



Jon Barthelmy

Jon Nicholas Barthelmy, age 55 of Alexandria, died peacefully on March 7th after a lengthy illness. Jon was born on January 23, 1954 to Peter and Willetta Barthelmy in Alexandria, Minnesota. Shortly after Jon was born, his parents were told that their son had Down's Syndrome and would never be able to walk or talk. They were advised to place him in an institution. Ignoring this suggestion, Jon B was taken home and with the endearing love and encouragement of his parents and sisters, Jon blossomed. Not only did he learn to walk and talk, he also quietly educated those around him about accepting people with disabilities. He blessed his family, relatives, and friends with his eternal optimism. Every day was a good day to Jon and everyone he encountered was his friend. Jon was baptized, received his First Communion, and was confirmed at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Alexandria. You would often find Jon at Mass in the front pew so he could "see Father". He was affectionately dubbed, "Pope Jon" by Father Al and beamed when anyone called him that. When Jon was younger, he would sing the hymns loudly and proudly, even singing in St. Mary's Senior Choir when his parents were members. You could search the world over and never find a purer soul than Jon's. God definitely discovered perfection when he made Jon B. Jon attended Alexandria Public Schools special education classes until he was 21 years old. Following his graduation he worked for his dad at Barthelmy's Furriers and later he was employed at the Alexandria Opportunity Center. He retired at the age of 50 so he could "take care of his mom and dad." Jon also

had a passion for athletics both as a fan and a participant. He was a proud team member of Alexandria Special Olympics where he won numerous medals in golf, softball, basketball, and bowling. Jon was also a HUGE Alexandria Cardinal fan, attending many Cardinal football and basketball games when he was younger. He would cheer unabashedly for his Cardinals! When he couldn't attend a game, you would find him listening intently to the Cardinal broadcasts on KXRA radio while keeping score on his game cards. You would know when the Cards scored because Jon would be cheering at the top of his lungs. Minnesota's Prep Bowl was one of Jon's favorite days. He would watch ALL six football games from morning until late at night. While he had a passion for high school sports, Jon was also a tremendous fan of all Minnesota pro teams. Whatever game he would be watching, he was dressed in the appropriate team colors. He was loyal to the Vikings, but in recent years Jon became a BIG fan of the Green Bay Packers. His cousin Deb, manager of the Packer Pro Shop at Lambeau Field, along with her husband Bob, got Jon hooked when they sent him a Green Bay Superbowl Champion hat. He became our "cheesehead", and he proudly wore his Green Bay outfits, right down to matching socks and jacket. His smile and charm helped him to get away with displaying his passion for a team most Minnesotans despise. Besides owning an outfit for all of his favorite athletic teams, Jon also loved to display the red, white, and blue. Jon was a true patriot and would proudly wear his country's colors any chance he had. Jon also had a tremendous love for music. He had a great sense of rhythm and had his own drums which he played often. Jon was the NUMBER ONE fan of the Alexandria Jefferson High School Marching Band. He could be seen keeping the beat at the Vikingland Band Festival. It was the musical highlight of the year for him. No sooner had the final band passed by him did he turn and tell everyone around him when next year's Band Festival would be. Christmas time brought out the caroler in Jon. He loved to sing Christmas carols, especially "White Christmas", and he would also "direct" the rest of the family gathered together for the family sing-a-long following Christmas dinner. Jon loved to

plan ahead. He always wanted to know what we would be doing next. Jon always had "an idea" which often involved a meal out at his favorite restaurants. He was the family groomsman or usher at many weddings. He was also the family pallbearer when we had to say goodbye to our loved ones. Jon always saw the good in everything. The simplest things made him happy. He loved to see the moon at night and in the daytime he would run to get his mom so he could show her the sun was shining. Jon was one of a kind. He was a real people-person and would often give a handshake or hug to his friends and even people he didn't know. He brought a smile to everyone he met. You couldn't help but love him. One person described Jon as an "institution" here in Alexandria. He was all that and more. He definitely left his mark and won't ever be forgotten. Jon B was our BEST BUDDY and we will all miss him so very much. Jon is survived by his mother, Willetta (Willie) Barthelemy, his sister Jan (Bob) Heggestad, his brother-in-law Jim Fischer, nieces Marcie (Josh) McEachern, Lizibeth Fischer, nephews Robert Jr. (Crystal), Nicholas, and Marcus Heggestad, great-nephew Robert Heggestad III, his aunts, uncles, cousins, and many friends including his special helpers from Accracare. Jon was preceded in death by his father Peter Barthelemy, his sister Lynn Fischer, his grandparents and several aunts and uncles.