



COREY LAWRENCE  
FOREVER

# CELEBRATING COREY LAWRENCE 1970 - 2021



OLLIE TRANSFER. PLEASANT VALLEY SKATEPARK 2003. PHOTO: FRÖST. FRONT & BACK COVER PHOTOS: SAM SMITH



JAPAN AIR. WARPED TOUR 2001. PHOTO: SIMON



COREY & DAN. ESCAPIST 2015. PHOTO: MARKS

## DAN ASKEW

I first met Corey at Sean Ingram's mini ramp when I was 14. I remember walking down the stairs to Sean's backyard and seeing this guy who looked like Tony Hawk, riding a hot pink Tony Hawk board with hot pink Gullwing magnesium trucks - "the groove thang" as he'd call it. He was loose and lanky, but also skated with finesse. My friends and I were still new to the ramp scene. We'd seek out ramps to skate here and there, but rolling around the streets of Grandview was our daily mission until one day Sean and I decided we should start building a mini ramp when we got home from school. We had enough wood that was sitting in Sean's garage to just build part of the flat bottom...we didn't get far, but there was no turning back. Soon some construction site wood found its way over and Sean's mom and MC's dad kicked in money to help finish it and my dad brought some coping home from the job and welded it up for us. Word soon got out that there was a new ramp in town and the entire city found their way over at some point or another. This was our first introduction to the greater Kansas City skate scene. We met so many new people, and Corey was one of them. After the city made us tear the ramp down, Corey or Phil would pick us up and take us to Smitty's mini ramp in Liberty, or a ramp in Waldo, or wherever. I vividly remember Corey driving down the highway on the way to Kyle's ramp, driving with his knee and playing the seat belt like a guitar. He was so full of life, and he absolutely loved music. He'd never let anyone just sit on the sidelines. He wanted everyone to join in on the fun. He really knew how to push you to commit to a trick you were trying or teach you a new one, even if on occasion it was by way of tough love. His passion was vert skating, but he'd settle for tinkering around on mini ramps until the next opportunity for a vert session would arise. I was always amazed at some of the revert tricks he was able to take to vert with ease and how that tall lanky body just seemed more at home on larger ramps. To this day I remember him telling me about how much easier pivot to fakies were on vert. He'd make this claim about most tricks, actually. I could never wrap my head around it, but I was always in awe when seeing it go down in person. The man was just inspirational. I wish I would have spent more time at McGrady's vert ramp while it was up. I went occasionally and learned a few basics, but it was terrifying. Had I put forth more effort, perhaps Corey would have had another person go on vert missions with after McGrady, Becker, and Darren all moved away. Still, we'd skate the Warped Tour vert ramp together when it passed through a decade later, or hit Murr's or Dennis McCoy's ramp from time to time. Another decade forward and Evan's ramp went up and it was so glorious seeing Corey's skateboarding and entire being, recharged. Sure, he was older now and had sometimes gone years without skating, but he hadn't lost a step. It was so impressive. I'm happy we were able to squeeze a video part out of him during this time. So little footage of him existed. It was all just legend. I think he was excited to finally share his skating with more people than the few who'd share the deck of a vert ramp with him over the years. Unfortunately, the ramp only lasted a few years, so we'd take trips to Wichita and St. Louis to skate vert. It's a shame that Corey didn't have regular access to his true passion. I'm truly grateful that he'd often make a point to stop into Escapist to visit, or hit me up to get some good food. He came into the shop the day before he left for his trip to Florida, and was so excited to have lined up a vert session while he'd be down there. In true Corey fashion, he tried to get me to blow off everything and come with him. I should have. Responsibilities will still be there after, right? I wish I had taken him up on every trip invite to go skate vert. It would have been even more devastating to have witnessed his accident, but I would have loved to spend those last moments with him, on the vert ramp, seeing him still having the time of his life doing what he loved. We love you, Corey!

## DEVIN LAWRENCE

I think we can all agree that my father was the coolest, most amazing person any of us know. I have yet to meet anyone more caring, loving, or giving than my dad. My entire life his friends would come to me and tell me how awesome he was and how lucky I was to have him as a father. They couldn't have been more right. I once got a job at a restaurant just because the manager hoped that if I worked there that there would be a tiny chance that he might think about joining me and start bartending there. I've never once heard anyone say anything even remotely bad about him. Not one person can say he has done them wrong. My dad will forever be fifty-one years old and a legend to anyone who was lucky enough to know him, and his love and kindness will continue to reach us for years to come. If he could hear me now, I'd say to him, "I am going to miss you, you old fart. I wish my time with you could have been longer. I know you love us dearly and we and so many others love you the same and will miss you so, so much. Now have a blast skating the heavens, Dad."

## TOM WYKER

I feel like I knew Corey my whole life. Back when there weren't any vert ramps around and only seeing him skate mini ramps, somehow, a vert wall was built at a soccer complex in Lee's summit in the mid-to-late 90s. Corey and his wife Callie showed up. I partied with the both of them and knew of him mostly that way. A sly, shit-talking dude you just wanted to have a beer with. Well, when he fucking dropped in on that thing my mind was fucking blown! I'd known this dude for years and skated with him, but I always thought he was just one of those older dudes from the 80s who talked shit like they looped a full pipe. I had heard dudes tell me over and over how they could do handplants and backside airs "so high" that I always wrote it off. Corey stunned me that day, to the core. That same good looking, trash talking, parking lot bombing older dude had the fucking JUICE to pour in every fucking glass. I never doubted anything he ever said since then.

