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after a nearly yearlong battle with cancer.

**Jason Bramwell** • Oct. 23, 2023



Joshua Lance, founder and managing director of Chicago-based Lance CPA Group and a **six-time “40 Under 40” honoree** by *CPA Practice Advisor*, passed away on Oct 21. He was 40 years old.

According to a [Facebook post](#) by his mom, Carole Lance, Josh was diagnosed with

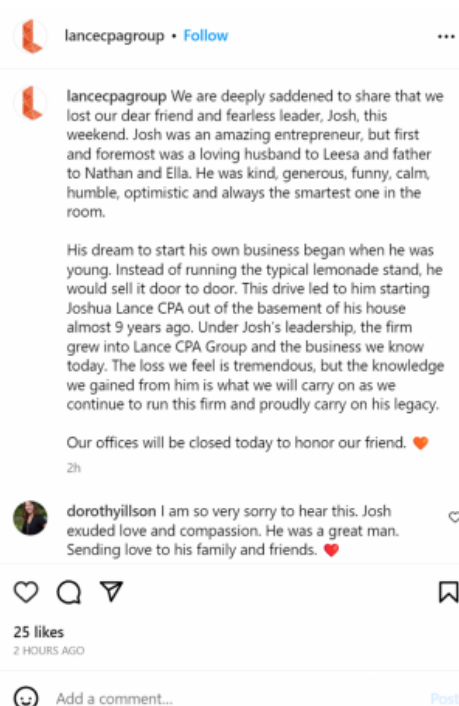
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“honor our friend.”

“We are deeply saddened to share that we lost our dear friend and fearless leader, Josh, this weekend. Josh was an amazing entrepreneur, but first and foremost was a loving husband to Leesa and father to Nathan and Ella. He was kind, generous, funny, calm, humble, optimistic and always the smartest one in the room,” the post says.

“His dream to start his own business began when he was young. Instead of running the typical lemonade stand, he would sell it door to door. This drive led to him starting Joshua Lance CPA out of the basement of his house almost 9 years ago. Under Josh’s leadership, the firm grew into Lance CPA Group and the business we know today. The loss we feel is tremendous, but the knowledge we gained from him is what we will carry on as we continue to run this firm and proudly carry on his legacy.”



A CPA and a CGMA, Josh began his career in public accounting at Crowe Horwath,

now Crowe, in the Chicago area. He then worked as a controller at an ultra-high-

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child, I had numerous lemonade stands and even sold lemonade door to door. In college, I started a ride-sharing business (this in the pre-Uber days) that would take students from our college to the airport during breaks at school. This drive to start something that was my own was always in the back of my mind. The opportunity to start a CPA firm with the transition of my old job made sense. Starting a CPA firm was not necessarily the business I always wanted to start, but I knew the industry and knew that I could take advantage of running a firm that was virtual and remote when very few firms were embracing this concept.”

So, he founded Lance CPA Group, a virtual firm that focuses on providing accounting and consulting services to craft breweries and digital agencies. As a craft beer enthusiast, it made perfect sense for Josh’s firm to provide accounting services to small, up-and-coming breweries in the Chicagoland area.

“We chose to work with craft breweries because I was a home brewer (and even more so a home winemaker) and I knew about and had a passion for the craft beer industry,” he wrote. “Early 2014 was the beginning of the growth in breweries in the greater Chicagoland area, and I knew these brand-new breweries would need someone who understood the accounting, finance, and regulatory aspects of their industry. We now work with breweries across the country by helping them grow strategically to reach the goals of their brewery.

“We also work with digital agencies, which really began when we started to attract agencies by how we branded our firm and positioned ourselves in the marketplace,” he continued. “While not specifically trying to reach these agencies, they saw how we market ourselves, which was different from most CPA firms. The agencies we get to work with are extremely creative and it’s exciting to see what they come up with and how they serve their client base.”

In addition to running his own CPA firm, Josh was head of accounting at Ignition, a

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[Josh's wife] Leesa and his two children and the wider Lance family, community, and all those who worked with Josh and had the experience of being in the presence of this human with a huge heart, cheeky smile, and a quick wit."

Will Lopez, head ambassador to accountant partners and customers at HR and payroll company Gusto, [wrote on LinkedIn Sunday](#) that Josh's passing left him "utterly broken hearted."

"Josh was so much to so many, including me. For years, we built our firms alongside each other sharing wisdom back and forth," Lopez wrote. "We celebrated when 'us accountants made it' into tech and in our respective roles. And he believed in me when we were creating People Advisory, chatting over the phone so long ago and asking if he would become the first person to help a client through PAS, and he did, we worked daily on it—the partnership with Ignition and the engagement letters in product are living arts of his commitment. And so much more ...

"Josh was Josh. And I am so very thankful to have known him and will continue to keep his memory alive," he continued. "My thoughts are with his family."

Josh also taught at two universities. He was an adjunct faculty member at Northwestern University teaching accounting and entrepreneurship in the Farley Center for Entrepreneurship. The class he taught is designed for undergraduate students to learn about accounting to apply to their future entrepreneurial efforts.

"I had the privilege of teaching with Josh for over 5 years at Northwestern and got to see firsthand the impact he had on hundreds of students. Throughout that time, I also learned more than I could ever imagine from him," Curt Mastio, CPA, founder of Founder's CPA, an accounting firm that offers specialized accounting services to startups and small businesses, and an adjunct professor at Northwestern, wrote in a [post on LinkedIn](#) today. "Josh was also an accounting firm owner, so I would



regularly reach out to him for advice or just to pick his brain. There was never a

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Josh was a *CPA Practice Advisor* “40 Under 40” honoree six times—from 2017 through 2022.

“He attended our ‘40 Under 40’ meetings a couple of times and also was a regular speaker at the ICPAS Summit. Josh was a super nice guy,” said Gail Perry, CPA, editor-in-chief of *CPA Practice Advisor*. “The accounting profession is a better place because of his contributions.”

Josh served on the Illinois CPA Society Board of Directors and was named as an MP Elite in 2022 by *Accounting Today*.

Those who knew him are invited to a Memorial Service being held on Saturday, October 28th, 2023, 10:30 a.m., at Hinsdale Covenant Church, 412 S. Garfield St. in Hinsdale, IL.

Instead of flowers, the family asks that donations be given to the organizations after Josh’s heart—honoring family and business:

- [Foster Progress](#) – Please select “In Honor of Josh Lance”
- [National Association of Black Accountants \(NABA\)](#)– Please select “General Fund”
- <https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/joshlance>

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