



Kevin Thomas Bonko

December 6, 1994 - August 1, 2019

Kevin Thomas Bonko, age 24 of Rochester, NY, formerly of Painesville Twp., passed away August 1, 2019 at the Seattle Children's Hospital. He was born December 6, 1994 in Cleveland, OH.

A 2013 graduate of St. Ignatius High School, Cleveland, OH, Kevin earned his B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Rochester, NY, in 2017. After completing a summer 2016 internship with Harris Corporation, Rochester, NY, Kevin accepted a full-time permanent position upon graduation and began design work on the glass lenses used in intelligence and defense satellites. After serving in various leadership roles, including president his senior year, Kevin remained an enthusiastic alumnus advisor to the UR SAE Baja club team, a role he fully embraced, including throughout his illness. Likewise, after spending his undergraduate years volunteering and employed by the UR Newman Community, he continued his efforts on a remote basis during his treatment in Seattle.

Until his leukemia returned in February 2018, Kevin continued playing goaltender in the Rochester men's ice hockey league, on the heels of four years on the UR Club Hockey Team. An avid world traveler, Kevin also enjoyed reading, skiing, and hiking, particularly in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

First diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia in March 2011, Kevin underwent three years, three months of daily chemotherapy through Rainbow Babies and Children Hospital and UR Medical Center. At relapse, Kevin returned to Rainbow for treatment, but the standard of care chemotherapy caused two incidents of septic shock, an acute emergency surgery, and an internal hemorrhage. He resumed treatment at Seattle Children's Hospital in Seattle, WA in April 2018, enrolling on three CAR-T cell therapy trials, two newly-FDA approved immunotherapy monoclonal antibody treatments, and a fourth trial of T-cell depleted bone marrow transplant that took place January 30, 2019. After another relapse post-transplant, Kevin underwent a donor lymphocyte infusion, ultimately succumbing to the resulting graft versus host disease.

In the Ignatian tradition, Kevin was passionately faithful, a constant and dedicated friend, an inspired optimist in taking on treatment to defeat his leukemia, and the consummate Man for Others. A.M.D.G.

He is survived by his mother, Deborah A. (Michael J.) George; father, Robert J. Bonko; brothers, Patrick M. and Daniel J. George; grandparents, Thomas and Joyce Gray and Judy George; the love of his life Madeline R. Bedrock of New Jersey; her parents, Keith and Christine Bedrock of New Jersey and many other loving family. He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Leonard and Sarah Bonko.

The family will receive friends from 4-8 pm Friday, August 16, 2019 at Divine Word Catholic Church, 8100 Eagle Rd., Kirtland, OH 44094. A concluding prayer service and reflection will be by Reverend Brian Cool, UR Newman Community.

A funeral mass will be held 10:30 am Saturday, August 17, 2019 at the church.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in Kevin's memory to Strong Against Cancer, <http://give.strongagainstcancer.org/kevinbonko>.

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG **16**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Divine Word Catholic Church
8100 Eagle Rd
Kirtland, OH 44094
(440) 256-1412

Funeral Service

AUG **17**. 10:30 AM (ET)

Divine Word Catholic Church
8100 Eagle Rd
Kirtland, OH 44094
(440) 256-1412

Tribute Wall

RB

“ It has been six months since my loving boy passed away. My heart was broken when he left but I also knew he fought hard to overcome his illness. Just an amazing man who accomplished so much with the limited time he had on this earth. People sometimes question me as to how I can maintain my faith throughout this troubled times. I tell them with all honesty and absolute certainty I know I will see Kevin again and it will be in a better place. Dad

Robert Bonko - February 03, 2020 at 04:29 PM

GC

“ I had the pleasure of knowing and working with Kevin during his time here at Harris. A finer young man one would be hard pressed to meet. Kevin was very easy to like, and we got along great right from the start. We worked close at times when I was fabricating his designs. I found things in common with Kevin as he was the same age as my son and that he was planning on going to Europe to visit some of the same places my son had just visited. I had fun teasing Kevin about the Browns and their struggles to compete. He always said that they would turn it around, and he was right. And then there was, the Milk Duds. This is how it started. Kevin had some small boxes of Milk Duds on his desk at some point and I went into his office and confiscated some, he laughed about it. Soon after he was coming back to my shop and jokingly bribing me with Milk Duds so that I would do some work for him. I in turn would drop some off at his desk. I sent some to him while he was being treated. I didn't need to attach a name, he knew who they were from. We had a good time and many laughs here at Harris that I will always remember. I stayed in touch with Kevin throughout his treatment and always managed to get some chuckles. I along with many are very saddened to know of his passing, and I will miss him. My sincere condolences to his other friends and to his family. “They are never truly gone, those who live in our hearts and memories.”
Fly High young brother, Fly High. Gib..

Gib Caster - August 21, 2019 at 02:14 PM

JB

“ I met Kevin while serving during the Arrupe Summer Program in 2010, and we shared many classes together throughout the rest of our time. Kevin was always so generous, outgoing, brilliant, and motivated. Throughout his entire battle, he never let even a glimmer of negativity show. My condolences at this difficult time, and you are all in my thoughts and prayers.

-JB '13

Jack Barendt - August 14, 2019 at 10:22 AM

RB

Miss you every single day Kevin. Love, Dad

Robert Bonko - August 18, 2019 at 05:24 PM