Jeffrey Vandergrift: a Bay Area icon



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PHOTO COURTESY OF JEREMY MARTIN

(Left to Right) Selena, Rico, Spartan Daily Senior Staff Writer Jeremy Martin, and Jeffrey Vandergrift pose for a photo at Martin's cousin's house in 2012.

Listening to "The JV Show" every morning on Wild 94.9 introduced me to a group of people that are just as unique as they are charismatic. JV particularly opened my eyes and taught me what it means to have an outlet, to reflect your own personality through.

He taught me that a person can captivate the entire Bay Area with their own charm, every time I heard his voice on the radio.

One of the Bay Area's biggest icons, Jeffrey Vandergrift, a DJ on the Bay Area's own Wild 94.9 radio station in San Francisco, was found dead at 55 years old, on Wed. March 22, according to a 2023 article from NBC Bay Area.

Vandergrift, had been missing since Feb. 23, and was last seen at his San Francisco home, on King Street, according to the same article.

In lieu of his death, many news outlets have been bringing awareness to lyme disease, which Vandergrift had struggled with for years.

JV grew up in Fremont and became drawn to radio during his time at American High School, according to the Wild 94.9 website.

According to the site, Vandergrift acquired his own show called "The Dog House" by the age of 25 and continued to work as a regular on the station's "The JV Show," along with co-host Selena and former "Dog House" member Graham. His wife Natasha Yi joined the crew later on.

Vandergrift was an icon and a staple to the morning routine of listeners across the Bay Area, myself included.

He would always make it just a little bit easier to get through the morning.

Being able to listen to the show and hear him make jokes on air would add a little bit more personality to my morning routine and make my experience getting ready for the day more fun.

The show actually made me look forward to waking up in the morning and getting ready for school.

I discovered Wild 94.9 during my time in junior high school.

During that time, I had an increased interest in music and following local radio stations in the Bay Area.

I had started listening to the station, having enjoyed a lot of pop and hip-hop hits back in 2010.

In 2012, my cousin had won a couple invitations to parties through the station, one of which was a playoff party during the game between the 49ers and the Giants, leading up to the Superbowl that year.

During the party, Vandergrift, Yi, along with both Selena and then cast member Rico, came to my cousin's house with a number of other Wild 94.9 affiliates on Jan 22, 2012.

Rico was also a staple to "The JV Show" at that time, according to a May 14, 2013 Facebook post by Wild 94.9.

Vandergrift, Selena and Rico all watched the game with us, as my family partied with them and they had served as the DJs for the party.

At the time, I was mesmerized.

I couldn't believe that the same people I had listened to on the radio days prior were right in front of me.

Vandergrift particularly made a huge impact.

Seeing him party with all of us really put into perspective just how nice and caring a person he really is.

Vandergrift had an amazing spirit and really made everyone at the party, including myself, feel like we were best friends that day.

It was as if we had known him all our lives.

He welcomed all of us with open arms and had the best time possible.

I had even gotten pictures with Vandergrift, along with both Selena and Rico.

After having such an awesome time that night and seeing just how positive they all were, I will never forget the time we got to spend with everyone, especially Vandergrift.

From then on, I continued to listen to the station off and on throughout the years.

I still make a point to listen to Wild 94.9 to this day.

Wild 94.9 has always been and will continue to be one of my favorite radio stations.

However, listening to the station will never be the same.

I could be having the worst day and one quick flip to "The JV Show" could immediately brighten up my mood.

Vandergrift made the show extremely special.

To hear him interact with his fellow cast members and crack jokes on air would give an elevated degree of personality to the show.

He knew just how to make listeners across the Bay Area smile and laugh every morning.

The reach that he had and the impact he made on listeners was immense.

He will forever be a Bay Area icon.

After Vandergrift's passing, Wild 94.9 made a tribute to the late radio DJ and stated that the morning show would continue under the name "The JV Show," according to a March 24, 2023 podcast of the show.

Fans of the show left flowers, photos and candles in a memorial outside of the station's San Francisco Studio, according to the same NBC Bay Area article.

Jeffrey Vandergrift, otherwise known as JV, will forever be missed and never forgotten.

Thank you JV for all the fun that day, all the memories and all the laughs every morning.

I will never forget you.

For anyone who may be struggling or if anyone you may know is going through tough times, call the Suicide and Crisis lifeline at 988.

Alternatively, you can call the previous line for the National Suicide Prevention lifeline at 800-273-8255, or text HOME to 741741.

For any additional resources, you can also visit SpeakingOfSuicide.com/resources.

To find more resources and more information about the battle against lyme disease, visit BayAreaLyme.org.

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