**John C. Panuski Memorial Scholarship**

“Strange, isn’t it? Each man’s life touches so many other lives. When he isn’t around he leaves an awful hole, doesn’t he?” -Clarence the Angel, “It’s a Wonderful Life”

Life’s journey doesn’t always go as planned, and that is what faced the Panuski family when their loving father and husband passed away tragically and unexpectedly. The Panuski’s went from being a family of six to a family of five in the blink of an eye, after losing their patriarch, John C. Panuski.

John passed away at the age of 43 on March 11, 2003. John graduated from The Pennsylvania State University Class of 1981 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Logistics. Saturdays in the Panuski household were known for watching Penn State football. John was known for his magnetic personality and sense of humor. He was a memorable storyteller, finding a way to retell even the most mundane story, and have everyone in his presence laughing. It was not uncommon when John was out with his family in the community that he would run into someone he knew, no matter where they were at the time.

John was very much a family man, enjoying nightly dinners with his wife Anita and their four children, Adrienne, Amanda, John, and Alecia. John and Anita celebrated and recognized every milestone of their children’s lives. Birthdays were celebrated with big parties, inviting extended family and friends to their home. Holidays were rich in family traditions, their house filled with joy, laughter and family. Some of his children’s best memories with John came from the annual beach vacations to the Jersey Shore and camping on weekends in the camper the family owned when the children were younger. Every family trip was exciting and special, filled with things to do and many, many pictures to look back on.

While John’s unexpected passing was devastating to his wife and children, it never deterred any of them from pushing forward. John’s wife Anita returned to the work force after being a stay-at-home mom for years to be the sole provider for her family. Anita became the guiding beacon for her children to persevere and continue to follow their dreams. John had a strong interest in his children’s academics and extracurricular activities, and Anita was dedicated to carrying on that legacy. He stressed the importance of doing well in school and going to college. That mindset stuck with his children and along with their mother Anita’s influence, all four of them became Wyoming Area graduates and all four followed their father’s footsteps and continued on to The Pennsylvania State University, graduating with degrees.

Adrienne, graduated from Wyoming Area in 2004 and The Pennsylvania State University Class of 2008 with a Bachelor of Science in Business Management. She is currently employed as a corporate trainer for a government contract agency.

Amanda, graduated from Wyoming Area in 2005, The Pennsylvania State University Class of 2009 with a Bachelor of Science in Communication Sciences and Disorders, and Bloomsburg University Class of 2011 with a Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology. She is currently employed as a speech language pathologist in a public school.

John, graduated from Wyoming Area in 2008 and The Pennsylvania State University Class of 2012 with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. He is currently employed as a central reliability team leader at a construction products manufacturer.  John’s wife, Danielle Vespaziani, graduated from Spring-Ford School District in 2011, York College of Pennsylvania Class of 2015 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice and is currently enrolled in The Pennsylvania State University Master of Professional Studies in Criminal Justice Policy and Administration with an anticipated graduation of May 2023. She currently works in state government.

Alecia, graduated from Wyoming Area in 2011, The Pennsylvania State University Class of 2015 with Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Bachelor of Arts in History, and The Pennsylvania State University Class of 2017 Master of Professional Studies in Community and Economic Development. She is currently employed as a fundraiser for higher education.

After assisting her four children achieve their accomplishments, Anita proudly retired from the banking industry in August 2022.

The Panuski family is beyond grateful to honor their father’s life with this scholarship. The Wyoming Area community assisted the Panuski family during their darkest hour and greatest time of need. They are so grateful to have this opportunity to assist a student who also went through hardship, achieve their post-secondary goals and aspirations.

**John C. Panuski Memorial Scholarship Criteria:** Can be awarded to a senior who has been accepted to a trade, technical school, community college, or a 2- or 4-year college or university.

**Essay Prompt:** In a solid essay of at least 500 words discuss the following: Tell us your story. What hardship have you experienced in your lifetime that has shaped who you are today? How did it impact you and what did you learn from the experience?