

Late Canucks beat reporter had roots in Aurora

By Jake Courtepatte

A familiar face among the Vancouver Canucks community, beat writer Jason Botchford passed away suddenly of heart failure last weekend, leaving the hockey world in mourning.

A writer with The Athletic Vancouver, and more popularly previously with The Province newspaper in Vancouver, it was his upbringing in Aurora that first brought Botchford to the offices of the Toronto Sun.

Born in Aurora in 1971, Botchford's keen eye for detail and affinity for bipartisanship made him a star at Centennial College's advanced journalism program, earning a position at the Sun shortly after.

He moved to Vancouver in 2005 as a news reporter for The Province, quickly converting to the Canucks beat.

Support for his family came pouring out from the hockey world shortly after his passing.

"I am shattered," said Jeff Paterson, his partner on his weekly podcast, on Twitter. "Just sitting here in a daze. I have lost the best podcasting partner a guy could ask for. Botch was also a friend, colleague, travelling companion & a driving force in Canucks coverage. So many great memories. My sincerest sympathy to his family."

"Jason was an incredibly passionate and dedicated reporter who connected with Canucks fans everywhere," said the Canucks organization in a press release. "His loss is heart-breaking for us all. The Botchford family is in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time."

"Even though our time collaborating was brief, I'm thankful I had the chance to get to know Jason this season," said James Mirtle, head of The Athletic. "I've been in this business nearly 20 years, and I've never worked with anyone quite like him. We built a strong connection in a short period of time, in part because we realized we both came up as outsiders in our markets and in the business and found a way to do things a little differently and find success."

One ray of light to appear from the tragedy has been the community's ability to rally behind the Botchford family, which includes Botchford's wife Kathryn as well as two daughters and one son.

A GoFundMe page was set up the

day after news broke of Botchford's passing, and has raised more than \$90,000 since its inception, something Kathryn said had her "deeply touched" in a statement released by the family.

Any Aurora residents looking to contribute can find the page at www.gofundme.com/supporting-the-botchford-family.