



# **Jodi Louise Cade**

**6<sup>th</sup> May 1984 - 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

## The Tribute

I sat last week with Jodi's closest family. I asked what she was like, and these are the words which I heard: fun, competitive, organized, bossy, caring, loving, an entertainer, articulate, a fighter. She was always the centre of the room.

As her sister, Hannah, says:

*"Jodi was the centre of our family who brought everyone together. Whether it was on one of her 'family bonding' holidays, birthdays or Christmas, Jodi made sure everyone was involved and no one was left out. Family was so important to her and Jodi would do anything and everything for each and every one of us .... which is pretty good going considering the amount of us!"*

*"Jodi was kind, funny and the life and soul of every occasion. I could not have wished for a better big sister and things will never be the same without Jodi, but I know she will want us to carry on with our lives as best we can and make sure Macy and Oscar are well looked after and have everything they need."*

These are some of the stories I heard.

She was mischievous from the first, and you only have to look at Macy to see what she was like as a child. She painted the kitchen cupboards black, she poured an expensive bottle of perfume down the loo because she didn't like the smell of her poo, she tipped dog biscuits over her head, and her clothes constantly needed changing because she'd jumped into some kind of mess.

She was also beautiful from the first – she won a local bonnie baby competition and went on to compete in the regional final. Again, just look at Macy.

Once she was at primary school, at parents evening the teacher said “What can I say? Jodi is Jodi.” Geoff remembers taking her to the local library, where, not content with what she found in the children’s section, he heard her asking for a book on willies.

By the time she was at secondary school, she was a leader. Her Mum Pattie told the story about the day a teacher and the class arrived at their designated classroom, only to find another class was already in it. The teacher set off round the school with the whole class in tow, looking for a free classroom. After this had been going on for a while, Jodi intervened: “Can I make a suggestion, please? Why don’t you leave us here and go and find a classroom, then come back for us?”

It was this quality of leadership, and her confidence, which led to her becoming Staffordshire’s representative to the Youth Parliament. Pattie recalls a time when she was addressing a local MP about the fact that poor public transport meant that young people couldn’t get out in the evening. The MP said “Perhaps you should stay at home and do your homework, so you can make something of yourself”. Jodie replied: “Excuse me, sir, I think I am making something of myself, because I can stand up in a room full of adults and talk about the needs of young people”.

With her friends Nicola and Beth, she formed a girl gang, the “Sexbomb Tribe”, though this might not have been as fearsome as it sounds, since she was also really active at the local community centre, organising charity fashion shows and generally championing the rights and needs of teenagers. Nicola and Beth later went on to be Macy’s Guideparents – at Macy’s naming, Jodi asked me to say this about Nicola: “During their childhood they made lots of mistakes together, and Jodi is relying on Nicola to steer Macy away from making the same mistakes, while encouraging her to have as much fun as they did growing up.”

And of course, she was a big sister too, and found lots of fun and drama in that role, often in collaboration with her older brother Robbie, and

even more often with best friend Nicola. Hannah remembers that one night, when Jodi and Nicola were babysitting, they convinced themselves that a man in the street was acting oddly. They pushed Hannah under the bed and armed themselves with a cooking spatula from the kitchen in case he knocked on the door. Her younger brother James, always confided in Jodi, particularly for relationship advice, which Jodi was probably meant to keep secret but in later years shared with Jamie – there’s nothing a husband and wife keep secret – sorry, James!

So, she went off to Uni to study politics, choosing Newcastle because she “liked the way they spoke” and also liked Alan Shearer. Her mum remembers getting a call at 2am one morning while Jodi was in Newcastle. She answered the call with the kind of dread which mothers feel when they get a call at that time of night, only to find it was Jodie, saying “Mum, I’m in a club and Alan Shearer’s standing RIGHT BEHIND ME”.

So, given her passion for Geordie accents, it’s not really surprising that she and Jamie got together. They had a group of friends in common, and Jamie soon fell for her, on one memorable evening bribing his mate Hamzah (later to be another of Macy’s guideparents, as it happens) to “crack on” with Jodi’s mate so he could be alone with Jodi. Jamie was already mostly living down south, and in her third year, Jodi quit her politics course, which she’d never enjoyed as much as the clubs, and the accents which Newcastle had to offer, and joined Jamie, taking a job at Claire’s Accessories, where she had already been working while (supposedly) at Uni.

