

Devin Hart Bearden

Caring, athletic, bright, witty, attractive

At 6'2 Devin was lanky, handsome and a natural athlete. Equally at home on a skateboard, snowboard or when surfing, he was a pleasure to watch; so fluid and graceful. He was a good soccer and baseball player and loved hiking in nature or being at the beach, especially on the annual family beach trips to Hatteras.

More than anything Devin loved being with his family. He was full of life and brought joy and fun to every get-together. He liked clowning around and was often the center of attention. The biggest mark he made in life was the close relationship he developed with his four nieces and nephews. He would virtually become a child with them, playing endlessly. Even when it was obvious Devin was worn out, he wouldn't say no to connecting with the kids. When asked if he ever thought about having kids, he said; "Not sure that's going to happen." It was as if he suspected he might not get his life together enough to do so.

As a teenager Devin was a camp counselor for young children and later attended an experimental school in Colorado with an outward-bound type program. He responded well to the physical challenges and thought of being an instructor, but at twenty he was "high-jacked by his opioid addiction," his dad Joe said. 'He set high standards for himself and needed to be perfect, drugs gave him the feeling of worth. He would catch a glimpse of his passion at times, but he just couldn't find his footing.'

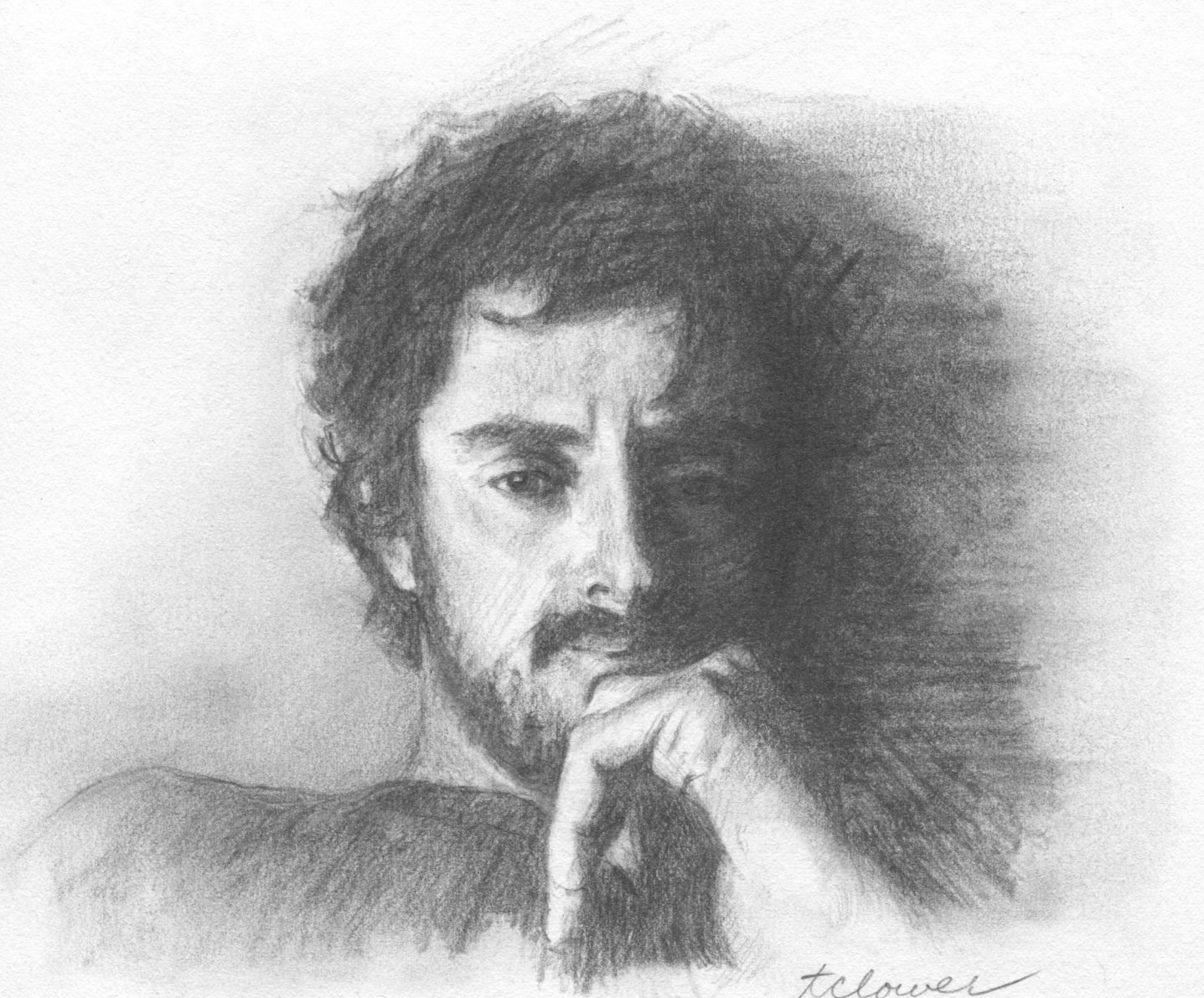
During Devin's active addiction everyone in the family rallied around him. As his dad put it; "tough love could have been fatal love." So they loved him unconditionally and tried everything they could to help him overcome his substance use addiction for the 12 years it had a hold on him. "He always knew he was loved," his mother said. Devin had just been in rehab and drug free for 50 days; he was recovering his self-esteem and feeling good about himself. He had a date and got anxious so went to what he knew to calm his nerves. He passed away of an accidental overdose on drugs containing fentanyl.

