will miss Brian so much.

- Andy Cartwright