

Tribute to Troy Larson
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Canyon Camp

As a little sister, it is not easy to say nice things about my brother. So if I choke a bit, well that's the reason why.

So who was Troy Larson...?

Troy was a quiet, timid boy. He struggled in school both socially and academically. In the second grade he was held back, and only years later did we know that this failure haunted him. You see, behind that timid wall was a very competitive boy who wanted desperately to succeed at something.

The something Troy found was with our Dad in his non-school time. Our Dad was a Boy Scout Leader for many years and Troy thrived there. He earned every Merit Badge in Cub Scouts and Webelos and eventually became an Eagle Scout with 3 Palms and was Chapter Chief of the Order of the Arrow. Troy was also an expert in Dinosaurs, Butterflies, and Fishing.

Unfortunately, Troy continued to struggle in school through his freshman year in high school. He even asked Mom what the lowest grade level she would accept from him was so that he could calculate just how long he had to suffer with her at the dining room table.

Then towards the end of his freshman year he told our Mom "I want to be a Camp Counselor at Canyon Camp." My Mom - with separation anxiety in her voice - said "But you'd have to stay all summer"! I, as a little sister, suddenly felt I could be supportive of my big brother's decision. GO Troy! The whole summer, YES!

Once again, only later did we learn that this decision would turn Troy's whole world around.

At Canyon Camp he was treated with respect by his peers and looked up to by young campers. He was strong and confident and his past didn't matter here. He met several other young men who were excited about college and success and these young men filled Troy with their enthusiasm and built up his confidence.

Mom was thrilled by Troy's happiness on our Wednesday night visits and we came EVERY Wednesday night.

On our first Wednesday night visit, Troy informed us he was going to be an Indian Dancer. This pleasantly surprised Mom and Dad really got into it too. Through the next years, Troy and Dad spent hours making bustles and head dresses; Troy even joined the Ouray Dance Team in the fall so he could dance in the winter months.

Now, there is a little something you need to know about Troy. He was a slob at home. His bedroom was a nightmare and he despised any form of cleaning or cooking. I tell you this so you understand a confession my brother made to my Mother after years of Dancing: "Mom" he said, "I know you and Dad were really excited about me dancing but the only reason I originally did it was because at Camp you had to pick between Indian Dancing, Kitchen Duty

or Clean Up. I chose Dancing."

On the next Wednesday night, Mom had noticed that Troy's cabin was without privacy curtains, so the next time we came we brought Curtains made from Snoopy sheets Troy and I had as kids. Mom was hoping Troy would be so embarrassed but the guys loved them and they were enjoyed for several years.

On another Wednesday night that first summer, June 24, 1984, right here at Canyon Camp, we brought cake and ice cream to celebrate Troy's sixteenth Birthday. This was meant to be nice but this ended up to be the thing that embarrassed him. Who knew? The more he blushed the more the guys brought it up. It was great fun!

Back to school in his sophomore year, Troy was becoming a different person. We learned he had dyslexia and we also learned that Troy was SO smart that he had developed his own system for reading and wouldn't need extra help - just time. His grades shot up and he was college bound. He eventually earned a Bachelor's Degree in Management from ISU and later a Master's Degree in Industrial Engineering from NIU. He worked at Bausch Tools in Chicago and was very well liked by his coworkers. At his memorial service, one of his co-workers said that everyone came to Troy with any problems at work because he would help them through and then he would jokingly say: "Yea, and I am the one who flunked the Second Grade!"

We lost Troy to cancer on May 18, 2004 and we are here on this Wednesday, June 22, 2005 to celebrate yet again all this Camp can do. Thank you, Canyon Camp for helping my brother realize his potential and reach such a high level of success. I hope the power of this Camp lives forever and that the scholarship named for Troy helps many more young boys become the men they are striving to be.