## BEN HLAVACEK

The only real time I spent with Corey was during the short lifespan of Evan Doherty's vert ramp. I think we had talked a few times before that and I had been in awe of him since I was a kid, seeing a few clips of him in Through Being Nice and on the Escapist website. At those sessions at Evan's, I remember him being this wonderful blend of old guard attitude and knowledge mixed with Midwest nice-guy. He wouldn't baby around advice to you about how to skate the ramp, but also never crossed the threshold into asshole territory. I always thought his relationship with little Evan was really special, as he would give him some input that he thought would help him in the long run, but never seemed to turn into a coach either. From my outside perspective, I thought it was a great gift he was giving to a very young skater. I remember our sessions were full of laughs and cheering on each other. I was scared shitless most of the time on that ramp, but having Corey there really helped me push myself a bit. He helped me gain a new set of skills that I still use on the rare occasion I'm able to find a vert ramp to go skate. I had been really hoping that one day we'd be having those sessions again, but now I will just hold them with me every time I am fortunate enough to pad up. I will miss you, Corey. Thank you for being a shining example of vertical skating in a sea of stair sets and manual pads.





TUCKNEE INDY PHOTO: HLAVACEK

## JASON ALBERT MCGRADY

I met Corey in Liberty, MO in 1985 back when I first started skating vert ramps. I thought, “who is this funny talented skateboarder?” Corey became a close friend after that and we skated in so many places...hung out and drank together and got a lot of coffee at Perkins. Corey was always a fruitful, loving guy who would have your back and go with the flow. One story was when I moved to Georgia he came to visit me and we drove to Daytona, FL to skate the park there. We met some locals and drank some with them. On the way home we both started getting sick...we were vomiting and shitting green bile for the next two days. I think it was the egg nog we drank? The last time I saw him was maybe 15 years ago hanging out at Brad’s house partying. I love Corey and feel his presence in the afterlife and I know he is still skating somewhere.



COREY GETTING HUGGED ON BY JASON MCGRADY & GREG LAUER. PHOTO: RUPNIEWSKI

## LISA RUPNIEWSKI

This pic was taken the summer of 1990...one of the most memorable summers ever! Corey was older than the rest of us and thus, the “grown-up” in the group. Been a long time since those days but they’re not forgotten. Corey, Jason McGrady, Greg & Kevin, Stephanie Simms, Carey Wolfskill, Sean Ingram, Jason Shelley, Dan Askew... Thanks for the memories, all of you! I love you guys!

