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**"HE WENT FROM DIRT BIKES TO FALCONRY TO SKATEBOARDING, HUNTING OR FISHING. EVERYWHERE HE WENT HE WANTED TO EXPLORE. HE COULDN'T SIT STILL."**

*-Jesse's sister Jackie Carlson*

***Although Jesse Carlson was only 18 when he died, he was already a proven falconer with skills.***

"He had a way with these birds," his father, Joel, said. "He could take a wild animal and turn it into a farm animal — he could make it docile. In 10 days, he could take a bird up with both hands and put it on his bare arm. Changing jesses on a perch without a hood was no problem. He could walk up and do anything you've got to do. You didn't even have to tie her down. That bird was so calm it was unreal."

Jesse was one of those energetic, happy teenagers often described as high-spirited and adventurous.

His mother, Sue, said he was a charmer, a bit mischievous, and was most comfortable in bare feet, tan skin, no shirt and lifeguard shorts. Photos and videos posted on the Internet by his friends only strengthen that description.

"His overall demeanor was to have fun and make everyone feel happy," his mom said.

"He was always smiling, even when he was in trouble or having a bad day," said his sister, Jackie.

Jesse worked for the city as a lifeguard for three years. He was a "swimming freak," his dad said, as well as a good diver and a skateboard junkie. With no time for television, he liked fishing, hunting and hiking. But he loved his dirt bike.

His dad said he inherited that drive and ambition.

"We're all avid hunters and sports-seekers — adrenaline junkies," he said. "He was a nut when it came to going fast. They say the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Well, he fell right down the trunk and landed on the root at the base of the trunk."

Jesse also inherited the love of falconry. His grandfather loved animals, particularly birds, and people would bring him injured birds. Any bird of prey was worth salvaging, Joel said of his own dad. They even had a pair of kestrels that flew loose in the house when he was growing up.

Joel took that love from Jesse's grandfather and would do falconry presentations for students who had been suspended, with the goal of getting kids to stay in school and stay out of trouble. The bird was the hook to grab their attention. Jesse would often help his dad, sometimes giving presentations to his own classmates.

And though Jesse had so many interests, it so often came back to his bird.

"He went from dirt bikes to falconry to skateboarding, hunting or fishing," his sister said. "Everywhere he went he wanted to explore. He couldn't sit still. But after he got his falconry license, it was nothing but the bird. He could sit here on the couch and hold her for hours."

He loved to take his red-tail out to hunt the golf course and other areas. If someone stopped to talk to him about his bird, he would often just make up a line of wild BS — he would rather just be flying it than talking about it. The bird itself liked rabbits and even an occasional pigeon, which is somewhat unusual for a red-tailed hawk. But, boy did that bird like rattlesnakes. The whole rattlesnake.

And people sure liked Jesse. After he tragically died in a late-night, one-vehicle dirt bike accident, even his family was surprised at how many lives their son had touched with his "notorious smile" and his energy.

Nearly 600 people turned out for his memorial service, including many adults whom his dad said he didn't even recognize.

**"HE WAS GENUINELY A NICE KID," his dad said.**

*Reminiscences: Joel, Sue and Jackie Carlson*





ACCORDING TO HIS MOM, SUE, JESSE WAS **ENERGETIC**, HAPPY, HIGH-SPIRITED, **ADVENTUROUS**, A CHARMER, A BIT MISCHIEVOUS, AND MOST COMFORTABLE IN BARE FEET, TAN SKIN, NO SHIRT AND **LIFEGUARD SHORTS**.