

Brother recalls Maxfield's spirituality

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The youngest of seven children, Andrew Maxfield lived at Gardner Place in Leominster his whole life before moving in with his parents, Edgar and Margaret, to Lancaster Avenue in Lunenburg a year ago. Attendants, who became close friends, helped him with everyday routines.

His brother Michael called Andrew a spiritual person and compared him with a saint, saying he always found time to sit, meditate and pray.

"He had this presence and stillness. He was one of the best listeners in the world," Michael Maxfield said. "Invariably, we used him to talk about our own days and troubles. He would nod and say comforting words."

Andrew Maxfield also loved to paint, using bold colors like his favorite surrealist painter, Salvador Dali.

Even though sometimes Maxfield could barely move his hands, his paintings do not show any hint of his illness.

"He would use one hand to push the other when painting," Michael Maxfield said while pointing to an intricately detailed ink drawing. "He was an excellent visionary painter."

By the time the disease ravaged his whole body, he would still paint using his mouth, relatives said.

One of his color pencil drawings titled "Two of a Kind" still hangs in Leominster Public Library meeting room. Others can be viewed at the Massachusetts headquarters of the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

Maxfield spearheaded several MDA fund-raisers



PHOTO COURTESY MAXFIELD FAMILY

Andrew Maxfield often went to Rockwell Pond in Leominster to meditate.

at local venues like the Knights of Columbus. He brought local musicians — Johnny Moore, Mark Marquis and Jane Miller — together for benefits, and he hosted art and variety benefits.

Michael Maxfield said his youngest brother loved rock 'n' roll and could be found listening to the Rolling Stones while at his computer.

"He could only move a little bit ... and with just that little movement he grooved," Michael Maxfield said.

He raised several thousand dollars toward researching muscular dystrophy, which placed him in leg braces at age 5 and in a wheelchair at age 10.

"He was always thinking about other people," said his father.

Andrew Maxfield also authored a computer program for an on-screen keyboard for the handicapped.

He would spend hours at

his computer once his illness set in, using a joystick and a stick in his mouth to play golf games online.

Before Maxfield died, he brought each family member into his hospital room to talk.

"His eyes were so clear, his presence so strong. It was astonishing," Michael Maxfield said. "It was as if he had one foot in Heaven."

Edgar Maxfield said that even at Andrew's weakest moment, his son never mentioned his illness to others.

"Not once did he ever complain about anything," Edgar Maxfield said.

Brother-in-law Gerry Albert quickly added: "Even to his last breath."

Funeral services for Andrew Maxfield will be held today at 10 a.m. at St. Leo's Church, 128 Main St., Leominster. Burial will follow in St. Leo's Cemetery.

Memorial donations can be made to Our Father's House, 53 Lunenburg St., Fitchburg.