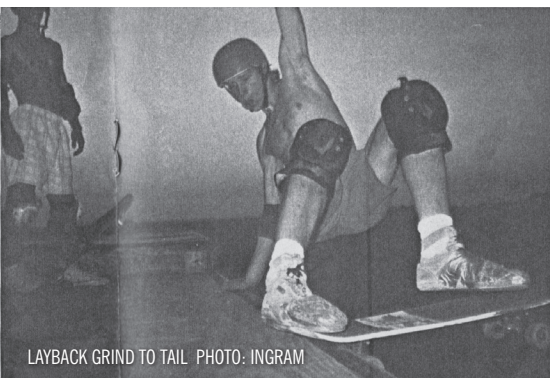




MCGRADY BLASTING WHILE COREY PADS UP



BACKSIDE DISASTER UP EXTENSION. MCGRADY'S 1990. PHOTO: INGRAM



LAYBACK GRIND TO TAIL PHOTO: INGRAM



BACKSIDE AIR. MCGRADY'S. PHOTO: ANDERSON



LISA, INGRAM & MCGRADY

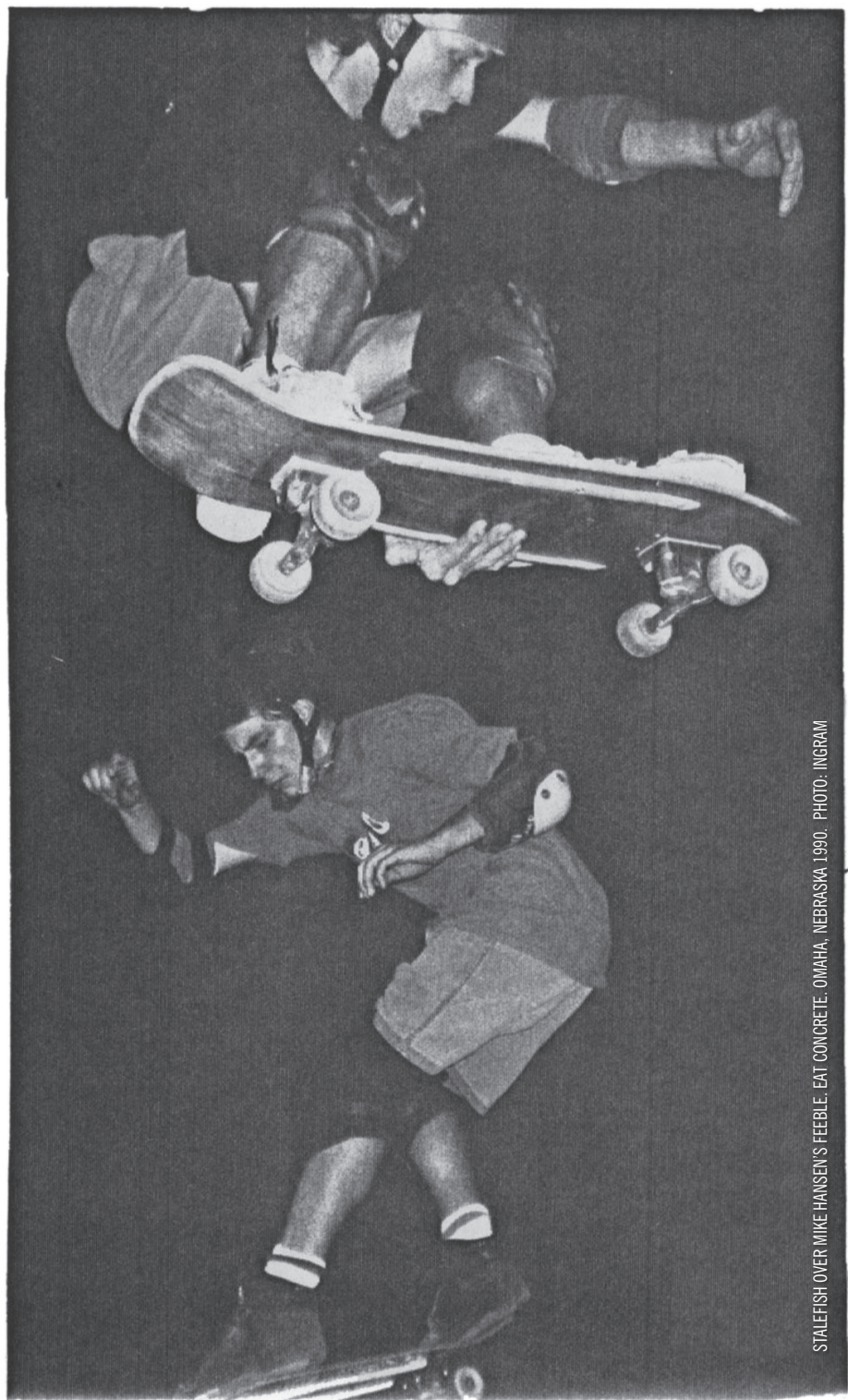
## SEAN INGRAM

In the early 90s my mom let all of us skaters in Grandview build a 6-foot mini ramp and overnight the entire KC skate scene found out about it and showed up at once, which was awesome, and Corey was one of them. This was around the time that my parents were splitting up, and so I had very little supervision. When my dad was actually around, he was difficult and verbally abusive. Corey really was like a surrogate father to me during that time and filled that void. If you knew Corey, then you know that really means we would get in trouble together, but his attitude towards me was really like the guidance of a cool dad. I'm sure you'll hear from others that Corey had a real heart to encourage and inspire kids skating, and I was no exception. Sometimes it would be "you know how to do this" but for me he usually got more results with "stop being a pussy, Ing". I immediately took to Corey.

Eventually the city made us take our ramp down, and I remember just figuring that was the end of that. I'd street skate around Grandview with my friends who lived in town and be happy. One Friday, I came home from school and Corey was there waiting for me to take me skating. "Come on Ing, we're going to Eat Concrete", or "Get your shit Ing, Jason McGrady built a vert ramp". It was hard to understand that Corey actually liked me and wanted to spend time with me. His friendship was not transactional. I had nothing to offer, my ramp was gone, I was too young to drive, and I was an annoying kid with zero social skills. But he took to me too and the best part of my childhood unfolded with Corey in the driver's seat. He relentlessly pushed me to overcome my fear of heights and when he was done with me, I was skating vert. That was something all due to him, because when that season of my life ended, I was never able to tackle it again. The summers at Jason McGrady's, and all of the friends that were a part of that time, were really something I wish my kids had instead of YouTube and Call of Duty. In retrospect, they may have been the most important summers of my life. As I got older and in high school, McGrady moved and the ramp was torn down. Corey got an apartment with a buddy of his dad's, and if we weren't there, then we were at Perkins talking all night, literally, over coffee. He was just my dude, someone that I never imagined that would not be in my life. His importance cannot be understated. There was a night towards my senior year we were all partying and I had what I understand now is a "death of ego" experience. I had dropped acid and was looking at myself sitting in a chair stoned, high, drunk, and it terrified me. I was partying too much, my skating suffered, I didn't know how to talk to my girlfriend honestly, and I really hated myself. I knew I would need accountability to get clean and for some dumb reason I chose to throw myself into the straight edge music culture. This, to the best of my knowledge, is how I lost connection with this friend group, and more importantly Corey.

Getting involved in music lead to joining a band, and the first tour I went on is when Corey's importance was first felt. We were opening for this Hare Krishna band and they were about five years older than me, like Corey was. I just took for granted that they were going to show us the ropes, take us under their wings, whatever. Wrong. They were selfish, tried to poach members, and stole aspects of our sound we were doing that were unique at the time. We spent weeks with these folks and at the end of the tour they had a little public celebration and excluded us. I remember watching my band members just watching from the sidelines and smiling and being stoked to be there and it was deeply confusing. It took a while to figure it out, but it's because they never had a Corey in their





STALEFISH OVER MIKE HANSEN'S FEEBLE. EAT CONCRETE. OMAHA, NEBRASKA. 1990. PHOTO: INGRAM

life. They never had someone show them the ropes and include them just because they were loved. That aspect of Corey is so unique in this world it's nearly criminal.

Life then snowballed like it does with a wife and kids, a job, and all that. I would get to bump into Corey here and there and it was always like old times. I was always so excited to see him and share with each other what was going on in our lives. The last time I got to hang out with Corey was last year. I moved onto a little land and learned he was into dirt bikes too. He immediately picked an overpowered bike out for me online that I did not want. One "don't be a pussy, Ingram" and I was buying the damn thing and hauling it home. It was literally a rocket on wheels. He came out and we rode around the lake and had beers and just talked about all the ways we screwed up with our kids and wives. He talked a lot about addiction and his deep regrets about how he handled it with one of his kids. He loved them so much and was upset how he could hurt them with his love. My heart broke for him because I could tell he went through the wringer and I just wasn't there for him. I have such guilt and regret that in my own busyness I wasn't there. I wasn't there for any of the babies, none of the good times, or bad times I might have been able to help. I have no doubt if I made the smallest effort he would have been a part of my adult life too. But I didn't, and I think I'm always going to struggle with that.

One of the last things Corey told me was that I had to pay to play. We were talking about how it takes him two hours to get his body to move in the morning, but it's worth it because he still gets to skate. I know Corey would appreciate that he died doing what he loves most, but for those of us left behind, the cost is just too high. We'd rather he was here with us still. We'd literally give anything. I loved this man dearly. I am so jealous of everyone who got to have him in their adult lives. I hope to find some way to honor him so no one ever forgets how important he was.



