

I'm Michelle, Matt's sister. One look around this morning says more about Matthew than anyone could put in to words. Every one of us is special to Matthew in our own way and he has touched all of our lives in a way that cannot be explained. I could be here for a couple of days telling stories and confirming what an awesome, amazing person Matthew was but instead, just want to say a few things that have come to mind over the past few days.

It was the summer of 1971, Dad came home from a day at Fort Pitt Bridge Works and Mom had prepared dinner like she always had. Michael, Mark and I sat down to eat and Mom announced that she was going to have a baby! Michael quickly asked, "do we really need another baby?" I'm sure Mom and Dad had some of the same thoughts but that was God's plan. In December that year, we welcomed Matthew in to the world and he was soon the envy of all the kids in the neighborhood. They were all asking their parents for a new sibling! Being that Michael was 13, Mark was 11 and I was 10, Matthew had 5 of us acting like parents. He was the coolest kid ever!!

Life continued and when Matthew entered kindergarten, Michael went off to college. In a few short years, Mark and I also went off to college. Michael became a pharmacist, Mark an electrical engineer and me, an accountant. But the greatest of all was Matthew! He had a God given talent of playing piano not by looking at those little black dots on a piece of music, but playing by ear! He came home from college one day to tell my parents that he was auditioning for a dueling piano job playing and singing. They asked when he started to sing and he said, "as of today"! That was the beginning of his journey in to the entertainment world where he would become one the most talented, funny musician entertainers I've ever seen perform. I'm sure those in his entertainment circle will agree....he was pretty awesome!!

Mara entered his life during his days in Erie, and instantly became his angel. Again, this was God's plan. In good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, she kept her vows through it all.

4 years ago in October, Matthew was diagnosed with cancer. We all rushed to his side and just as Matthew always did, he was comforting us. He was ready to fight this disease head on and did just that! He asked Mara to get him a Superman shirt and he wore it to every chemo treatment, doctor's appointment and hospital visit. The past 4 years has been a roller coaster ride between good and bad scans, successful and unsuccessful treatments, surgeries, procedures and more procedures and a miracle....NOAH! Matt and Mara were told the chances of conceiving a baby were slim to none but in August of 2013, God's miracle came in to the world. Noah will know that his Daddy was the greatest, most loving and kind man. And through it all, Matthew was the bravest man I know! He was truly an inspiration to all! A real Super Matt!

When Matthew's body could endure no more, we again were all called to spend the day with him. His request was that we tell stories and jokes so we did! That night in a special ceremony at Matt and Mara's house, Noah was baptized which was very important to Matthew. Matthew told us that day that he was at peace although a little nervous. A little? I hope that we have all learned through Matthew's life the importance of living each day to the fullest and being the best people we can be.

You know they say the apple doesn't fall far from the tree? Matthew would not have been the person he was if he hadn't learned it somewhere. I want to thank my parents for raising us in this loving family and teaching us the values they instilled and lived by. Mom and Dad, you are the greatest and I love you with all my heart!

Again, there are way too many memories and stories to be told about Matthew and the way he has touched each and every one of us, but I'm sure these stories will be told for many years to come.

I imagine that when Matthew entered the pearly gates, there was a huge applause and a grand piano waiting for the entertainment to begin. Then I imagined hearing my Pap say, "Hey Ang...it's Maffew!". And, my maternal grandmother who we never got to meet, welcoming Matthew home into her loving arms. It's hard for many of us here on earth to understand but we know you are in a better place for God has a plan. I love you Matt...until we meet again....