

# **A FATHER'S LOVE LASTS FOREVER: Scott Hunter reflects about his cherished son, Zack**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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**ALTON - Scott and Sarah Hunter** and their family have endured what no one wants to encounter – the sudden, tragic death of one of their children.

On Friday, there was a funeral Mass at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Alton for **Zack Hunter**. Zack died at noon on Sunday, April 17, from injuries sustained in a car accident earlier in the month. Zack and a friend were returning from a tennis workout session at Principia College when the terrible accident occurred.

The question parents throughout the region kept asking themselves since Sunday when Zack died is how do you cope with losing a 16-year-old son?

**Scott Hunter** had a simple answer in regard to the question for his family: “Only through our faith.”

“I believe without faith in God I would have just been angry and turned to anger,” he said. “I don't know how anyone makes it through something like this without faith. It made me realize what my daughters are going through. I think our faith pulled us together so we could go through this as a family.”

Scott said he and his wife and family have a strong Catholic faith.

“We have a strong faith that has never wavered,” he said. “I have never prayed as hard as I did since his accident. To see other family members praying Catholic prayers with him is pretty touching. We prayed a lot with a rosary when he was in the hospital.”

Scott said because of his wife’s leadership and Catholic convictions, he has adopted them and now is in complete unison with her. The two have been married for almost two decades and “are very tight,” he said.

The little aggravations, burdens and challenges people go through are nothing when you go through something like this, he said.

“Unfortunately, all of us go through the motions every day and it is sad it takes something like this to awaken people,” he said. “People should tell everybody they love them every day and never hold back.”

Several fellow hockey players dressed in their jerseys and others close to Zack carried his casket on Friday at St. Mary’s Catholic Church. The funeral at St. Mary’s Church in Alton was filled with the Hunter’s family and friends of all ages. The service was extremely moving with multiple priests and many high school age students in attendance.

Zack was a top-notch athlete, playing both tennis and hockey. The community had rallied around Zack with prayer vigils. Ultimately, there was a balloon release in his memory at East Alton Ice Rink. Edwardsville, Jersey, Granite City, Collinsville tennis teams all showed their support to Zack wearing T-shirts in his memory in recent matches.

Zack’s father said his son was a “super smart kid” with “great hand-eye coordination.”

“His hand-eye coordination skills were just amazing,” he said. “Nothing came hard to the kid. If he was going to put passion into something, he had it. For me, he was my buddy. He liked everything I liked – cars, hockey, sports, and watching sports.”

Scott and Zack were the typical father and son who loved to go fishing together.

“He would ask me non stop, let’s go fishing,” Scott said. “He just wanted to play all the time. If I was on the couch, he would say, ‘come on dad, get up.’”

Zack’s father said he is changed forever by the loss of his son at such a young age.

“We want our son back,” he said. “We know that is not going to happen, so you try to pull the good out of the situation. A lot of good things are happening because of all of this with the transplants and how all the prayer is changing people. All the little things in life seem to be nothing when something like this happens.”

Zack was “a great kid,” his father said. “I know through my life I have always made it a point to tell my kids I love them. I used to grab his head and kiss him on the forehead at church. I know he didn’t like that, but now I am glad I did it.”

Scott said one thing his mother taught him is a person can’t run from anything and it is better to face everything head on. His mom taught him that with any problem in life the worst thing is to run. So for her, he said he also has to remain strong.

The key motivation now for Scott Hunter to remain a strong leader for his family is his son, Zack.

“I can’t let my son down,” he said. “I have to be strong for his mom and sisters. I have to be strong and move forward.”

“I will cherish the 16 and a half years I had with him and all the experiences I had with him,” his dad said.







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