There is now a hole in the family that everyone is aware of, especially during family gatherings. Joe said: "It is the sadness that lingers, like a wet blanket restricting you, but then you remember the joyous times and get some relief. Devin was a good kid, we always knew that, I don't think he always did."

Devin's father, Joe Bearden, provided the information for this narrative.

November 13, 1985-February 4, 2018

Age 32-Lived with addiction 12 years



McClower
"Devin"

Devon Howard

Loving, handsome, caring, giving, adventurous

Devon was a kind, caring, giving person, an easy-going child and amazing older brother to his younger sister, Hannah. He was a daredevil, always up for new adventures and loved to keep people laughing. Devon spent his free time outdoors at Lake Anna, fishing, on a jet ski or a boat. He also loved hiking in the woods or mountains. His birthdays were always a day all about him and since he was a St. Patrick's Day baby, all the decorations were green.

His mom recalled a memorable event that happened when Devon was four. He thought it would be interesting to put a watch battery up his nose. When it got stuck, his mom rushed him to a hospital and as they were sitting in the waiting room, Devon, still sobbing, said, "Look, Mom," and there was the battery in his hand. They quickly exited before meeting with the doctor.

Though Devon was a certified meat cutter, he also loved landscaping. In good weather, he could be found outside, maintaining someone's yard to perfection. Devon was always willing to help anyone. His mom, Sheri, recalls a time when he stopped to help two homeless men. He brought them food and toiletries and fed them. After sharing time at a bonfire together, Devon invited them to spend the night.

Devon had some difficult losses over the years prior to his death, both of his grandparents died in the same year. His cherished aunt passed away, his parents divorced, and his beloved stepsister was murdered.

In active addiction, Devon would isolate from family and was quick to anger. His mother felt helpless and was constantly worried about him. Devon's biggest goal in life was to conquer his addiction, so he could be free to decide what to do with his future. He sought treatment himself and made all the arrangements. Devon was proud to be sober. He looked healthy and loved living in California; unfortunately, sobriety was short-lived, and Devon relapsed.

His mom misses everything about him; his beautiful face, getting his phone calls and hearing him say "I love you mom." "His absence in my life is miserable," she said.

Both Hannah and Sheri are advocates for educating the public and bringing awareness to the issues around substance use disorder. Hannah is now a NARCAN trainer and was recognized by a Virginia U.S. Representative for her dedication and advocacy. Sheri said, "I will always be Devon's voice and never stop educating and sharing resources regarding addiction."

Devon's mother, Sheri Gauthier, provided the information for this narrative.

March 17, 1992-May 8, 2019

Age 27-Lived with the disease of addiction 6 years



Theresa Clower
"Devon"

Timothy James Parham

Beautiful soul, best dad and Papaw ever

Unconditional love was the theme of Tim's life. He was a caring friend, father and "Papaw" generous with his love, his time and his resources to provide the best life for everyone he loved. Tim was loyal and trustworthy. His daughter Ashley said, "When he gave his word, it was done! You could call on him day or night and he was there."

