When someone special enters your life, it’s said they never leave. For his family and scores of friends, that person was Andrew Seligson. Born in 1963, Andrew grew up on Long Island in a happy, close-knit family. His parents, Edith and Alan, and his sisters Kate and Nancy, remember the happy, caring young man who was interested in sports, cars, and, of course, girls. But at 17—following an injury during a hockey game and the unexpected results of a subsequent physician’s visit—darkness fell over Andrew’s bright life: he was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, a fast-moving and fatal cancer.

A testament to his spirit, Andrew took his cancer and treatments in stride. Despite being told that he had just months to live, Andrew pursued new therapies, clinical trials, and his usual, vibrant life. Years after his initial diagnosis, he was still traveling the world, seeking new treatments and touching dozens of lives along the way with his indomitable spirit and upbeat attitude. ABC’s hit news program, 20/20, even profiled his journey, spotlighting the remarkable young man who encouraged so many.

After the show, “he received tons of fan mail and even offers for dates,” remembers his sister, Kate Seligson Friedman, a director of the CSHL Association. “He was so much fun.”

Though he was told he would never accomplish it, Andrew made his way to the University of Colorado, where he joined the DTD fraternity. His “brothers” became his second family and could not help but be taken by Andrew’s spirit and zest for living. There, the bonds he formed lasted a lifetime, a lifetime tragically cut short for Andrew by cancer.

After college, though continuing to pursue every available therapy, Andrew eventually succumbed to neuroblastoma, soon after a big black tie party Kate had thrown for his 25th birthday. His father, Alan, who today serves on CSHL’s Board of Trustees, established the Andrew Seligson Foundation to support the Laboratory’s cancer research, and to keep Andrew’s presence and unwavering spirit alive. Today, the foundation supports a postdoctoral fellow at the lab of Scott Lowe, Deputy Director of CSHL’s Cancer Center and a leader in cancer therapy research and pharmacogenomics.

Although 17 years have passed since his death and nearly twenty since Andrew was a “Delt” at the University of Colorado, it soon became clear that his family wasn’t the only group still touched by Andrew’s spirit. On the occasion of their 20th college reunion, his fraternity brothers, led by his close friend Xerxes Bhote, collected a significant sum to support research at CSHL in Andrew’s memory. They had all witnessed Andrew’s stubborn refusal to give in to what, at times, were incapacitating effects of his disease during his years at Colorado, and they wanted to create a tangible, meaningful remembrance of him.

A fantastic tennis player, a good friend, and a great son and brother, Andrew touched many lives in his short 25 years. The bonds of family never die, nor do those of friendship, as evidenced by the many University of Colorado “Dels” who came together to do something, as they simply put it, “for Andrew.”
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