



Joseph A.. Sawyer, Jr.

APR 17, 1953 - FEB 8, 2016



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Joseph A.. Sawyer, Jr.

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Joseph Alvin Sawyer, Jr., the son of Joseph Alvin Sr. and A. Omega Sawyer, was born on April 17, 1953, at Reid Memorial Hospital in Richmond, Indiana. He was the second oldest of three children. Joe was raised in Liberty, Indiana, where he received his early education. He graduated from Short High School in 1971. He attended GMI/Kettering University, in Flint, Michigan, earning a Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering in 1977. In 1983, Joe earned his J.D. at Seton Hall University, receiving the University's coveted Fahy Award for scholarship, leadership and service contributions to the law school community. On August 25, 1984, Joe and Sherri Hayes were united in Holy Matrimony in Stamford, Connecticut. As husband and wife and best friends, they shared over thirty-one years of marriage. Joe was the Managing Partner of Sawyer Law Group, a PC, an Intellectual Property law firm, located in Palo Alto, California. Joe began his patent work over a decade in working as in-house patent counsel. He joined a Los Angeles-based law firm to open a Bay Area office in 1992. In 1993, Joe opened a law practice in Palo Alto under the name of Benman, Collins & Sawyer. In 1996 the firm became Sawyer and Associates, having offices in Palo Alto and Hawaii. In 2002, the firm changed its name to Sawyer Law Group. Joe was also President of the Silicon Valley Intellectual Property Law Association (SVIPLA) from 2000-2001. He was a member of the Board of Directors Episcopal Community Services – San Francisco. Joe was a long-suffering Cleveland Brown's fan in honor of his Dad and Jim Brown. Joe is preceded in death by his father Joseph Alvin Sawyer, Sr. He is survived by his beloved wife Sherri; mother A. Omega Sawyer; sister Jo Anne and brother-in-law, Gregory Knoll; brother Russel; nephews Jamaal and Alex; nieces Natausha and Naima; mother-in-law and father-in-law Deloris and Hallie Bryant; sister-in-law Kathy Hayes and many other family members and friends. Joe departed this earthly life on Monday, February 8, 2016, in San Carlos, California, at the age of sixty-two years. He will be missed by all.



Obituary

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Memorial services will be held for Joe at Skylawn Funeral Home, 100 Lifemark Rd, San Mateo, CA 94062, on February 27, 2016 at 12:00 pm and at the First Missionary Baptist Church, 414 Eaton St., Liberty, IN, on April 9, 2016 at 2:00 pm. In lieu of flowers, donations are welcome to the Foundation House, c/o Pastor Timothy Hawkins, 1520 8th Ave., Oakland, CA 94606 or to the Joseph A. Sawyer, Sr. and Alpha "Omega" Sawyer Memorial Fund, 404 Eaton Street, Liberty, IN 47353.



Tribute Wall

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TJ

Thomas H. Jackson posted:

, fellow patent attorneyWritten by: Thomas H. JacksonI knew Joe from his days at Bell Labs and the two of us car-pooled to Seton Hall School of Law together. I will miss him. I never met you, Sherrie, but I have learned of you from Joe before his passing and from Sam Williamson, a mutual friend, who was with us at Bell Labs.

May 8 at 7:25 AM

BA

Brian Aull posted:

Dear Sherri, I just learned of Joseph's passing and I'm sorry for your loss. I always struggle a bit to get beyond the overused phrases when offering condolences. My prayers are with you (really). We will be having a St Andrew 50-year reunion in 2019, and I hope that I get to meet you again after all these years, either at that gather or elsewhere. -Brian Aull

May 21 at 12:18 PM

JB

Joanne E. Burns posted:

To the wife and family of Joe Sawyer: It is with great sadness that I just now learn of the passing of Joe, with whom I worked briefly at Chips & Technologies. Many years ago, during a holiday luncheon to which he brought the most delicious rolls, he graciously agreed to share the recipe with me. Obviously written from memory, what he shared that day has become one of our own family holiday staples, and I think of him every time I pull out the treasured yellow legal page. My tenure and our association there was brief but friendly, and I'm very sorry we didn't keep in touch ? but I wanted you to know that I remember him as an intelligent, sweet and humble man, which you and the world has lost all too soon. My sincerest condolences. Joanne Burns