Tim was a genuine county guy. He loved camping and four wheeling and was good at sports. He was a huge racing and football fan and enjoyed golf. On Ashley's 15th birthday, Tim got to fulfill a lifelong dream of riding a Harley and shared the experience with Ashley. "I will never forget the feeling of being on that motorcycle with my dad. It was so peaceful and serene," Ashley said.

Ashley described her dad as a kid friendly person. His grandkids loved to stay with their Papaw and he was happy to have them. He showed up for all their events, most recently his grandson's football games. He wasn't comfortable sitting in the bleachers so he stood by the fence line so he wouldn't miss a thing. Tim's biggest desire in life was to buy a plot of land big enough to house his kids and grandkids so they could all live near each other.

Tim worked as a brick mason for 35 years, which physically ruined his body, causing extreme back pain. He was prescribed opiates for the pain. Though he had been a substance user since age 13, Ashley said, after taking the opiates, he was never the same." He couldn't work or do the things he loved and became depressed. Eventually, he succumbed to a heroin overdose.

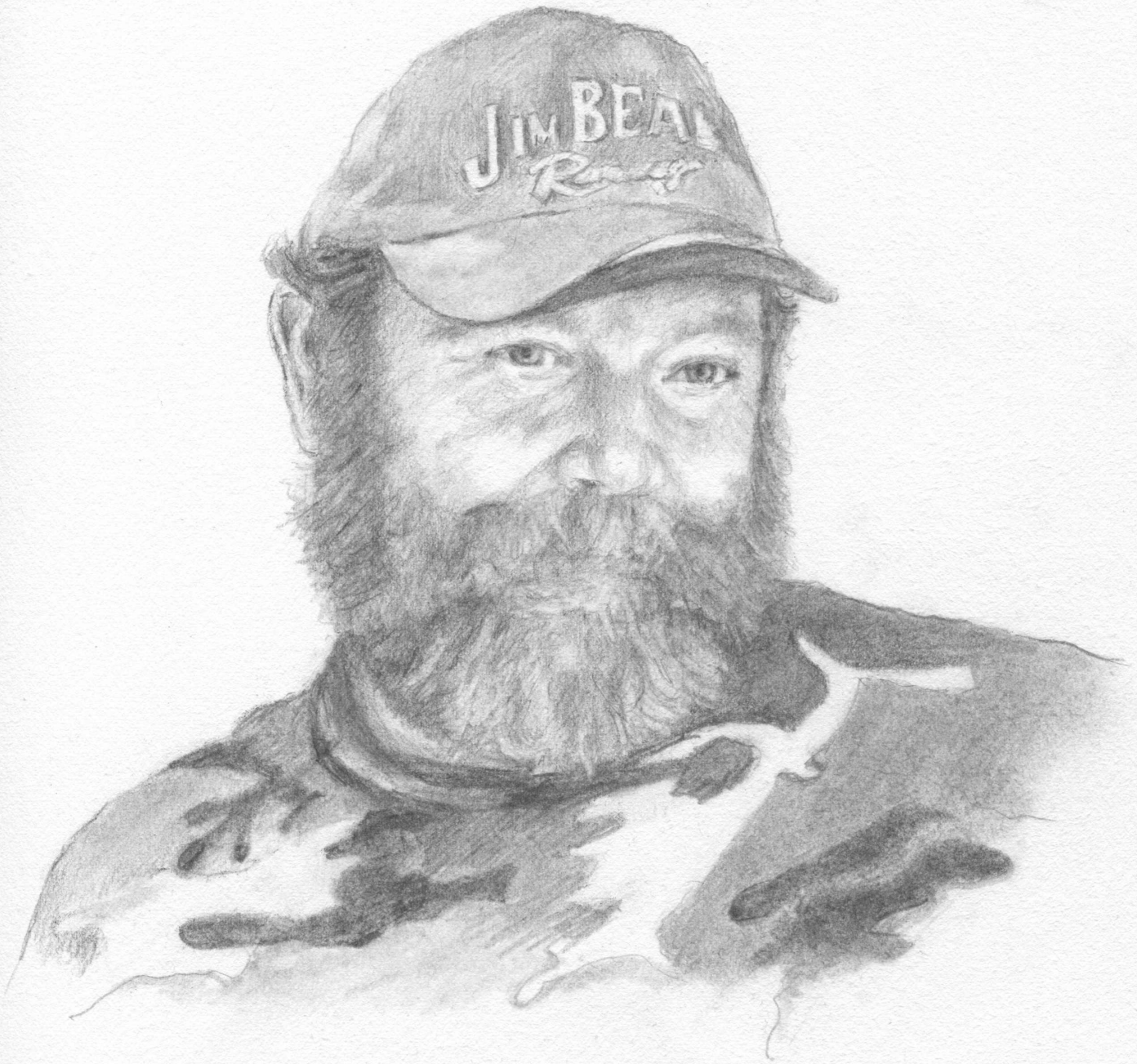
"All the family and extended family have addiction problems," Ashley stated. "Even in his passing, my dad helped me. He planted something in me that made me want to do better. I am the only one in the family to break the chain of addiction." Today she is living in a sober living environment, working full time and getting her associate degree in Human Services. She plans to work with young adults and at-risk children to address substance use issues.

