



When the Whiting family gathered on the evening of May 24, 2016, they were overwhelmed by the sudden death of their son and brother, Coleman. At only 24 years of age, he was simply gone too soon. Through their shock and grief, they consoled themselves with one question: **What would Coleman want?**

Diagnosed with epilepsy in adolescence, Coleman had spent much of his life under the care of neurologists—which included being prescribed numerous pharmaceutical seizure medications over the years. By the age of 20 however, cannabis was emerging as a legitimate option for the treatment of seizure disorders. His decision to invite his dad, Jerry, to lunch and toss his medical marijuana authorization on the table was a timely turning point in not just the conversation surrounding Coleman’s health, but the beginning of a beautiful business opportunity. As Jerry said to Coleman, “I don’t know much about it, but Marty Lee is staying with us during HEMPFEST in a few weeks.”

Having Marty Lee, aka Martin A. Lee, who happens to be the author of *Smoke Signals: A Social History of Marijuana*, give you a six-day crash course on the ins and outs of CBDs will get you up to speed on the medical cannabis movement right quick. Thus began a personal and professional endeavor that would lead Coleman and Jerry into their next relationship: business partners. Over the coming years the two would found LeBlanc CNE, a medical cannabis company with an emphasis on CBD genetics. Meanwhile, Coleman’s presence in the medical cannabis community in Seattle was growing—when he wasn’t busy running CO2 extraction units at Green Lion, he was a well-known face in organizations such as the Coalition for Cannabis Standards & Ethics and The Cannabis Alliance. Working as a budtender and manager at Herban Legends only furthered his reputation in the industry, where his style and spirit never went unnoticed.

And then, amidst so much joy and progress, Coleman unexpectedly lost his life. Following a regular appointment with his neurologist, he returned to his car and suffered a fatal seizure known as SUDEP—sudden unexplained death in epilepsy. While the shock traveled through Coleman’s large circle of family and friends, outpourings of love and hope nonetheless began to shine through the tragedy. It’s safe to say that’s exactly what Coleman would want.

While Coleman is no longer here with us, it now feels as if he’s everywhere. Posters and t-shirts throughout the community keep his uniquely stylish look fresh in our minds. Shoutouts at concerts all over Seattle keep his name in our conversations. And the Coleman Whiting Memorial Fund through Project CBD keeps his beautiful spirit alive and well—where all donations made will go to support economically disadvantaged patients who are in need of CBD-rich cannabis treatment.

When the Whiting family gathered together the evening that Coleman passed away, and found the strength to ask, "What would Coleman want?" they may have not realized just how quickly answers would start to appear. As Jerry concluded, "We're watching in utter amazement as Coleman lives on through the loving efforts of those he loved. He was my son, my business partner and my best friend."

Rest in peace, Coleman. Your spirit shines on.