December 19 at 10:05 AM

EG

Ed Goettl posted:

I received my copy of the Kettering (GMI) Alumni newsletter today and was profoundly saddened to see that Joe had passed away. I was Joe's doubles partner in the summer of 1975 GMI Intramural tennis tournament and, if my memory serves me correctly, we won. I cherished Joe's friendship back in the day and was delighted to reconnect with him via LinkedIn a few years back. I was in awe of his professional achievements and can only hope that he found an equal measure of happiness in his all-too-short life. Rest in peace, old friend! Ed Goettl GMI Class of '76 Hendersonville, NC

October 7 at 9:00 AM



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KM

Karen A Moon posted:

Dear Sherri, I am so sorry that I just heard of Joe's passing. My heart aches for you and your family's loss. I will always cherish the fact that he was a friend of mine. I was blessed that Joe stopped to visit with me about 2.5 years ago while he was visiting his mother. That was the last time I spoke with him. We talked and laughed as if no time had passed since our days in college. He was a good man. I will pray for God to mend your heartbreak and comfort you through the coming days. Karen Anderson Moon

March 18 at 3:37 AM

CR

Charlie Ann & Dagny Rascoe posted:

The Rascoe family send their love and sympathy to Russel and his family. God always pick his best flower to go into his rose garden. Our prayer goes out to the family. From the Rascoe family.

March 9 at 1:25 PM

SL

Scott Lewis posted:

Dear Sherri, We were all very very fortunate to know Joe. Joe was not only my patent counsel and on the board of Percept from it's founding, he was also a friend for 25 years, and always there for everyone. We will miss him greatly, but his spirit of innovation and integrity is a legacy that lives on and will not be forgotten. All our thoughts and prayers go out to you and your family and friends, Scott Lewis, and on behalf of all of Percept's employees and advisors

February 27 at 3:42 AM



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JS

Joe Sandoval posted:

Dear Sherri, Teresa Bowman called me late last week to share the news of Joe's passing. Gail and I are so very sorry for your loss. Joe was one of the first African-American lawyers I met when I moved to San Francisco in 1982. Since then, I have been honored to call you and Joe my friends. I have many years of fond memories: meeting for a drink and talk at Circolos, sharing dinner with the Bowmans in Moraga, listening to music at Yoshi's, playing basketball in the Lawyer's League, discussing and debating issues of the day, and so many more too numerous to count. What always comes to mind when I think of Joe is his reverence for his parents and his gratitude for their instilling in him the qualities that made him the man he is: strong, proud and determined. He was so fiercely (and justly) proud of who he was, where he came from, and what he accomplished in this life. How else can you explain Joe's unswerving loyalty to the Cleveland Browns and Jim Brown? This is how I remember Joe, and it makes me smile. With Love to you, your family and the Sawyer family, Joe Sandoval and Gail Kavanagh

February 26 at 9:32 AM

GT

Gary Denise Tiggs posted:

Dear Sherri and Family, My wife and I send our deepest, heartfelt, condolences out to you. I've know Joe for over 25 years, and fortunately for me, we became friends quickly and have remained so ever since. He called me 2 days before he passed-we were planning to have lunch that week. My phone was not on me at the time he called; wow-I wish that I could have talked with him for one last time. The world is missing a great person; I know that God must have plans for Joe. I'm devastated with his loss, and I know that I'm not the only friend of Joe who feels his loss in a huge way. When I met Joe ("way" back in the late 80's), I was a newbie engineer. I remember sitting in my cubical thinking about some technical issue, and Joe walked by- he stopped and introduced himself. I was blown away with Joe's charisma; he was like a magnet for people. And, he made everyone feel like they were his best friend. We had a running joke: Being that Joe is African American, and I am also, anytime we talked for more than 5 or 10 minutes, we'd head back to work-and always parted with: "let's breakup before anyone thinks we're starting a club". Another thing that I remember vividly is that back then, in Silicon Valley, people adhered to hierarchies in the company, and executives (and even managers and such) did not fraternize with employees who were too far "down the stack" position-wise. Well Joe ignored that-he didn't exclude anyone and everyone felt better after talking with him. I love Joe for being himself. Joe was like a mentor and brother, no matter how busy he would be, he'd always, and I mean *always*, stop and talk to you or offer advice if you had some issue. Through Joe's friendship, I had the honor of meeting his lovely wife Sherri. Sherri is a wonderful, warm-hearted person also- so she and Joe were really a perfect match. My wife met Sherri also. I could write an entire book on Joe, he was (and I believe still is) an amazing person. His memory and spirit will stay with us forever, and our prayers and thoughts go out to Sherri and Joe's entire family, friends, and colleagues. He will be missed greatly. Gary and Denise Tiggs