SEAN, GREG & DAN TRYING TO RESURRECT MCGRADY'S VERT RAMP 1991 PHOTO: RUPNIEWSKI

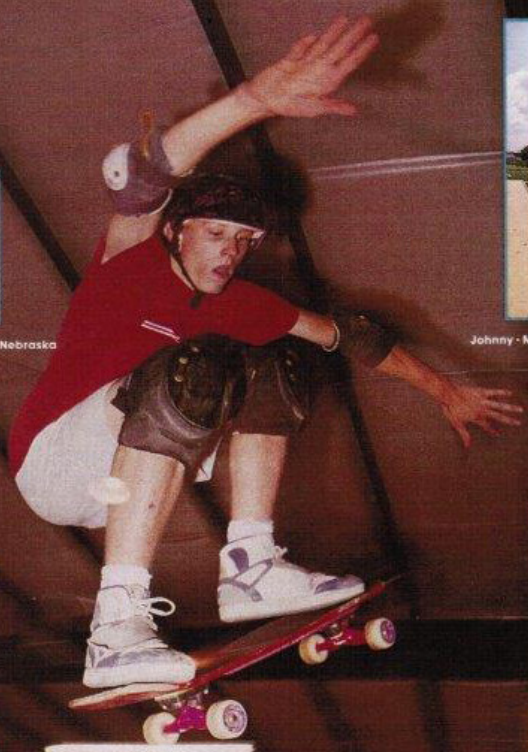




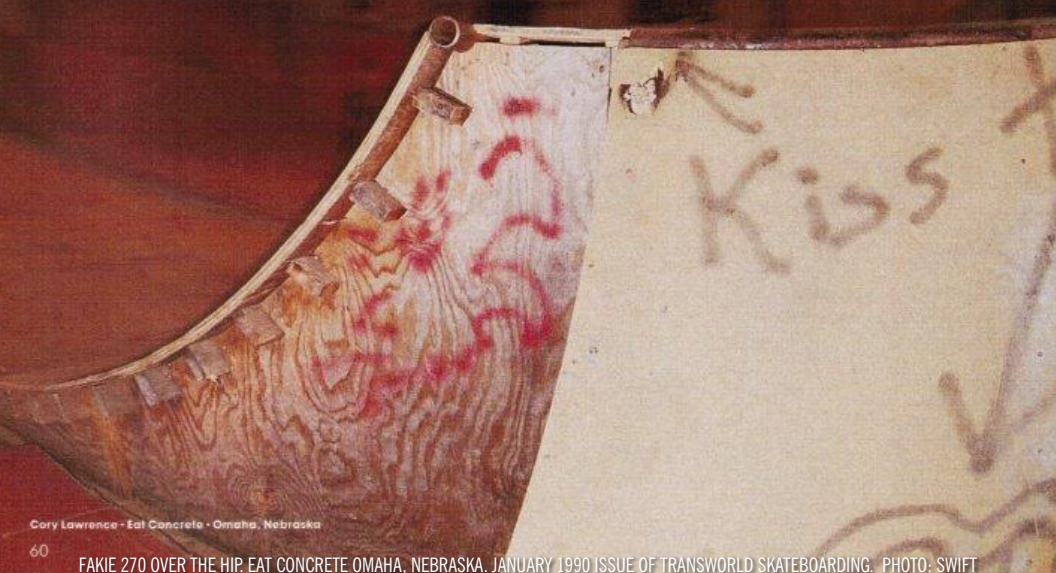
Mike Youssefpour and catheter - Omaha, Nebraska



Johnny - Malone Center - Lincoln, Nebraska



Rocky and snack - Eat Concrete - Omaha, Nebraska



Cory Lawrence - Eat Concrete - Omaha, Nebraska

## DENNIS MCCOY

I built several vert ramps in the KC metro from the 80s well into the 2010s, and the skateboarding community was always welcome. Corey Lawrence was the constant, regularly showing up with a big smile to skate or help with the build. Every one of those ramps was bigger and faster than the last and I watched Corey adapt to and progress on each one. He will be sorely missed. Let's celebrate his memory by keeping his passion for a good session alive forever.





## PHIL TUCKER

Corey and I grew up in the Linden Hills neighborhood in S.KC, attended Center High School together and started skating before either of us could drive. Mid 80s Powell Peralta was the rage and with that time every kid wanted to try their luck on a board. Corey would try to channel his inner Tony Hawk before ever really picking up vert. After he was out of school he eventually moved to Omaha for a bit where he really began to step up his vert game at the local park. (We may or may not have consumed copious amounts of whiskey and hopped a fence at Hitchcock Park swimming pool for a drunken jump off a triple dive platform.) Visits to Omaha, as well as Wichita, Springfield, Dallas and someplace in Iowa I believe to meet up with a guy named Lynch. Slept in the car waiting for the park to open. So many memories. Corey introduced me to my first half pipe experience in an Overland Park backyard. Back then he was just doing rock 'n' rolls where a local named Corey Brown was doing backside airs. In those days Corey actually liked the early freestyle stuff as well. Rodney Mullen stuff.



PHIL & COREY



BUBBA

## BILAL "BUBBA" ALAREDHI

How can I explain how much Corey helped me when I was growing up? My mom wasn't always in the right state of mind and he knew that. I remember my mama was so messed up that Corey let me move in with him. He enrolled me in school. He took me in like I was one of his own children. Now that I'm a dad that's exactly who I want to be like. Not having anybody grown up, that man would just look out for me anytime I was down and out. Not even that long ago he helped me out with my kids, just because he loved me. That dude is all out legend. In my eyes, he was my hero.



"YEP, IT SMITHS" PHOTO: ASKEW

## BRAD BECKER

Corey was a brother. I have known Corey for almost 35 years. I met Corey when I was in high school at a Gator Rogowski demo. After the demo, if memory serves me correct, everyone went to Dan Sharp's ramp. I couldn't go that day and Corey was so bummed he called me the next day and picked me up in the badass Impala, f'n sweet. The rest is history... from my backyard ramps, to all the Liberty sessions with Shawn Stewart and Travis Burke, to Jason McGrady's ramp, Eat Concrete in Omaha, Lawrence Ramp... a lot of great skateboarding, a lot of great times, a lot of unforgettable memories. I love you brother. Rip ride forever.



