



Dzhoy Zuckerman

November 30, 1995 - July 15, 2023

Dzhoy Zuckerman, 27, free spirit and bicycling enthusiast, was fatally shot while cycling home in the early morning of July 15, 2023. Police have not yet confirmed the circumstances of their death.

Dzhoy (they/them/their) found their happy place on the bike trails and streets in and around Washington, DC, usually in the company of or in close contact with dozens of fellow bicyclists and jugglers. Their enthusiasm and passion for whatever they were doing were noted by all who came in contact with them, as was the image of them happily zipping by throughout the city on their purple bike, wearing their purple helmet.

Dzhoy Burakevich Zuckerman was born on November 30, 1995 in Bobrovitsya, Ukraine, and in 2004, at the age of 8, they and their younger brother Asif were adopted from a children's home in Gorodnya. Their adoptive father, Don Zuckerman, met them the previous year during a cultural exchange program for children awaiting adoption, and 14 months later brought them back to Takoma Village Cohousing, their new home in DC.

Growing up, Dzhoy was always up to something with their hands. They mastered magic and card tricks at an early age, then the Rubik's cube in its many iterations. They loved paper crafts like origami and kirigami, and made many dozens of friendship bracelets which they distributed freely. Board and strategy games became a focus as well - anything to keep their fingers and mind engaged.

As they got older, Dzhoy was always surrounded by neighborhood kids who loved their energy and creativity. Dzhoy would introduce them to craft skills, make and fly paper airplanes, chase or be chased, and was great at tossing kids up in the air. They took this same energy onto the soccer field, first with the Takoma Park Neighborhood Youth Soccer League, and later with the Stoddert Club, Montgomery Travel Soccer, and on school soccer teams.

Dzhoy thrived in the summers. They loved going to art and soccer camps, and YMCA Camp Letts was a destination for many years, initially as a camper and then as a CIT and counselor. Dzhoy also possessed an acute intelligence and had a voracious appetite for gathering information of all sorts. They were accepted into STEM programs with the Center for Talented Youth and GEMS (Gains in the Education of Mathematics and Science) programs, studying subjects like Advanced Probability and Cryptography. Dzhoy graduated from The School Without Walls in 2015 and moved into various jobs, including working as an assistant teacher at an early childhood education center, in a game and puzzle store, in bike stores, and most recently adored their job as as a bicycle courier for several different downtown companies.

During their high school years Dzhoy became serious about honing their juggling skills, mastering balls and clubs, multiple ball cascades, then passes with multiple partners, and was central in the development of a weekly Sunday Circus group that met at DC's Meridian Hill Park on Sunday afternoons. Dzhoy was known to be a demanding yet encouraging teacher who pushed fellow jugglers to rise to their full potential.

Dzhoy delighted in playful time with their son, Charlie Nguyen, who lives with their former partner, Jennifer Nguyen. Charlie's face always lit up at the sight of his daddy, and after engaging in energetic play time together or learning magic tricks and board games, they both got a kick out of phone apps that made their faces look like cartoon animals.

Dzhoy most recently found their people and passion in the bicycling community of Washington, DC. They were a proud member of the LGBTQIA2S+ community and used they/them pronouns. Dzhoy's enthusiasm was contagious and fueled the community, and was known to many as their "gas." Dzhoy maintained an active presence on social media and their purple bicycle made appearances all over DC in their postings. If Dzhoy believed in your cause, they were the first to like and promote it.

Dzhoy created a 34.6-mile ride called 'The Purple Line Ride' that looped the DC metro area. They were also fundamental in the planning and execution of numerous group rides, and was a frequent rider with several clubs, including DC Critical Mass, DC Queer Bike Rides, Bikes Not Bombs, and Call Her Daddy. As a veteran DC Bike Party volunteer, Dzhoy was a regular at Tour De Bike Lane and many other DC bike community events. If Dzhoy wasn't racing in an alleycat or local race, they were always willing to volunteer and support other cyclists.

In addition to their father, brother, and son, Dzhoy is survived by their partner Cathryn (Cat) Smith, their beloved cats Butters and Toast, and their godmother Alicia George, plus many aunts, uncles and cousins, neighbors, and a multitude of jugglers and cyclists who embraced them as a kindred spirit. The immediate family is grateful for the generous donations made to support Dzhoy's survivors, and to their friends who set up several memorial rides and a GoFundMe campaign, powerfully demonstrating how expansive and devoted Dzhoy's network of connections had become.

Dzhoy will live on forever in our hearts.