Joel Esperanza
(1971-2015)

Joel passed away peacefully with his wife Becky at his side on June 15, 2015.

Having an interest in science and art from a young age, Joel received a BFA in Scientific Illustration from the University of Georgia in 1993, followed by a MFA in Medical and Biological Illustration from the University of Michigan in 1996. After several years working as a medical illustrator, he shifted his professional focus towards academia, ultimately earning his PhD in Education from Capella University in 2012. In 2001, Joel joined the faculty of American Intercontinental University (AIU), holding several positions, including Associate Professor, Associate Dean of Design, and culminating in the position of Program Chair in Visual Communication. He was admired and respected within the educational field, earning several leadership and educator awards from AIU, the Career Education Corporation, and the Epsilon Pi Tau Honor Society for Technology.

In addition to his focus on academia, Joel kept a strong connection to the field of medical illustration. He earned the status of Certified Medical Illustrator in 1999, and regularly attended the Association of Medical Illustrator’s Annual Meeting. He held several AMI volunteer positions, including Salon Judge, Artists Rights Committee Member, and speaker at the AMI’s Annual Meeting in 2001.

An Atlanta native, Joel was an avid Georgia Bulldogs fan. He also found a creative outlet through acting. He attended acting school in Atlanta and in Brussels, Belgium, where he lived for a time with his wife, Becky. He appeared onstage with the OTC Comedy Troup in Atlanta, and in television and film.

Joel’s kindness and uplifting spirit will be remembered fondly by all those whose lives he touched, as an educator, colleague, and friend.

Text provided by Jill Gregory and Images provided by Becky Handforth