

JEFFREY J. DEAN



Jeffrey J. Dean, 64, passed away on Wednesday, September 18, 2024, in Houston, PA.

Born to James J. and the late Constance H. Dean, he is survived by his father of McMurray, PA; and his sister, Molly Dean Bittner, of Richmond, VA. Also surviving him are his brother-in-law, Stephen Bittner; and nephews, Robert "Bo" and James Bittner, all of

Richmond; as well as many beloved cousins in Pittsburgh, Texas, and Florida.

Jeff had Down Syndrome, and exceeded every expectation in his well-lived life. Jeff was on the forefront of many of the advancements that are now readily available to individuals with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics became a big part of his life. He competed locally, statewide, and internationally in swimming, gymnastics, skiing, wrestling, volleyball, softball, and track and field, winning two gold medals in the butterfly and breast-stroke events in the 1979 International Games, and representing the United States in the first United Kingdom Special Olympics in Liverpool, England, in 1982, competing in swimming and gymnastics. The development of Jeff's athletic abilities is due in part to the inclusiveness of the Peters Township Athletic Department in accepting Jeff into their swimming and gymnastics lessons in the early 1970s. Walter "Buzz" Long patiently taught Jeff to swim and became his personal coach and life-long friend.

Jeff was also among the first to live in a group home environment for people with intellectual disabilities, where he lived until his death. The staff and roommates over the years became his extended family, with love, respect, and fun abounding. The Dean Family would like to thank the staff at the McGovern Group Home (Dana, Tamara, Robin, Victor, Tracy, Ocean, and Jenn) for their love and support of Jeff over the years.

One of Jeff's proudest moments was graduating from McGuffey High School in 1981, one of the first examples of educational mainstreaming, where he was immediately accepted by the faculty and students and served as the Manager of the wrestling team.

Music and faith were very important to Jeff, as he was a life-long member of St. Benedict the Abbot, serving as an usher for 20 years.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 9:30 am, at St. John XXIII Parish, St. Benedict the Abbot Church in McMurray. Immediately following, interment will take place at the National Cemetery of the Alleghenies in Bridgeville.

A celebration of Jeff's life will be held at a future date. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the ARC of Washington County.

Please add tribute at

beinhauer.com

Send condolences post-gazette.com/gb