COREY & BRAD 2018. PHOTO: ASKEW



BRAD 1990. PHOTO: INGRAM



TUCKNEE INVERT PHOTO: SMITH

## MICHAEL "MC" COCHRAN

I remember pulling his pony tail back in the day because he was making fun of my most marvelous, magical, marathon kick turn session at the old Raytown Road ramp and he was kind enough not to pummel me. I also remember what I'm pretty sure is the last time I really saw him... He saw me walking down the street and he picked me up and I rode with him while he went to some golf store in Martin City before he gave me a ride home and we just got to hang out and shoot the shit for a while and it was really cool.





PUTTING ON AN IMPROPTU CLINIC. BACKSIDE AIR. HARMON SKATEPARK 2005 PHOTO: SMITH

## CALLIE LAWRENCE

The first night that I met Corey at Java Gaia, before we even spoke to one another, he said that he was going to marry me some day. Many thanks and much gratitude in all that you have gifted me in our 28 years of adventures. Ciao, bella; see you on the flip side. You have been loved...all ways. - Your wife

## SEAN BEAVER

Most of my Corey stories (skating wise) are at Eat Concrete, Dennis McCoy's, etc. Nothing too grand...just always looked at him as being good. So technically smooth and powerful. In the last five years my stories have been rooted in our kite shows. He and Callie both were like family. We had so much fun. The one time we went to Great Bend and we passed the skatepark mini ramp and he rode it using some kid's board. It was so Corey.





## AIDEN LAWRENCE

A few years back, dad woke me up in the middle of the night and told me “pack your shit and don’t tell your mother, we’re going to skate in Michigan.” I called my good friend John and we packed and took off. Made it up to a skatetopia-like private park called Ponds 7 and it was beautiful. Shortly after we went to the lake and relaxed for hours followed by fireworks as it was close to 4th of July. I’ll never forget how many smiles there were skating that night.



AIDEN & COREY



COREY & CALLIE



SEAN, COREY & ZACK

## DJ STEWART

I met Corey Lawrence when I was probably 14 and thought he was superhuman. I’d never with my own eyes seen someone do what he could on a skateboard. I was then lucky enough over the years to get to call him a friend. I watched a movie last night that fell in line really well with this, called *Secondhand Lions*. It was about being a good man and going out with your boots on. Corey did that. He lived. Hard and fast and awesome. To his family both blood and board, my deepest deepest condolences. We will all miss you, Corey.

## AUSTIN COSLER

When I first started skateboarding, Corey was an extremely positive role model. He showed support from the sidelines during my first KC Indoor contest. He took me along with him to the opening of Harmon Park. Throughout the many years of working at Escapist, he would come in and have philosophical conversations with me about skateboarding, education, work, and everything in between. I’m sending love your way, Corey.



## AUDRYE PARRIS

I'll miss you Dad. I'll always be your only baby girl. I'm so thankful you got to be here for the biggest moments in my life. My sobriety, my wedding, the birth of my children. I'm sorry I put you through hell as a teenager, but I'm so glad we really got to bond as adults. I could always come to you with my problems, and you would talk with me as a human instead of brushing it off because I was young and they seemed insignificant. I never realized as a kid how much you struggled to support us, and I guess that's just proof that you did what you needed to do as a parent. You were a father to my friends who needed it, and always a shoulder for whomever to lean on, and you'll be missed by more people than you may have realized. You touched every soul you met and will be forever remembered.

"I am never wrong. I thought I was wrong once, but I was mistaken." - Corey Lawrence

## MYKE JOHNSON

Corey loved my mother so much, he took me in as his own child. He was an awesome father, and more of a man than most could dream of ever being. I'm so lucky to have been able to call him dad, and later, a friend. He's a legend, and my hero.





CALLIE, CHRISTIAN, STEPHANIE & COREY



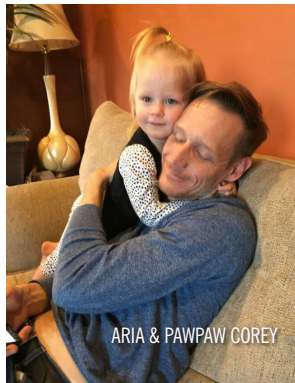
1990 PHOTO: STEPHANIE SIMMS

## STEPHANIE SIMMS

Thank you, Corey Lawrence. I was lucky enough to meet you when I was only 15. At Jason's backyard ramp, watching you skate, those friendships have lasted through my life. You accepted us all and acted as our big brother, getting us into just enough trouble and making sure we knew how to get ourselves out of it. I have so many fuzzy memories with you in them. Java Gaia - drinking coffee and feeling important, talking about our futures, the world, and other super deep teenage shit. I remember you telling me about meeting Callie there. You coming to Columbia to see the Screaming Trees, sneaking you into my dorm to stay the night. Why didn't you have a ride back to KC? Not sure, but I was happy to skip class and spend the day with you instead. Across the bar at EBT, talking about great food, your newfound love of wine. I loved how much you enjoyed bartending. Totally lit you up when you had a great night. Also loved that a great night for you had very little to do with how much money you made. Sitting at my kitchen island licking a bowl of whatever baked good I happened to be making. Giving us the updates on the family and what you had going on. I loved it when you stopped by for a visit. You had such a generous heart. When I didn't think there was anything more for you to give, you always surprised me. I wish so badly now that those memories weren't so fuzzy. That I had cherished those chats enough to commit them to memory so I could recall them better now. I thought there would be so many more. You have left a huge hole in our lives that is going to be impossible to fill. I miss you, but thank you.



