



**In our Hearts Always
Shea Jeffrey William Stremcha
September 16, 1985 – July 20, 2011**

To help mark the occasion of our beloved Shea's 26th Birthday this Friday, his parents and siblings invite all of his family and friends to reflect, in some personal way, on how he touched their lives. To help us remember and honor Shea, we have decided to publish the eulogy delivered by his brother, Jesse, at Shea's remembrance and burial service on July 26, 2011.

"Shea: you need to wear a hat. You're bald." That was the advice my 3 year old daughter, Matilda, gave her uncle in response to his shaved, sun burned head just over a week ago. He smiled, sort of chuckled in the way he did, shook his head and responded, "Well, yes I am."

And that was Shea....Shea Rocks.

Shea was a miracle

Two years after my sister Amanda was born, my second sister, Julie, died during childbirth. After more than 5 years and several mis-carriages, my parents were ready to give up. Finally, more than 6 years behind Amanda, along came Shea...

Shea was strong

At our house, the same night about a week ago, he was doing curls with Matilda on each arm. He could toss her in the air and swing her -- matching her boundless energy in a way no one else could. Just a few more reps.

And, when dad, Shea and I were hiking on our trips, we'd affectionately call him our 'mule'. He'd bound ahead -- even with the heaviest pack on his back -- because we weren't moving fast enough. He'd wait for us to catch-up, just long enough to see us, assure us he was okay and then he'd bound off again.

Shea was big-hearted

He was so proud of his big muscles and the amazing things he could do with his body, but he was really defined by his big heart - his gentleness, empathy and compassion. I woke-up scared the other night. And, I was able to fall back to sleep, imagining Shea's broad smile and big-heart watching over me, giving me comfort.

Shea was smart and ambitious

He was happily one with his work, in a way that's oddly common in my family. He worked some hard, long hours at his job with Ameriprise Financial – following in dad's footsteps. Because, as he told me, "I'm going to beat dad by 5 years." and retire at 50 years old. I figure I'll be lucky if I can retire at 70!

Shea was optimistic

He was excited about his investment in these volatile leveraged option funds. He was telling me if they could just return 10% per week for like 5 years he would have a million dollars. Who really thinks they can earn 10% per week for 5 years straight!? I mean no one is really that optimistic. Are they? Shea was.

Shea was funny

He had a great way of imitating people where he sort of deepened his voice and shook his head back and forth. And, there is a picture where he's standing on top of Eagle Mountain which, as a Mountain, is kind of a let-down but there he stood, hand on hip, finger pointed at the sky, like he'd conquered the world – he loved posing for a picture.

And, Shea was in love

I've heard lots of stories, but the one I like best is him telling my sister, Amanda: "I usually don't like freckles, but on her, they look so good." "We knew he had fallen hard". He was so excited about being married to Ashley.

Even before Ashley, Shea always talked about being a husband and a dad. He told my mom at 4 years old he would name his first two children Spike and Whiplash. Spike for a boy and Whiplash for a girl (because no one would mess with a girl named Whiplash).

Shea was loved

Shea touched so many people in personal ways and they loved him. All of his confidence, swagger, cockiness even, was rooted in knowing deep down, and without any doubt, that he was loved. I've seen lots of proof of this in the past week: in the condolences, the Facebook wall posts, the cards and the crowd assembled here.

Shea was loved.

Shea was one of a kind

And just like we're all on a new journey, adjusting to a life without him, Shea's on a new journey too; to the life that's next for him. He still needs our love and prayers.

We're deeply grateful for all the expressions of sympathy and support. So many friends have asked what they can do: "If there's anything I can do to help, please let me know." I'd like to close with two requests:

1. Hug your people

From the book Hug Time; one of my favorite bed-time reads to my daughter Matilda:
“Hug the whole world, will that make it better? As Jules nodded yes, Doozy helped with his sweater. There was no one this kitten wanted to miss, so he made (and checked twice) a Hug To-Do List.”

Make your Hug To-Do list, and hug some people, because you just never know...and the people we love are so very precious.

2. Help the world

Another of my favorite quotes is from The Lorax: “UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”

Shea has touched your life in some way or you wouldn’t be here. So, I’d like you to join me in keeping his ethos - his spirit and character - alive. Think a little bit about what you can do big and small to help the world - to create better options for the next guys.

Be a miracle to someone. Be strong. Big-hearted. Optimistic. Smart and ambitious. Be in love and loved. And when people notice the difference, just smile a broad, secret smile to yourself -- and know the world is a better place because my brother was here -- even if for only 25 short years.

Our miraculous, strong, big-hearted, smart, optimistic, funny, in love, loved world will rock. Just like Shea...Shea Rocks!