

Jon Absey

December 28, 1967 ~ January 31, 2026

Jon Absey, the beloved and original Utah Jazz Bear, peacefully passed away in the comfort of his home on January 31, 2026, after a heroic and courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 58 years old.

Jon was raised on a farm in East Grand Forks, Minnesota, He graduated From Sacred Heart High School in 1986, attended Moorhead State University and was a proud veteran of the United States Army. His roots shaped the work ethic, humility, and resilience that carried him throughout his life.

In 1994, Jon made history as the first person to bring the Utah Jazz mascot to life. In 1995, he married the love of his life, Shana Christianson, and together, with their three beautiful daughters, they built a life rooted in love, laughter, and family.

Jon didn't just wear a costume—he built a character, a program, and a culture that connected fans of all ages to the game. Long before mascots became a staple of professional sports culture, Jon understood the power of laughter, movement, and shared moments. His energy lit up arenas, his creativity broke new ground, and through his performances he gave generations of fans memories they will never forget—making basketball feel a little more magical for over 25 years.

Beyond the costume, Jon was a deeply kind and generous person. He was known for his quick wit, warmth, and genuine ability to make people feel seen and welcomed. Whether performing, creating, or simply showing up for those he loved, Jon gave his whole heart in everything he did.

Jon's battle with pancreatic cancer was marked by extraordinary courage and grace. He met each day with determination and resilience, inspiring those around him with his strength and spirit. He was lovingly supported throughout his journey by his devoted wife, Shana, whose unwavering love, advocacy, and care carried him through even the hardest moments. Together, with the love of their daughters, sons-in-law, his siblings, extended family, and friends they walked that journey with courage, hope, and deep gratitude for the love that surrounded them. He faced his illness with the same strength, humor, and heart that defined his life, leaving behind a lasting legacy of joy, creativity, and connection.

Jon was preceded in death by his parents, James and Charlene Absey, and his sisters, Virgie (Daniel) Krummel and Rosie (Ervin) Larson.

He is survived by his loving wife, Shana; his daughters, Lexi Absey, Sydney Eldredge (Conley), and Alyssa Absey (fiancé Cody Atkinson); his grandson, Baker Jon Eldredge; his brothers, Gus (Nancy), Roger (Becky), and Casey (Patty); his sisters, Lori Taylor (Doug) and Lisa Beste (Kevin); his mother-in-law, Kathy Christianson; his father-in-law, Milan Christianson; his sister-in-law, Sara O'Brien (Kevin); and numerous nieces and nephews, dear friends, and countless fans whose lives he touched through both his work and his kindness.

Jon Absey will be remembered not only as a pioneer and performer, but as a husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, fighter, a friend and so much more. He will be deeply missed.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 2:30 pm on Monday, February 9, 2026 at South Mountain Community Church, 14216 S. Bangerter Parkway in Draper, Utah. Friends are welcome to greet the family during visitation prior to the services from 1:00 - 2:15 pm.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to a charity of your choice in Jon's honor.

Services will be streamed for those wishing to attend virtually. To watch the previously held services, please click the "Watch S ervices" link above.