February 19 at 9:21 AM



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RD

Richard Davis posted:

I grew up across the street from Joe and it was no surprise that he had done so well in his life. There are just too many good memories of Joe to put one ahead of the others. Although I did not see Joe very often after school I miss him. His smile, his laugh, his ability to listen and the way that he said "right". God bless Joe's family in the days and years to follow. Richard Davis Liberty, IN.

February 25 at 6:59 AM

FA

Farrokh posted:

Dear Sherri & Family Our deepest condolences, thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. We miss Joe. Joe was a dear friend and colleague of mine and Kayvon's for a long long time. Joe has prosecuted many of my early inventions and I am very thankful of him. Joe's sudden passing is a great loss to all of us. However, he will always remain in our hearts. God bless his soul. Love, Farrokh Pourmirzaie

February 25 at 6:51 AM

CL

Clem Lacy posted:

To Sherri Sawyer, the Sawyer and Hayes families we send you our prayerful thoughts as you support each other during this very difficult time. Clem & Joset Lacy Raleigh, NC

February 24 at 8:18 AM



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Mark And Sara Meltzer posted:

I first met Joe at Hughes Aircraft in the 1980s. We were colleagues in Hughes patent law department and became friends. Joe worked on cutting edge technology, including highly classified government programs. Joe was a very quick study and was especially good at getting sometimes inarticulate engineers to clearly explain what they had invented so that he could protect it in a patent application. Joe never took the easy path and I admired him for that. Preparing and prosecuting patent applications is the toughest part of patent law and few stay with it for very long, migrating to easier and often more lucrative specialties. Joe never stopped doing patent prosecution and his clients and understudies benefitted hugely from his seasoned approach. It is no surprise that Joe's IP legal talents were sought by major high tech players including IBM, Lenovo and Cadence Design. Joe had a quiet but strong presence and manner. If you had just met Joe you wouldn't know that he was an accomplished engineer and attorney. He could have been a carpenter, longshoreman or tradesman. Bragging or putting on airs, just wasn't in Joe's DNA. I've known Joe for decades and it was only in his obituary that I learned about his receipt of the Fahy Award at Seaton Hall law school for scholarship, leadership and service. Joe also never traded off his ethnicity. At a time when some minority owned law firms were pitching that aspect of their practice hard to clients wanting to showcase diversity, Joe didn't follow. His marketing was based solely on technical and legal excellence, never race. I would have lunch with Joe from time to time and our conversations often went far afield from law. We talked politics, current events and other topics of mutual interest. Joe had a very sharp intellect and a fierce independence as well. He didn't always line up with the politically correct point of view and had a refreshing pragmatic mixture of liberalism and conservatism in his viewpoints. I had lunch with Joe just five days before his untimely death. He talked about his wife Sherri, their move to San Carlos, his practice and we had a spirited discussion regarding the various presidential candidates. Joe seemed happy and at peace. I've never met anyone quite like Joe Sawyer and I doubt that I ever will. He worked his way up from humble roots to the pinnacles of Silicon Valley high tech legal practice, but never developed the inflated ego that so often attaches to such a remarkable ascent. Joe never took on the Silicon Valley affects; he stayed true to his strong and modest character, always. I admired Joe as did many others. Joe set the standard on marriage too: one woman, true love and lasting devotion. Some men rarely talk about their wives. Joe wasn't like that. His love for Sherri was obvious and he mentioned her often. I remember the pride Joe took in telling me about Sherri's cancer care work at SF General Hospital and how it was more fulfilling for her than practicing law. My wife and I recently spent an evening with the Sawyers at a small club in the Mission District of SF, listening to local live jazz. We could see how close Joe and Sherri were and we remarked about it at some length when we got home. I can't imagine the depth of Sherri's loss and our hearts go out to her. Joe and Sherri Sawyer shared a deep love, one that will last forever.

