

Drew Swan, 24. Opioid Epidemic Victim. Died April 3, 2013 Plantation Florida | DrewSwan.com

Childhood: My first-born son Drew was born in Rochester, MI on April 10, 1988. It was the happiest day of my life. I thought, “even if I die, I will live on through him.” I experienced the same thrill when his only brother Jack was born the following year. Jack’s arrival completed our little Swan family of four, and we created a serendipitous life together as we went along. We homeschooled our children in idyllic Oconomowoc, Wisconsin while I ran a small business. At age 11, Drew took a standardized test and scored “collegiate level” in 21 of 22 categories. Drew was also an exceptional athlete. As a freshman at Arrowhead High School, Drew led his football team caught interceptions, earned a state championship swim team title, and was named the MVP of the varsity tennis team. Drew achieved a Life Scout from Boy Scouts of America and balanced his extracurriculars with singing in the school choir. I shall never forget hearing his solo part during *The Christmas Shoes* song performance at his winter concert where we watched him proudly. Drew painted as well. Because he knew I liked Van Gogh, he replicated *Starry Night* to near perfection and presented it to me. What a gift! Drew was voted “Best Looking” in his high school and was runner up for Student Body President. It was in High School that Drew sustained an athletic injury and was put on pain meds. Later he was given some unprescribed Oxycontin at a party - and he became hooked on opioids.



Drew’s College Years were spent at UW-Milwaukee double-majoring in English and Business. Drew studied one year abroad in Australia, where he made wonderful friends from around the world and wrote music. His addiction eventually caught up with him when he arrived back in the U.S. as he could no longer afford it - and he called me for help. Drew interned for me at my digital sales office in Michigan - and helped me start GODclick.com, accurately predicting - in 2010 - that “Programmatic was the future of digital advertising.” Later I ended up doing an intervention for Drew in Milwaukee at his college graduation, and a week later, after a strong encouragement from his brother Jack, he entered treatment at Rosecrance in Illinois. Upon successful completion, Drew moved to halfway house in Florida and supported himself with retail and waiter jobs. I helped him get his own apartment.

Final Years: Drew created a blog site and became a beautiful writer. He was planning entrepreneurial adventures, had started “The Progressive Group” and his future looked extremely bright. I spent a wonderful long weekend with him in February 2013, at Disney World. In March we grabbed “DrewSwan.com” to publicize his writing, and I sent him a calendar of photos we took of him at Epcot with “Women Around the World” along with his own business cards. Drew was volunteering at his local church and began helping homeless people get their clothes dry cleaned before interviews. He was proud of himself, and so was I. Unfortunately, in March he attended a rave in Miami and relapsed on a “Molly”. My last conversation with him was March 31. He spoke to his brother April 1, and his mother April 2, saying he “had to get back on track.” He died in his sleep from an unprescribed pill he got from a roommate in a government-assisted sober house on April 3rd. The Swan Family party was over. We were absolutely gutted with the loss of Drew. My wife and I brought awareness to the epidemic running for congress in 2018 and getting a mention in the SOTU address that year. The \$6B budget that resulted was spent on PSAs, but the death decline was negligible. Jack became a Doctor of Emergency Medicine hoping to save other “Drews.” It has taken 10 years to come to terms with the loss, but we finally settled on a go-forward solution to cope with our loss: warning kids directly, and in person, about how fentanyl kills. Drew’s brother Jack and I started “FentanylFathers.org” with the goal of presenting Fentanyl Education Awareness to all U.S. high school assemblies through a volunteer workforce of 600,000 bereaved parents that have been created over the last three years. We’re both preventing overdose deaths for unaware students, and grief for unsuspecting families. This ministry aims to act as a solution-driven program for change, with a goal of having every student hear our message and graduate alive.

-Gregory Swan, Drew Swan’s Father, with help from my surviving son Jack Swan.