"Inside my dad, there was a desire to be so much more than the addiction allowed him to be," Ashley said. "He was a loving father and grandfather and a beautiful person. He was my everything and I miss him every day."

Timothy's daughter, Ashley Parham, provided the information for this narrative.

May 12, 1964-July 13, 2018

Age 54-Lived with the disease of addiction 41 years



McClower
"Timothy"

Carly Anne Sananes

Tragic loss of a beautiful, but broken, soul who is forever in our hearts.

Carly was described by her mother, Tina, as “a beautiful soul with a gigantic heart, not defined by her addiction, but tragically, defeated by it.” Carly was funny and silly with a rambunctious laugh. As a child, she was precocious. She loved to role play with her Barbie dolls or do comedy skits with her cousins and younger siblings, Jenna and Danny. She was good at doing impressions and cracking up the family by making up silly stories using Rugrats characters.

In elementary and middle school Carly was active in cheerleading, gymnastics, and softball. She was known for standing up against bullies and protecting their victims, and interested, at that time, in becoming a special needs teacher. The family has cherished memories of times at Sanibel Island, the Florida Keys and other Florida attractions such as Universal Studios, Islands of Adventure and Disney World.

In recent years Carly won a contest for Schwarzkopf hair care, receiving a trip to California and a modeling shoot. She had a strong interest in attending Boca Beauty Academy to become an esthetician. Two years before she died, she did the work necessary to get baptized and was passionate about her faith and her church. Her greatest dream was to have a family and become a mom.

Carly suffered from several mental health issues, ADHD, Bipolar disorder, anxiety, depression and borderline personality disorder. “Having all these conditions made navigating life extremely difficult for her,” Tina said. ‘She reached out for help over and over but in the end the disease(s) took her life.’ The most difficult part for the family was the personality changes, the worrying, and never being confident that Carly could overcome her challenges. “Since Carly’s passing, it is hard to hold on to hope,” Tina said.

Though Carly and her mother were close, their relationship could be tumultuous. Times of Carly’s active addiction were difficult, and recovery was unpredictable. Her mom was always fearful that Carly could overdose or be murdered because of her drug involvement. “I tried to get her the help she needed every time. Now that she has passed, it is me that needs the help,” her mom stated.

Tina never hid Carly’s substance use disorder (SUD). She said, “It is a genuine mental health condition that has been stigmatized by the public far too long.” Carly wanted to beat her SUD. She was making changes but ran out of time. “Carly would be alive today if it were not for fentanyl; like so many others, she did not die of an overdose but from fentanyl poisoning,” Tina stated.

“Life will never be the same without my first-born beautiful child,” Tina said. ‘My family is shattered into a million pieces. It is a mystery if we will ever be able to put it back together. But we will continue to try in her honor.’

Carly’s mother, Tina Sananes, provided the information for this narrative.

November 12, 1994-April 17, 2021

Age 26-Lived with the disease of addiction approximately 10 years



Theresa Clower
"Carly"