

## **Robert E. Nelson – PharmD 1997 Pharmacy**

Robert Ervin Nelson BCPS, age 49, of Naperville, Illinois passed away suddenly on Monday, October 25, 2021. He was born on February 15, 1972, in Devils Lake, North Dakota to parents Joan and Robert Nelson. He is survived by his loving wife, Diane Nelson (née Magen); sons Zach and Ty Nelson; his mother Joan Nelson (née Howen); brother Jayson Nelson; niece Saidee Nelson; uncles Gene (Bette) Nelson, Monty Howen, and Wayne Howen; aunts Alice Nelson, Deb (Stan Weisz) Nelson, and Shelley (Alan) LaBar; along with many cousins and friends. He was preceded in death by his father, Robert Nelson; and uncle, Terry Nelson.

Rob grew up and graduated in Devils Lake, ND. On his 2nd birthday, he received the gift of his baby brother, Jayson. Always the student, his mother remembers him as a little 4-year-old boy, asking to start school early. He became a self-taught baker by 10, creating the perfect chocolate-chip cookies while his parents were at work. Once he did get to go to school, he never stopped learning. He graduated from Devils Lake High School in 1990 and received a full scholarship to attend the University of North Dakota. After spending 3 years at UND, he transferred to North Dakota State University, and graduated with his Doctor of Pharmacy degree in 1997.

Rob completed his work as a Pharmacy resident in 1998 and went on as a licensed Pharmacist for MeritCare Health System until 2004. His next role was Clinical Pharmacy Manager at Sanford Health until 2011. During this time at MeritCare and Sanford Health, Rob also worked as an Assistant Professor at NDSU College of Pharmacy. A nod to his incredible teaching abilities- Rob was awarded "Teacher of the Year" twice in his 13 years of teaching there.

After his tenure as a Clinical Pharmacy Manager and Assistant Professor, Rob joined ViroPharma Inc. as a Regional Medical Scientist. During that time, he and his family settled into their new residence in Naperville, Illinois. After two years as a Regional Medical Scientist, he took his professional expertise to Amgen, beginning as a Senior Medical Science Liaison (MSL) on the Nephrology team, working his way up to MSL Field Director on the Neuroscience team, Medical Director on the Neuroscience team, External Medical Engagement Director on the Neuroscience team, Medical Director on the Neuroscience team, External Medical Engagement Director on the Global General Medicine team, and then returned to the Neuroscience team as a Medical Director. During his tenure at Amgen he played a key role in medical and strategic planning and evidence generation. Rob was instrumental in building an MSL team that helped to successfully launch Aimovig, a new migraine preventative. He was a beloved colleague by all who had the privilege to work with him. Rob was proud of his work and used his skills to mentor those up and coming in the field of medical science.

Rob met the love of his life and best friend, Diane, on November 22nd, 1991, at a party while both attended UND. His humble demeanor and giving spirit drew her in and they were inseparable ever since. They loved each other as much as one can love another, making the most incredible team. He was her rock, keeping her grounded when life felt overwhelming. He helped her think through things and always took care of his family, putting himself last. He treated her like a queen and loved her like only he could.

One of Rob's favorite things was to be a dad. He and Diane became parents for the first time on November 17, 2004 to their son, Zach. Nearly a decade later, they became parents again to Ty on August 26, 2014. He was devoted to them both, doing everything from walking Ty to school each

morning to coaching the boys' sports teams. Rob's teacher heart was evident in his daily activities as a husband and father.

At 16, Zach's favorite memories of his dad are centered around the lake house they would use each year as a family. They spent holidays there fishing, boating, and tubing, where like all great Dads, he made every effort to get them to fly off the inner tube. One of Zach's favorite memories includes receiving his first Lego set. Rob spent over an hour and a half sitting with his son as he carefully assembled it, piece by piece. Rob's patience was unparalleled, and Zach will always remember his dad's teacher spirit.

At 7, Ty's memories are fewer, but no less impactful of the extraordinary man that was his dad. He describes his favorite thing to do with Rob as playing Plants Versus Zombies on the Xbox. "He taught me to be good at school and to try brave things." He recalls Rob's best food to cook for him was chicken nuggets, and when asked what his Dad's favorite thing in the world was, his response: "My Dad's favorite thing in the whole world is love and care. I'd like to say my Dad was great. I want to say thank you to everybody."

Rob had many hobbies, including hunting, fishing, golfing, and building everything from Lego sets to anything that included power tools. He was the family IT person, accountant, chef, driver, and planner. Whenever leaving the house for a trip, he would shop, cook, freeze meals, and organize for his time away. He was the most excellent bookkeeper, and he loved his family and those around him with each skill he'd been gifted with. He was kind to everyone, even strangers. He was admired for his brilliance, his authenticity, his sincerity, and his humility. His loss is felt by every person blessed enough to have known him.

A life cannot be measured in one written statement, however; there is one forever memory etched in Diane's heart. On their 20th anniversary, Rob and Diane renewed their wedding vows in Hawaii. Zach stood by their sides, and they were just weeks away from Ty's birth to complete their beautiful family of four. Diane remembers it with such warmth because, "When you say 'I do' the first time, you don't really know what you're getting into. That recommitment after 20 years to keep doing it; by then you know all of your flaws and you still choose to love each other."

The Nelson family will continue to carry Rob's memory with them in everything they do. They wish more than anything he could be here to make new memories, but he left them with so many to cherish until the day they're reunited.

Visitation will be held on Monday, November 1, 2021, from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at Beidelman-Kunsch Funeral Homes & Crematory, 24021 Royal Worlington Dr., Naperville. Funeral Service with Online Streaming, Tuesday, 11:00 a.m. at Grace Pointe Church 14210 US-30, Plainfield, IL. Interment private. All his cousins and his only niece feel honored to be pallbearers for their alpha cousin.

A scholarship fund will be created in Robert's name through his alma mater, NDSU. Details are forthcoming and will be updated here as well as on Facebook.

Please leave a message or memory on Rob's Tribute Wall here on our website. These messages and memories will be included in a keepsake memorial book that will be prepared for the family following services.