

The Story of the Trinity Aurora Barton Handbell Choir

On December 22, 1997, at the age of 16, Jeffrey David Charles Barton died suddenly as a result of a car accident. He was an honour student at Wellington High School in Florida.

Jeffrey loved life and to give; Christmas was his favourite time of the year. Before his death, he had decorated home with strands of white lights that circled the house and palm trees lining the entranceway. He placed an angel at the top of the Christmas tree and helped the family decorate the main floor. He then stacked the tree with presents for the family, and his older siblings' close friends.

Jeffrey started buying presents in September with his own hard-earned money and carefully selected his choices. On the day he died he had shopped all day for the perfect gift for his mother, who was the light of his life. He inscribed the card with, "All my love from your best son, Jeff."

Summertime was spent in Muskoka where Jeffrey enjoyed sea-doo's, swimming, boating, and BBQs. In the summers of 1996 and 1997, he had also worked on the construction of new retirement homes: the Atrium in Orillia, and the Colonial in Whitby.

The funeral service was held at Trinity, Aurora on Monday, December 29, 1997. On the preceding Sunday, the Bartons heard a handbell choir play during worship at Trinity, and almost immediately decided that a set of handbells and chimes to Trinity would be a fitting memorial for Jeffrey.

On September 4, 1998, Jeffrey's father, Wayne, died of cancer at the age of 53 in York County Hospital.

A graduate of the University of Toronto, Wayne obtained his C.A. at Price Waterhouse prior to operating a successful private accounting practice in Toronto. Wayne then founded Alert Care Corporation in Aurora and built up a successful chain of retirement homes across Ontario. He was a very motivated entrepreneur; he spent his life pursuing and realizing his dreams. Wayne approached every task with vigour and with an eye to perfection.

After Jeffrey's death, Wayne dedicated his life to the Jeffrey Barton Memorial Foundation that he established to help children in need. Wayne was an honourable man and a person who was highly respected by all who knew him. He was kind and never turned away a friend or colleague in need. His funeral was at Trinity church on September 9, 1998.

On Sunday, April 11, 1999—the Sunday after Easter—a three octave set of handbells and chimes were dedicated to the memory of Jeffrey and Wayne Barton by Father Philip Poole, rector of Trinity Anglican Church, Aurora. The first choir was composed of 18 teenagers, under the direction of Joanne Flint.