

Updated: Reno man, 44, dies after pulling son from rip tide in Mexico

By Jaclyn O'Malley • jomalley@rgj.com • June 30, 2010

A 44-year-old Reno father and medical clinic administrator died Tuesday afternoon in a tragic drowning accident in Mexico, after his family said he saved his son caught in a rip tide, and then re-entered the water in an attempt to rescue a child also struggling in the turbulent waters.

Family and friends are calling Gary A. Sorge a hero for his bravery and life-saving efforts.

Sorge had been on a family vacation in Cabo San Lucas when he was alerted to screams from his 12-year-old son, Trenton, who was caught in a rip tide, said his brother, Jeff Sorge, who did not go on the trip.

He said after his brother saved Trenton, he and a group of other people went into the water to rescue a child nearby, also in trouble. But as the group returned safely to shore with the child, Gary Sorge never came back.

His body was soon found, and he was taken to a hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Jeff Sorge said an autopsy was being done on his brother Wednesday, and few other details about the incident were still not known. His mother, who was with his brother on the trip, had called him Tuesday with preliminary information. It was not known Wednesday the specific area where the incident took place. The family was working on arrangements to bring his body back to Reno.

Gary Sorge had been the administrator of Digestive Health Associates in Reno, and had previously worked as an administrator for Saint Mary's Regional Medical Center. He earned a Masters Degree from University of Nevada, Reno.

He leaves behind his wife, Kelly, sons Trenton, 12, Connor, 15, and Trevor, 1, and many other family members. Gary Sorge was very popular, and had many friends.

On June 17 Gary Sorge turned 44.

His reputation amongst his friends was that he was a trusted buddy, who had a passion for life and fun. He was never down, and was meticulous in researching new purchases or ideas.

Jeff Sorge said his brother was very athletic, and was an avid mountain climber and biker. He said he doesn't understand how his brother could have died in the water, given his supreme fitness.

"He was a wonderful guy," Jeff Sorge said of his brother, who with his wife had taken many adventure trips outside the country. "He really had it all together (with his career and family). There's not one person you could find who would say a bad thing about him."

Gary Sorge's best friend of 26 years, Court Cardinal, said he can't imagine life without him. The pair met as freshman at UNR. They both enjoyed adrenalin sports such as mountain climbing and race car driving. Recently, Gary Sorge got back into racing cars, even winning his class during an event last year.

"The smile on his face when we would race cars, the look of joy drinking a great bottle of wine or sample the perfect barbecue (with extra garlic of course), the joy his sons and family brought him and the happiness that he imparted on all that were around

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him," Cardinal said of what he will miss of his friend. "To say Gary will be missed is a gross understatement. To say that the people's lives that Gary touched are for the better of it would be the truth.

"To my best friend, I love you man," he said. "You left us a hero."

Contributions can be made at First Independent Bank of Nevada to account number 71027627.



Gary Sorge and his son, Connor. (Provided by the Sorge family)

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