Lavinia, Jamie’s Mum, says of Jodi:

*“From the moment we met Jodi she became like one of the family, introducing Jamie’s sister Sophie to her antics in Newcastle and treating me not just like a Mum in Law but like a friend.*

*When Jamie made the relationship official, we spent many Christmases together as we followed his football career across the country.*

*From the outset I felt that I had gained another daughter and Sophie a sister and best friend. Such a best friend! In fact, when Jodi threw her wedding bouquet, Sophie caught it, much to the horror of her then boyfriend, and now husband, Craig, who was looking on. The relationship that Craig had with Jodi was a really special one and they were in constant contact. Coming from a family of 3 brothers, he found a sisterly bond in Jodi that will leave a huge void now she is no longer with us.*

*Jodi welcomed us and made us part of her family, and even though we lived so far away she always made a point of keeping us involved.*

*I can honestly say that couldn't have wished for a better relationship with my daughter in law and she will be so, so missed but always loved."*

She'd not been down here long when she was diagnosed with Hodgkins Lymphoma, a disease she fought hard and eventually beat. By then she was working at River Island, and for 6 months she alternated weeks when she had chemo, and weeks of going back to work. And it was at that time that Jamie proposed, so she had lots of plans to make for the future, enjoying ringing venues and suppliers, making comparisons, organising everything. And in her spare time, between working, chemo, and wedding planning, she bought cats. First Marley, then Lulu to keep Marley company, then Tito and finally Nellie. Oh yes, and there were the guinea pigs too – Pattie used to breed them, so Jodi ended up with a couple.

Inspired by the growing number of their friends who were having children, particularly Anth and Emma, Jodi and Jamie decided they

wanted a family, though they were warned that the treatments that Jodi had undergone might frustrate them. But finally Jodi got pregnant. After trying for so long, they were both completely in shock – she did several pregnancy tests because they couldn't believe it – and they were delighted by how smoothly the pregnancy and birth went (perhaps because she banned all ball games within 10 yards of her while she was pregnant). And they loved being parents. They loved the purpose and focus that parenthood brought to their lives. The joy and happiness was beyond anything they could have imagined, and, not long after moving to their new house, Oscar joined the family, a planned baby who made a speedy arrival and was instantly a fantastic member of the family, making their world feel “complete and perfect”. Her youngest sister, Sarah, says that Jodi will be a role model for her in the future, because she was “the best Mum she’s ever seen”.

There were great family holidays, particularly in Dubai, the last one with Robbie and Sam, who Jodi also welcomed into the family and with whom she formed a close bond – the fact she and Sam shared a passion for Mulberry handbags probably helped!

Jodi was super-organised. She planned everything, then double and triple planned it, and then recorded the fact it had been done. Jodi lived by her lists, and even when she was in hospital, she kept up her lists, plans and instructions.

But she could be charmingly vulnerable too. She got separated from the rest of the family when cycling at Centreparks, and when Jamie went out to look for her, he found her crying under a tree, lost and miserable. And her planning ahead occasionally failed – Jo and Rob remember having to go on a mercy-dash shop for knickers after Jodi found that the ones she had bought for her wedding were too big for her.

She was a great boss. The tributes from the people she worked with tell us that. Here are just a few of them: “Jodi was always a pleasure to work with and made me always enjoy my days. Funny, caring, strong, beautiful woman.” “We worked together at River and spent many

evenings talking. I don't think I've ever met anyone as kind hearted and beautiful inside and out". "Jodi was one of the kindest people that I had the pleasure to work with and socialize with". And "She really was the best manager and I will treasure the memories I have of her always".

Jodi was diagnosed with the cancer which killed her just over a year ago, and was told it was likely she only had a year to live, which turned out to be a horribly accurate prediction. She showed the same bravery as before, giving herself milestones along the way – being around for Macy's first day at school, seeing her nephew for the first time, even though it meant hours of painful and exhausting travel, finding out that Hannah was expecting a boy, and getting home for a couple of hours at Christmas. But in the end, even Jodi couldn't triumph over cancer this time.

Jamie has written these words which he has asked me to read:

*"Where do I start? The most inspirational and bravest person I've ever had the honour of meeting and I also got to marry you. My heart is broken, not just that you're not here, but I just wanted more time. I keep looking back at old photos of you and it seems like you've been ill for so long that I almost forgot how beautiful you were. Some would say I was punching above my weight!*

*It was Jodi who pushed me back to college to re-train, Jodi who supported me setting up my own business, Jodi who held our family together. There's nothing she wouldn't have done for us. We were her world, and she was ours.*

*It's only been a few weeks but I'd sacrifice myself to a life time of your nagging to bring you back.*

*Not only was she an amazing wife but an amazing mum and also the greatest friend. I'm proud that I got to call you my wife and will be forever proud that you put up such a fight when everything*

*was against you. I'll love you forever and I'll make sure Macy and Oscar know how much of a legend their mummy was."*

Of course, she was beautiful. Even with no hair, even at the end, she was always beautiful. The bonny baby had become a beautiful woman. Wasn't she lovely?