

Aj's parents have asked the family to read on their behalf.

Thank you all for coming here to remember AJ today. Many of you are also here to support our family. Aj was a lot of things to many people- our son, nephew, brother, friend, significant other, companion, competition, classmate, and coworker. He had meaning to so many of us, and his loss is difficult.

It is hard to know how to address his death. It was very unexpected and painful to all of us. In contrast, it has highlighted the generosity and compassion of our friends, family, and community. Our family has been

supported since the news got out with kind words, meals, prayers, and visits.

We could read off names like an Oscar-winning speech. We deeply appreciate everyone in this room and those who could not make it today.

Aj turned 25 years old in August. He was always quiet, shy, introspective, intellectual, and caring. He repeatedly told us that he wanted to help others and let them know he cares and wants to help. In the last few months, he has been journaling, and his compassion for others is the primary theme in his writing. Since 2020 and the start of Covid, he struggled with alcohol use, leading to abuse and he shared feelings of deep depression. Early this year, he

acknowledged that he needed help and decided to go to inpatient rehabilitation. In the last few months, he embraced sobriety and focused on helping others with similar difficulties. He followed the program of Alcoholics Anonymous and began emphasizing his spirituality. His sobriety day was May 10th, and he maintained this throughout the program. We thought he was doing well and were looking forward to him completing rehab and moving to the next step of his life as a sober young man. He was interested in returning to school and becoming a counselor to help others as he had been helped. On the morning of October 5th, we talked with him while he was on an outing with his housemates; he was laughing and seemed to be having a good time. That

evening, AJ was gone. The assumption is that he took his own life, but he did not leave any indications for us to understand what happened. The situation is suspicious and under investigation. We hope to learn more as time passes. We are devastated, and it still seems unreal to our whole family. We miss him every day and are failing to make sense of this.

The purpose of this evening is to remember his life and who he was to each of us.

As part of his reflective activities in his counseling, he shared the beginning of his life story-

My Life Story

Unknown date

“My name is Adrien Leyester Snell IV, I was born in Flagstaff, Arizona, on August 12th, 1999. My mother is Amy Snell, and my father is Adrien L. Snell III. I am the first of three children; the middle child is my younger sister Natalie, and the youngest is my little brother Timothy. Natalie is about three and a half years younger, and my brother Timothy is about four and a half years younger.

When I was born, my parents were both students attending Northern Arizona University. My father started his college career pursuing a music

degree playing the tuba, after he met my mother, he decided to lean into his affinity for programming computers and switched majors. My mother was studying to become a nurse and she would take me to class with her on a regular basis so that she and her classmates could practice handling and caring for babies; for this reason I like to tell people that I was born into and attended college as a baby.

When I was born, my parents were at the end of their college careers, and we only stayed in Flagstaff for the first year of my life. After Flagstaff, we moved to Chandler, Arizona, where we stayed until I was about three years old. I don't remember much about this time of my life except for feeling very lonely."

Obviously, there is more to this story. We moved to Page in 2008, and AJ started school at Desert View Elementary. This is where he met most of his current friends. He worked through his school years and excelled in many areas- the most notable is his participation in percussion with the band, drum line, and auto-tech. He competed at state with auto-tech/skills and got 2nd place overall. He graduated high school in 2018. He continued his work in the automotive field at Liberty Auto.

AJ was always intellectually gifted. He was reading at a 12th-grade level in 6th grade. He could do complex math in his head. He and Timothy would have rubrics-cube competitions at light speed. In recent months, he had been exploring how to apply his gifts to help others, sharing a strong desire to become a counselor. Along with his intellect and passions, he was universally loved by the people who knew him. However, his most significant struggle was receiving the love that others had for him. He mentioned several times that he did not feel worthy of it. He *was* worthy of all of it.

Aj- WE LOVE YOU always and hope you now understand your importance to us all and how special and worthy you truly are. We are comforted by all my memories and every moment we shared.

We wish for you to come back, but we don't want you to suffer again. We know you are with us and always watching over us. We miss you and love you forever.

We sincerely appreciate everyone in this room and are honored you for the roles you all played in his life.

We want to share some of his recent writings and thoughts for the remainder of our time here. We also want to hear your stories as well. Please feel free to share any words or stories you might have with us here today.