COREY & AUDRYE



ARIA & PAWPAW COREY



COREY, MIKE CAVIAR & STEVE PANZICA



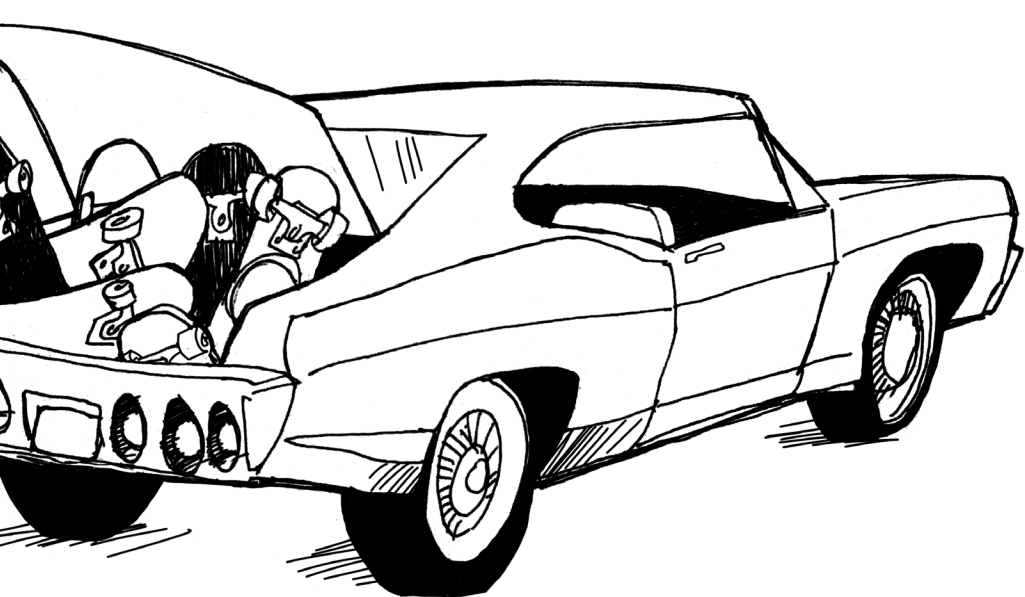


## DON SIMON

I've known Corey longer than anyone that I'm not related to. From the first time I saw him, I knew there was something special about him. The calendar may say that I was born first, but he was always the wiser man. When I made foolish mistakes, he sought to protect me; where I was ignorant, he taught me lessons that have stayed with me to this day. He was compassionate when I was in pain, understanding when I was confused, caring with all his heart. It was joy to see him love and grow, it was a blessing to spend the time we had together, and an honor to watch his family grow. No one has ever been more proud of me, nor inspired me more to attempt to live up to those expectations.







## CHRISTIAN SIMMS

I always found myself in some of the most unique situations when it came to Corey. He was undeniably a force to be reckoned with. He used to get me into a lot of shit. We went to the same high school and met sometime around 1986 or 1987??? I had this jump ramp out in front of my house that all my friends would skate every day after school. He started coming around blasting huge airs off the thing. I was fourteen, he was sixteen and the only one out of all of us that had a car. He used to drive a 1960s Chevy Impala. Roomy enough for like eight of us to throw our gear in the trunk and pile in like a clown car for road trips to CSC in Des Moines, Eat Concrete in Omaha, and Wild Wild West in Wichita. We would just drop everything and go. On one occasion when he came to pick us up for one of these excursions, Phil Tucker, myself, and some others were skating out front waiting on him. Corey comes hauling ass around the corner and slams on the brakes joking like he was going to run me over. He screeches to a halt, inches from taking out my legs. My mom saw the whole thing and was so pissed. This was the first time she met him. We got out of there quick before she changed her mind about me leaving town with this dude. Yes, he could be reckless and spontaneous, but extremely resourceful. There was no pre-planning for these trips. We would often end up crashing on floors at his uncle Gary's or some random friend's house. We would show up unannounced after an all-day session, with no guarantee of the host being open to a house full of rank skaters camped out all over the place. There was little money for food, let alone for gas or park entry, but he could do wonders with a can of green beans, corn and some seasoning salt. Corey provided. He was the older brother I never had and a great mentor. He was always looking out for us, always pushing us to land that trick we had been working on all day, or one that we were too scared to try. He was supportive to the extreme. I was mostly a street skater and he wanted me to expand to vert, so we could have sessions together. I wasn't comfortable with big ramps, but he never gave up on me. He absolutely shredded. Over our thirty-year friendship, there are so many more stories, both on and off the board. Too many to tell here. I will miss him like mad. Love you, brother. Skate on.





## “TEXAS DAN” SHARP

Thanks for putting a memorial together for Corey. He so deserves it, though we all can never forget him. I wish I had a personal photo to share but all I have are visions of a few sessions from around 35 years ago. I met Corey on the vert ramp at Eat Concrete in Nebraska. I was still fresh to the vertical arena and he was there doing some tricks I had only seen in mags. Bio airs, proper hand turns, even lip tricks to revert. It was magic to me. He could tell I was from a smaller ramp scene...landing in the bottom, not grinding on top. But he showed me how to adjust my riding style and timing to ride bigger terrain. He was the first guy I ever saw frontside roll in over the lip. To me that was raw and I loved that approach, his approach to skating. He was like an early mentor to me. Taught me how to roll in and charge, which I still take to heart to this day. As long as we all keep doing that he can't be forgotten. Thank you, Corey.

## DAVID CAMPBELL

I met Corey after my wife and I moved to Kansas in 2011 so she could pursue a PhD at KU. Our friendship was an easy and automatic function of our shared love for vert and bowl riding, and although I rode with him many, many times over a five year period we never developed a relationship any deeper than that of acquaintances. Not through any fault of either us, but we both had grown up lives - work, family, etc., and skateboarding was the only overlap. But that was enough. Corey showed me plainly who he was in that world. Confident but not cocky. Caring and helpful. Gracious. Patient. Thoughtful and considerate. Many years ago when my wife and I first met I warned her that she might occasionally find me, through skateboarding, in the company of people that I might not otherwise choose as friends, or as quality company. Corey was the opposite of that. Dead polar opposite. We didn't stay in close contact after Lindsay got her degree and we moved away. Just some occasional social media here or there, but he didn't spend a lot of energy there so our communication lapsed. But know this: if Corey had ever in the rest of my life showed up at my door needing my help, I wouldn't have given it a second thought. Such an easy call.



