

“Our Beautiful Son, John Landon Black”

by Jeff and Stephanie Black at his Memorial Service

He had the biggest heart of anyone in our family. He loved unconditionally, without judgement. He saw goodness in everyone, sometimes when goodness wasn't there. He could talk to young and old, rich or poor, black or white. He was never intimidated. He was just John Landon Black.

When he was a little boy, he made his parents turn a car around to give money to someone on the street asking for help. John Landon always wanted his parents to give money to Harold, a man living from a wheelchair who stayed in front of the Central Coffee Shop in Manning, South Carolina. He didn't just put money in Harold's cup, he spoke to him. They smiled ... together.

John Landon was a comedian! When he was five years old at the Manning United Methodist Church, he came down for the Children's Moment, said something that made the entire church laugh loudly. And then ... sat back down by his Daddy and whispered in Jeff's ear ... “I knew I could make them laugh.”

John Landon loved his momma! He always put his arms around her when sitting in that church on Sunday morning. And most every other day of the week for 25 years of his short life. Stephanie cherishes those moments especially on Mother's Day 2022, when John Landon was doing well and when she saw him for the last time. He hugged her, and told her, “I love you Momma.”

John Landon and his sister, Liz, fought like all siblings do, but at the end of the day, they ALWAYS had each other's backs. And, oh, now John Landon loved being an uncle to Gia!

John Landon loved spending money – especially when it was his Daddy's! 😊 From shoes, to 20” tire rims to sports jerseys to jewelry, he was all about the bling. He loved finding a great deal, especially at Goodwill. He mastered eBay at 10-years-old. His personality – and his jewelry – and his shoes – always shined brightly. And now he is with the ultimate designer, our Lord, who has a path for all of us.

He loved sports, was a walking sports encyclopedia, loved going to Carolina football games, and insisted on waiting to the very end in hopes of getting a sweatband or a signed glove. Liz remembers John Landon's love for basketball as he played on the church's basketball team. Smith Gardner and King Cutter were his coaches. They were told by these coaches that John Wesley was their mascot!

John Landon did a brief work internship at Donna's House in Manning, a gift shop. Donna Snyder remembers how John was a natural born salesman, and as we know, that runs in his family. But Donna said his best quality of all was his ability to talk with older people, making them feel special and important.

And he was loved by all, especially children. His nieces and nephews adored him. He was their “Tickle Monster.”

John Landon loved his grandparents. He always told them how much he loved them. His last words to them were, “I love you, grandmamma ... I love you, granddaddy...”

He loved his friends deeply, so many of them here today. Jeff and Stephanie want y'all to know he talked about y'all all the time. He had his demons. He suffered from terrible anxiety ... and from addiction. He tried his very best to recover. His parents did everything humanly possible to help him. John Landon struggles no more. He is free. And for that we should all be grateful.