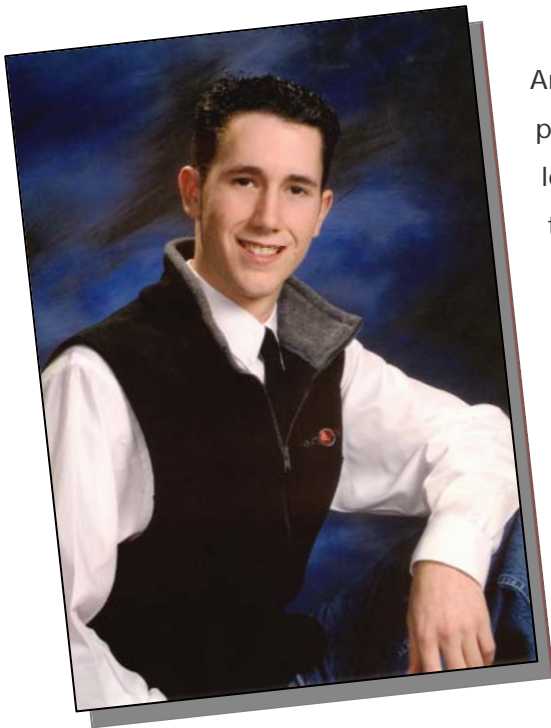


# Remembering Ryan Hudson: son, brother, uncle, friend



Any attempt to put into words the primal, raw pain a parent feels after losing a child is near impossible. The loss is so deep — something no parent should ever have to experience. In the cycle of life, losing a child is not the natural order.

Yet that was exactly what Liette and Brett Hudson had to endure. When their son Ryan died in a senseless trucking accident, they lost their future with him — his wedding, a daughter-in-law, his children. Their daughter Crystal lost her only brother, and her two children, Jayda and Ty, lost their uncle.

“Ty was just six weeks old when his uncle Ryan died,” said Liette. “Ty looked a lot like his uncle when he was born, and I remember how thrilled Ryan was to finally have another boy join our family of girls.”

Ryan’s sister, Crystal, struggles with the thought that she will never be an aunt, never have nephews or nieces. Her relationship with Ryan was special. “He was my other half at family functions, my best friend, and my ultimate confidant,” she says. “He held many of my secrets and covered for many of my mistakes. I’m proud to be his sister, and to have been part of his life. He was a gentle, kind-hearted man, and would have been a good husband and father.”

Liette often accompanied her husband, an independent trucker for over 26 years, on long-haul trips. It was on such a trip, that they received a call from Crystal who said that Ryan had been seriously injured in a trucking accident and was being airlifted to the hospital



Ryan with newborn, Ty

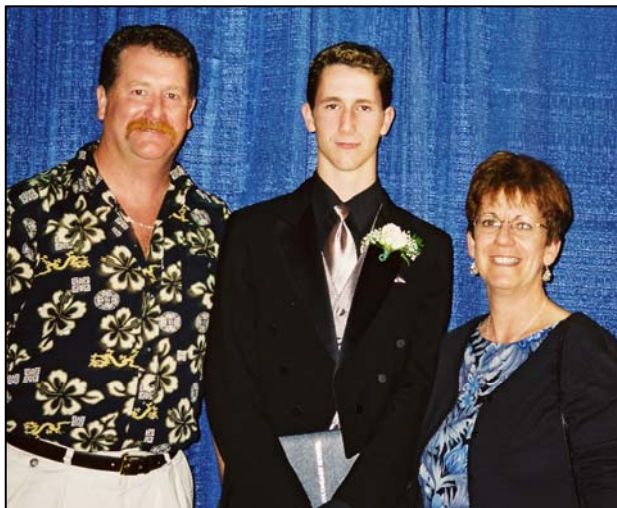
in Campbell River. At the time, they were dropping a load for a client in Seattle. After getting the news, they frantically began planning how to get home. But Crystal telephoned again a short while later, telling them that Ryan had died. They continued north — first to the U.S. / Canada border, then the ferry crossing, then the long drive home to Campbell River.

Over time, they have learned that one hour before his 12-hour shift was due to end, Ryan lost control of a 25-tonne articulated rock truck (ART) while driving down the steep slope of a logging road in a remote location on northern Vancouver Island. As he was thrown from the truck, a large rock from the load he was hauling became airborne and struck Ryan in the head.

Brett struggles to understand how his son, a new Class 5 driver with virtually no experience, could be behind the wheel of a massive ART on a grade so steep, "that only a seasoned trucker should navigate."

A Safety Task Group was formed. It worked with staff at WorkSafeBC and developed the Articulated Rock Truck Training Standard and Qualification Program. Dedicated to Ryan and all other ART drivers who have been seriously injured or killed on the job, the goal is to prevent future tragedies with ARTs.

Long-time friends will forever miss Ryan's easygoing nature, and the children of Campbell River who took karate lessons in Ryan's dojo will always hold fond memories of their sensei (karate instructor).



Brett and Liette Hudson with Ryan at his graduation

Ryan's family continues to come to terms with the void left by his passing. "As a mom, I feel I've lost myself, my identity," says Liette. "As a family, it changes your perspective on life. We'll never be the same. We hope that the Articulated Rock Truck Training Standard and Qualification Program will help change some of the regulations so other families don't have to go through what we did."