

John Harris Burt

September 17, 1956 ~ August 10, 2022

John Harris Burt - September 17, 1956 - August 10, 2022

Johnny Burt was one of the smartest guys we ever knew. The glint in his eye and that mischievous smile seemed to say “that’s right, friend, I have it all figured out—watch and learn.” And we did. And here’s what we learned from Johnny:

Life is about love. That’s it. That’s the lesson.

Now, is that such an original idea? Not really - not as a thought, anyway. Not as a statement. Many of us may even believe it. But few of us act on it, or act on it consistently.

Johnny lived it. He loved everyone, and wanted to be loved by all. He was far from flawless, but his love for others was close to perfect. It burned bright, and gave him a stature and presence far beyond his small physical frame. And when that love was reciprocated, Johnny was radiant.

John Harris Burt was born on September 17, 1956 at LDS Hospital in Salt Lake City, Utah, to Douglas Church Burt and Janice Birkes Burt. From father Doug, he would inherit dogged persistence and a work ethic that was second-to-none. Mother Janice loved him intensely and unconditionally, and that love is as responsible as anything else for the person John would become later in life.

John was born with phenylketonuria (PKU), a rare disorder that can lead to intellectual disability. The United States didn’t begin testing for PKU routinely until several years after John was born. We believe John was born at exactly the right time and place.

Johnny, the guy we knew and loved, was born a few years later, following some important choices that John Harris Burt made as a young man, with the help of innumerable angels along the way, Mother Janice the first and most important.

John Harris Burt was subjected to cruelty of various stripes throughout his life, ranging from teasing to outright abuse, the full severity and scope of which are known only to him. Far more often than not, in the face of this adversity and suffering, John Harris Burt chose to respect others anyway, including those who disrespected him. He chose to trust others anyway, including those who betrayed him or used him as a mere object for their amusement.

He chose to love others anyway. And in making that choice, John Harris Burt became a legend.

Johnny Burt loved sports, and in particular high school sports. As has been noted by both the Deseret News and the Salt Lake Tribune, he was a “fixture” at high school sports events, and left an “indelible mark” on Utah's sports landscape. He also loved playing sports, from ping pong to volleyball to pickleball to pickup basketball - he’d play

anything, and especially enjoyed participating with the Special Olympics of Utah. He was competitive in other ways, too. For example, he was a beast at Uno and Bingo, but really hated to lose.

Johnny loved to help others, and took charge whenever he could. If you gave him a job, you had to be sure you were clear on the instructions from the beginning, because once he got going it was hard to redirect him. And stop him? Good luck trying that; the man worked until the job was done, and heaven help anyone who got in the way. He held jobs and lived independently for most of his life, including for Deseret Industries, the Utah Jazz, the Delta Center, Murray City, Sandy City, and Utah Grizzlies Hockey.

Johnny was generous and loved to give other people toys, treats, and gifts, some of which were pretty unusual. Those lucky enough to have received such gifts were often left wondering where they had come from!

Johnny was a faithful member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and an inspiring example of “enduring to the end.” He exemplified the first and second great commandments, as there was no doubt he loved God and his fellow man. Some of the most important people in Johnny’s life were in the Crescent Ridge Stake in Sandy, Utah. He faithfully served a service mission at the Salt Lake Temple. We like to imagine he’s already hard at work in Heaven, and may be trying to take charge!

Johnny passed away in his sleep at Avalon West Health & Rehabilitation in the early morning of August 10, 2022, after suffering a variety of health challenges during the past few years. He received excellent care at Avalon, for which his family is very grateful.

Johnny is survived by brothers Mike (and his wife Joan, and their children), Doug (and his wife Peggy, and their children) and Barry, and sisters Rosemary (and her husband Skip, and their children) and Annette (and her children). Johnny is also survived by countless others with whom he developed relationships and formed bonds of family as close as those of his “blood” relatives. Those relatives want to thank all of you for your kindness toward (and patience with!) Johnny over many years.

Johnny’s funeral will be held at the Crescent Ridge Stake building at 1265 East 11000 South, Sandy, Utah, at 12:00 PM on August 20, 2022. A viewing will begin at 10:00 AM at the same building.

In lieu of flowers, consider donating to the Special Olympics of Utah at https://www.classy.org/campaign/johnny-burt/c423599 . Also, please consider leaving thoughts, memories and photos by clicking here https://forms.gle/cMz4sR3Edqspwtcy9

To view the services on-line via Zoom click on the "Watch Services" button or follow the link: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/9z5_8a2njyhEBXnbaI1iYnuZNketYKDeDO8OmqnkjnRrsGkSQ6qFrb29PYXS4LWv.DW