February 19 at 9:21 AM



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SS

Sharon Legette-Sobers posted:

Dear Sherri, Rogelio and I send our love and prayers to you during this phase of your life. We are thankful for all of the good memories that we have of the times that we spent with the both of you during our residence in California. Joe's striking presence will be missed. However, he will always remain in our hearts. Much love, Rogelio and Sharon Sobers

February 24 at 4:37 AM

MJ

Meg Jordan posted:

Dear Sherri, We are holding you in light and love and sending prayers and condolences, as you move through this difficult passage. We will always remember the way Joe offered his humor, strength, and encouragement to you as you completed your studies and beyond. What a beautiful marriage you both created...a rare gift. Lots of love and comfort to you, Meg and your friends at CIIS

February 23 at 2:38 AM

JH

Jane Hammett posted:

Dear Sherri, Robert and I send you our very deepest sympathies on the passing of your dear Joe. We send prayers of love and peace to you and Joe's whole family. Our hearts are breaking for you right now. Please reach out to us for any help. Holding you in love and light. All love always, Jane Hammett

February 22 at 3:35 PM

AB

Anita Burton posted:

Dear Sherry, my condolences to you and your family for the loss of your husband. If you need any assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out. Much love to you – Anita Burton

February 22 at 7:54 AM



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AD

Anita (Fields) Decker posted:

To Joe's wife, Sherry, his brother, Russell and sister, JoAnne and her husband, as well as his dear Mother, Omega, and any other family members I may have forgotten to list:: My heart broke to hear of your husband's, your brother's/brother-in-law's, your beloved son's, and my dear friend's passing. I have such fond memories of Joe, having been a classmate for all but two years of elementary-high school. He was always so sweet, with a smile that radiated kindness and compassion to all. I remember how mature and wise he was beyond his years, and how hard he worked to get through college. I admired his character, his heart, his courage and wit. My life was better having known him as a friend. The world has lost a good man...but, heaven has gained one. I am sorry for your loss.

February 21 at 2:50 PM

DM

Dan Murphy posted:

My heart is broken at the passing of a dear friend. Growing up in Liberty, every Murphy held and holds a special affection and respect for Joe. Joe's character, intelligence, and impact on all who knew him was and is profound. Though the years, I have come to realize how lucky the Murphy children were to grow up in Liberty. Among many good circumstances was the fortune that made friends between the Murphy and the Sawyer families. To every member of the Sawyer family, Susan, Patti, and I, and our families, share your grief and hold you dear to our hearts. Besides a great friend, Joe also was important to my early education. As smart as Joe was, he shared a common flaw with me: early in our lives we were both horrible cursive writers and almost equally bad spellers. Joe's writing was at times so difficult to interpret that our grade school teachers had very little energy left to address my flaws. As with many things about Joe, a disadvantage in anything never became a permanent problem. He always found a way to fix it or come up with a really good and frequently better Plan B. In my sadness at Joe's death, I choose to remember an inherently good and wise man. Joe would probably not feel too inclined to be considered a hero or a role model, but my friend is to me. Stories of Joe have been told to kids I have coached for 25 years. Some of those stories talk about athletics, but most talk about an extraordinary man and his extraordinary family . The character level of heaven has gone up substantially. Dan Murphy

February 20 at 1:20 PM



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Sheila Snyder (Thompson) posted:

Joe, you were a much beloved member of the Short High School class of 1971 and were taken from us far too soon. You will be greatly missed, especially on June 18th when we all gather to celebrated our 45th class reunion. Your chair may be empty but our hearts will be filled with a lifetime of memories of growing up together in our wonderful small town of Liberty. Every child should be as lucky as we were to be surrounded by the love of God, family, friends, and community. Our sadness at your leaving us is profound but we rest assured that we will all come together again in the glory of the Heavenly Father. Dear Jesus please take care of our brother Joe until we can all be together again. Love You Forever, Your Forever Liberty Friends

February 19 at 9:21 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Joseph by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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