BACKSIDE AIR PHOTO: HLAVACEK





STALEFISH. EVAN'S 2013. PHOTO: ROGERS



## ZALE BLEDSOE

My oldest memory of Corey goes back almost 20 years. We were at the Columbia Skatepark and he was blasting airs over the hip higher than I'd seen anyone do. It made me want to take a picture of it. I still have that picture and it still stokes me out to this day. A while later I went to film him skating Dennis' ramp and being able to see his inverts and Madonnas in person stoked me out so much that I went to KC indoor and learned Madonnas on the 6-foot quarter. In my head though, I was Corey Lawrence on Dennis' vert ramp. He had a style and presence that was hard to ignore. In short, he fucking ripped and I'm stoked to have gotten to know him. I feel lucky to have had the opportunities I did to skate with him over the last 20 years and I'll never forget them. Godspeed, my friend. I will see you again.



ZALE & COREY



HIP OLLIE 2003. PHOTO: BLEDSOE

## JUSTIN LYNCH

I skated with Corey and Travis Burke in 1989 in the Eat Concrete days and always remember Corey as a super nice guy. Donnie and I had an apartment with Travis. We never paid our bills and were going to get kicked out, so we took a full-blown road trip. All over the place. I don't have a lot of memories, but the one major memory was when he had his return to skateboarding, very close in time to me getting back into skating vert. Corey called me back in 2013 to tell me how stoked on skateboarding he was and mentoring Evan. Over 40 and completely amazed...no skateboarders at 18 thought they'd live past 30. We weren't super tight, but we had a mutual bone to pick and I respected him. I was sad to find out how he passed. Good skateboarder and more importantly, a nice guy. Pure heart. This was a guy who had passion.





FRONTSIDE 5-0. HARMON SKATEPARK PRAIRIE VILLAGE, KANSAS 2005. PHOTO: SMITH





## SPENCER BENAVIDES

When I first moved to Kansas City around 2003, I heard about Corey Lawrence being a heavy hitter on big transition. When I finally met him, I got to see why the stories were always based on how nice he was and how hard he ripped. Absolute ripping vert action, positive attitude, welcoming and pushed me to get in the mix with him. I'm so sorry to all my KC friends to hear of Corey's passing. An immeasurable impact on KC skating. His approach to just being an amazing skateboarder and good guy all around are notched in my memory bank forever. RIP Corey.

## MIKE ALEXANDER

I grew up skating in KCK/Wyandotte in the mid to late 80's and it was a really different time for skateboarding and life in general. I had a looming fear and reticence about older skaters, of which there weren't that many, but the ones that were around were fucking intense. In a great way. I totally face-planted the first time I tried to drop in on anything because this older kid kept calling me a pussy. It hurt and was embarrassing but I got up eventually and pulled it off. Corey Lawrence embodied all of that old school fearlessness and swagger that I've been trying to effect since that painful Wyco day in 1987. The first time I met him he immediately teased me about something and I liked him right off for it. We only skated together once but I always thought about that day even before we've all been recalling everything about Corey we loved. "My spine looks like a crack whore's teeth." This was what he said to me as he was loaning me some knee pads that he would end up gifting to me at the end of the trip. He really was one-of-a-kind and skateboarding will mourn his absence for the foreseeable future. Rest in power my friend.

## SAM BOWERS

Corey got me to drop in on my first vert ramp while simultaneously making eight of us laugh harder than we ever have in one weekend. Truly the highest energy there.



INVERT. BACKSIDE OLLIE (OPPOSITE). EVAN'S 2012. PHOTOS: HLAVACEK





OSIRIS

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IS PLANS







AWE-INSPIRING. FASTPLANT FAKIE. EVAN'S 2012. PHOTO: HLAVACEK



## ANDREW LOVGREN

One of my earliest memories of skateboarding was walking up to the window of a brand new skate shop in my home town called Escapist. It wasn't open yet, but it looked different inside and I knew it was special. I remember going to the very simple website at the time and seeing images of their riders. Most riders had a promo video attached of a few tricks, but one person stood out to me. He looked a bit older and didn't have any videos of him skating. Corey Lawrence. After high school, my life was taken over by capturing skateboarding in documentary form. My work always gravitated towards why I loved it so much. I never felt it was my place to film parts, as my closest friends were doing that. Out of the blue, Dan Askew reached out with the opportunity to drive out to Evan Doherty's ramp a couple hours from my home and film a part for Corey. His first Escapist part. Over the next few months, I got to spend countless hours with Corey and his crew in the dead-heat of summer. It took some time to get into the groove of shooting at a big ramp but once Corey started seeing his skating from my perspective, I could tell it turned a light







BACKSIDE OLLIE TO TRUCK BASH. FAKIE OLLIE REVERT (BELOW). ESCAPIST RED AND YELLOW. SEQUENCE: LOVGREN

on in him. One instance I'll never forget was the last session we filmed. Christian Hosoi stopped by to say hello and during the session, one of Corey's friends was getting so close to rock 'n' rolls on the deck. Christian was screaming "You got this!" and every time he got closer Christian would get louder. The last attempt he fully committed, slipped out, and knocked his head the hardest I'd ever seen. Immediately slumped down the ramp, not moving. Christian jumps down the ramp right to his face and gets real close trying to wake him up. After a minute or so, he comes to it and with big eyes looks up as if he's seen God. His first words, "Never did I think I'd be waken up out of a slam to Christian Hosoi calling my name." He got up okay, and immediately after, Christian and Corey ended the session doing doubles. For some reason I felt not to shoot but to just watch. After months of traveling a state away to film both myself and Corey's first skate part, I got to sit and watch Corey and Christian blast huge airs together. It was the perfect way to end an incredible journey with a true Kansas City legend. Rest in peace, Corey Lawrence.



