

EVAN ANDREW CONAWAY



Evan Andrew Conaway, 34, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, passed away on June 10, 2024, in Denver, Colorado. He was born on January 31, 1990. He was a North Allegheny High School graduate where he played cello in the Strolling Strings and was a member of Amnesty International. An Eagle Scout, a hockey player, and a dog lover, Evan went on to pursue studies at Boston University for Biology with a

specialization in cell biology, molecular biology, and genetics.

He was a man of science, and while he rarely talked about his academic and research accomplishments, they were significant. A former supervising professor of Evan's at Harvard University's Brigham and Women's Hospital described Evan as "a remarkably gifted scientist," and in spite of only holding a bachelor's degree at the time, he was the "first author on one of the most important manuscripts to come from my lab... He has single-handedly developed a new approach to investigation in my laboratory."

He continued to pursue his passion for science and animals after being awarded one of only three spots at Colorado State University's dual degree Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and PhD Program. Evan worked in the Clinical Hematopathology Lab, where he researched blood cancers in dogs. His supervising professor shared that during Evan's work on his PhD thesis, he used his unique skills in bioinformatics, which she referred to as "his superpower," to identify the specific cell that is activated through inflammation and infection and causes a common type of blood cancer in dogs. "Evan was the first person in the lab with these skills [in bioinformatics], but he helped get others started. Part of his legacy here is a group of people who are now able to do this work."

Evan loved all kinds of sports and outdoor activities, including participation in several triathlons, but hockey was his favorite. His love of hockey and attitude as a scientist made him a perfect fit for his other gig; when not in the lab, he refereed ice hockey in the Boston area on evenings and weekends. He brought his equitable and nonpartisan eye to the ice where he plied his trade refereeing levels as high as Division I college hockey for women and junior hockey for men.

As a cellist, bassist, and music lover, he was often asked what type of music he liked, to which he would reply wryly, "I like good music." Evan had a very unique and endearing style of humor, and it was hard to find anyone who didn't comment on what a genuinely nice guy he was. He loved to playfully make up silly word combinations and phrases that had everyone laughing and wanting to join in on the fun of speaking "Evanese." Some of these Evanisms were lovingly documented by his friends in an "Evanese to English Dictionary."

For a man who often played the quiet type, he was a surprisingly happy and enthusiastic dancer. He spent many nights in Boston with friends, whom he lovingly referred to as his "family," singing and dancing into the late hours of the night. He loved traveling the world, and in particular, visiting Germany and speaking the language with his friends and family who live there. He had an especially close relationship with his older brother, often hanging out until the wee hours of the morning whenever they visited each other.

Evan battled a very aggressive form of multiple sclerosis the last eight years of his young life, and as a result, had to put down his instruments, hang up his skates, and eventually, even had to drop the veterinary medicine portion of his Dual DVM/PhD program. In spite of all this, Evan never stopped being Evan. He never lost his wit, curiosity, and engagement with the world. He never stopped being a passionate music lover or an extremely knowledgeable hockey fan. He didn't let it stop him from traveling the world, and he never stopped being a remarkable scientist. Evan will be remembered for his relentlessly positive personality and the heroic way in which he overcame significant hurdles.

On January 18th, 2024, while he was on his way to work using his mobility scooter, he was run over by a truck while using the pedestrian crosswalk in front of his lab. After five long months on a ventilator, he ultimately succumbed to complications from his catastrophic injuries. To say he fought hard for his life would be an understatement. After he passed, the head nurse of his wonderful care team shared, "It was an honor to care for him." Evan was fiercely loved by his family and he will be missed terribly.

Friends will be received at **JOHN A. FREYVOGEL SONS, INC.** (freyvogelfuneralhome.com) 4900 Centre Avenue at Devonshire Street, Thursday, June 27 from 5-8 PM. Funeral Friday, June 28, Mass of Christian Burial, Divine Mercy Parish, Epiphany Church at 10AM.

Evan is survived by his mother, Kathy Conaway; his father, Bruce Conaway; his brother, Jonathan Conaway; and his sister, Elizabeth Clarke. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to Canine Companions (<https://canine.org/dontate-now/>) an organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained service dogs at no charge to the recipients.

Send condolences post-gazette.com/gb