## CURTIS HENDRIX

Corey is one of those guys that always made you feel included, important and needed. He topped the list of the KC skate scene and if you didn't know him personally, you knew of him from hearing stories from fellow skaters about his flawless inverts, lofty ollies and his ability to get a session fired up! I am lucky enough to call him my friend. Corey and I made trips out of town and out of state to skate various vert ramps with some great people. Road trips I will hold in my memory for ever. Outside of skating, Corey was the kind of guy that was always willing to lend a hand and help out a friend or a complete stranger. We also shared many a Saturday or Sunday on the golf course. That is how I first met his father, Bill. Let me tell you, Corey was a chip off the old block! As I type this up, my eyes are filling with tears. Just yesterday while I was golfing without my buddy, I made an incredible shot and was so wanting that high five and a hug from my buddy. Corey was a hugger, and if you ever got one from him, just know that he doesn't just hand those out to anyone. I will miss those hugs and encouraging words for years to come. Rest easy my friend, until we meet again.



## JOSH WHITE

This photo (left) shows how big of a smile we (everyone) had on our faces every time we were anywhere near Corey on any given session. I was very fortunate to catch a few of those indescribable sessions at Big E's Vert ramp while it was around. Every time I did, Corey was there to help cheer you on and push you way further than you ever thought you could take that session. I had never been a vert skater by any stretch, but watching Corey drop in and FLY around with such grace and pure ease really did make you think, "man, maybe I could learn something new tonight." Every single drop in you felt more and more confident thanks to that amazing cheer and genuine belief coming from Corey that you were just right there and almost had it. "Carve in a little more and STAND UP on it," Corey was yelling at me as I kept bailing. Finally, after watching him do multiple runs with every single trick you wish you could do yourself, I was able to listen to his advice and just commit to standing up and coming back into the ramp! Even though Corey could literally do this trick with his eyes closed, his sheer hype for me landing my first one ever was as if he himself just landed a trick he had been battling for hours. From that moment on, a bond was built and more than that a real friendship began. Every time we crossed paths after that, it was nothing but smiles, jokes, talking about skating and whatever else was going on at that moment. You could tell when he asked, "how you doing, Josh?" He really meant it. That's something I will always cherish about Corey. That's just the way he was. A true skate rat, amazing friend, and best of all, father to his family. You will truly be missed, until we shred again on the other side my friend. Roll on forever! Love and condolences to the Lawrence family.





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## MIKEY SANTILLAN

I grew up skating Grandview mini ramp and seeing Corey there as a kid. I knew of him from the Escapist team section and heard that he skated vert really well. We had many sessions on that mini ramp, oftentimes with Corey's kids there skating too. He was always inviting, encouraging, and just a wonderful human to be around. You could always tell he never really got the chance to fully skate the way he wanted on that ramp, but that never stopped him from getting out. When little Evan's vert ramp came about, it was like the world opened up for Corey, and it was such an awesome experience to see him shine on that ramp. He was always there giving advice to anyone who would listen, and often you found yourself sitting down and watching Corey blast airs and doing pivot fakies. He would always get on to me for wearing knee pads and not sliding. I struggled to wrap my head around the concept of sliding on my knees so one day Corey told me to jump from the top of the ramp to my knees, in my head I'm thinking "you gotta be shitting me". So I did it once and continued to keep running out of frontside airs. I miss those sessions, but grateful I got to experience them with him.



HOW TO DRAW A PERFECT LINE PHOTOS: ASKEW



BRIAN & COREY STRIKE A POSE



TEAMWORK MAKES



## BRIAN SMITH

Corey and I had always had a solid connection as we were the same age and both had a deep love of all things skateboarding. Corey's skills far exceeded mine, yet he was always amped, encouraging and super positive and never at a loss to share tips and pointers. Many times we spent more time talking than skating. We shared in the joy of seeing our own kids, as well as any others at a skatepark, learn new tricks and accomplish something that they had been working hard to achieve. A highlight for me was seeing Corey full bore amped while skating at "Big E's" vert ramp with Christian Hosoi. The level of excitement and satisfaction that poured out of him was incredible and magical. He was glowing, and you knew this was a lifetime experience for him and we got to witness it. When we began the process of building out the TF, he stopped by one day to see the progress of the mini ramp and next thing we know he was helping us with the build, welding tabs onto the coping and just generally losing all track of time. Corey as a skater was amazing and as a human being and friend had nothing but good vibes to share. Blessed to have been able to call you a friend and you will be missed! Peace and love to his family!



THE DREAM WORK



HOSOI AT EVAN'S



ONE-FOOTED EGGPLANT PHOTO: FURNEE



INDY AIR. TUCKNEE EGGPLANT (OPPOSITE). BOARDERTOWN FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS 2020. PHOTOS: WICKERSHAM





## JAKE WICKERSHAM

These two photos were shot in the winter of 2020 on a little weekend trip down to Arkansas. About five or so friends, including Corey and myself, had gotten an Airbnb for the weekend. I had been on a few trips with Corey prior to this, but this one was top tier of them all. One night after everyone had gone to bed, Corey and I found ourselves on the porch chain-smoking cigarettes and enjoying the brisk Arkansas night. Seeing as how both of us have struggled with addiction in some capacity or another, that became an easy subject we sort of dove into. We would spend the next few hours sharing our experience, strength and hope with each other. It's always a blessing being able to get on that level of vulnerability with someone. It reinforced what I already knew to be true about Corey. His love will live in our hearts forever.

**WILLIAM COREY LAWRENCE**  
**4/21/70 - 5/17/21**

