



Arthur Dale Cleveland

February 27, 1957 - August 11, 2018

Arthur Dale Cleveland, 61, died on August 11, 2018. He was born February 27, 1957 in Tallahassee, Florida, the first son to Arthur D. “Jinks” Cleveland and Billie Ann Williams Cleveland. Throughout his life, Art had a passion for music, believed that children were important and crucial to the world, and had a deep love and loyalty for his family, friends, and Florida State Football, even through the Jeff Bowden years.

Art grew up in Tallahassee, alongside his little brother, Brett Cleveland, and eventually, his much younger little sister, Caren Cleveland Odom. He was baptized in East Hill Baptist Church and grew to be a Royal Ambassador there. Throughout his life, Art could recite the Royal Ambassador Pledge. Music became central to Art’s faith and life. During high school, he sang in East Hill’s Revelation group. In 1981 he joined his brother’s singing group, Southern Churchmen, and “toured” North Florida with Mike Smith, Stacey Mills, Dave Williams, Jack Chason, David Griffith and accompanist Karen Willes. At Godby High School he played saxophone in the band and was drum major his senior year. Through the camaraderie of music, church, and play, he maintained lifelong friendships with boys in his neighborhood, church, and high school.

Art was a practicing Christian throughout his life and sought church membership in every community in which he lived: Lakeside Baptist Church in

Lakeland, Florida; Deer Park Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, and First Presbyterian Church in Tallahassee, Florida. In each congregation he served: as a deacon, as an elder, as a choir member, as a Sunday School teacher and youth group advisor. His faith was full of joy. He sometimes joked more than he sang bass in the choir and he always laughed at the thought of Jesus as a mischievous badger. Most importantly, he knew that Brother Will Campbell spoke the truth when he said, "We're all bastards, but God loves us anyway."

Art married the love of his life, Peggy Wright, on May 21, 1983, in East Hill Baptist Church. Peggy and Art met while attending Florida State University's Baptist Campus Ministry, became best friends and fell in love. Art and Peggy had four daughters: Anna Cleveland, Lillian Cleveland, Eleanor Cleveland, and Abigail Cleveland. Art's greatest joy in life was being a father to these vibrant young women. He never missed a dance, viola, violin or cello recital; soccer game or chorus concert; honors ceremony, graduation or art show, and he was always thrilled to be there, even through ten different painfully slow variations of "Jingle Bells."

Art was a Licensed and Board Certified Clinical Social Worker who specialized in Child and Adolescent Play Therapy, with a private practice of his own for twenty years after working in the behavioral health practice of Consultative Pediatrics for fifteen years. He received both his Bachelors and Masters of Social Work from Florida State University. Additionally, he was an advanced graduate of the FSU/LSU Harris Institute of Infant Mental Health. He believed and preached that "play is the work of children." While pregnant with their first daughter, Peggy gave Art a book entitled *The Nurturing Father* by Kyle Pruitt, M.D. It was the first book Art had ever seen about the importance of fathers in the lives of children. As a clinician, Art visited many preschools and elementary schools. At each visit children asked whose daddy he was, tugged at Art's pant leg, pulled on his arm, showed Art their work, and asked him to

play. Art became convinced that Dr. Pruitt was correct in his belief that children look for father figures everywhere.

Art asked himself questions:

How can we as a society help fathers learn to nurture their children?

What could he do as a child therapist and the father of four?

How could he take Pruitt's research and make a difference in the lives of fathers and children?

Later Art developed a successful program to educate and inspire fathers, the DADS Project. For ten years, Art taught over 4000 fathers the tools needed to make an impact in the lives of their children, utilizing one of the initial grants in the Fatherhood Initiative from the Office of Governor Lawton Chiles.

Art also served the profession as the Treasurer of the Florida Association for Marriage and Family Therapy for eight years and as the President of the Tallahassee Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. He contributed as a consultant to the Capital Area Head Start and as a Board Member of the First Presbyterian Preschool. He was an Association of Play Therapy board member who thoroughly enjoyed the conferences and board meetings, where he got to play, discuss the importance of play, plan the training of future play therapists, and drink scotch with lots of women. He never thought it was bad to be the only male in the room (and he often was). "You've got to play, to make it today," was an often heard chorus in reference to Art's work. Art made a difference in the lives of many children and their families through his life work of "play."

Art is preceded in death by his father, Jinks Cleveland. He is survived by his wife, Peggy Wright-Cleveland; his four daughters, Anna Elizabeth Cleveland (partner Jacob Kline), Lillian Margaret Cleveland, Eleanor Irene Cleveland, Abigail Grace Cleveland; his mother Billie Cleveland; and his siblings, Brett

Cleveland (wife Debbie Cleveland) and Caren Cleveland Odom (husband Shawn Odom, daughters Eliza and Sloane Odom). Art's greatest strength was friendship and loyalty, and because of that, and because of the life-changing work he did, there are many who will miss him. However, his love for Florida State Football and sports, passion for children, social justice, and the occasional pessimistic attitude will live on in his daughters: Anna, Lillian, Eleanor, and Abigail.

The family will receive friends from 5:00PM until 7:00PM on Friday, August 17th at Bevis Funeral Home, 200 John Knox Road in Tallahassee. The memorial service will be held at 11:00AM on Saturday, August 18th at First Presbyterian Church, 110 N. Adams Street in Tallahassee. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that a donation be given to the Art Cleveland Play Therapy Endowment: Perpetuating a Legacy of Caring for Children through the College of Social Work at Florida State University, a scholarship for future play therapists. (<https://csw.fsu.edu/article/art-cleveland-play-therapy-endowment-perpetuating-legacy-caring-children>). Alternately, a donation may be made to First Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee, Florida at www.oldfirstchurch.org or 110 N. Adams Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32301.

Kelly Barber of Bevis Funeral Home (850/385-2193 or www.bevisfh.com) is assisting the Cleveland family with their arrangements.

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 17. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Bevis Funeral Home & Crematory
200 John Knox Rd
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 385-2193

Memorial Service

AUG 18. 11:00 AM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church
110 North Adams Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Reception

AUG 18. 11:45 AM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church
110 North Adams Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Tribute Wall

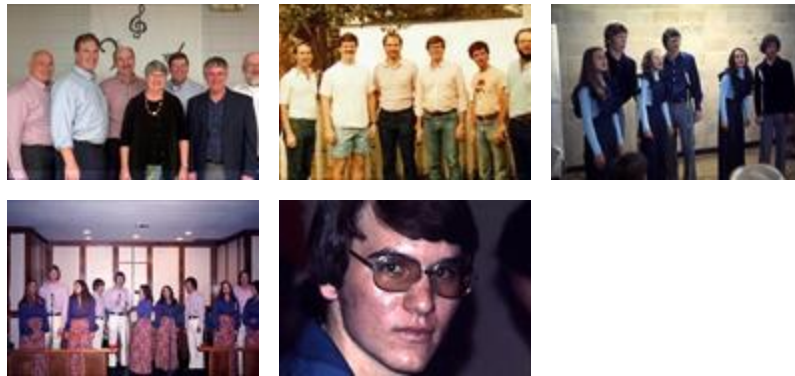
WB

“ He was a great co-worker with all of us while at the PACE PROGRAM in Winter Haven. The CLEVE was great with the kids in the program, always there for support and advice. I'll always remember the Friday field trips and the staff get together, especially the canoe trips! You'll always be remembered as A PACER! Farewell and RIP my friend. PEACE. Wayne

wayne Bassarear - June 24, 2019 at 12:46 AM

JC

“ 6 files added to the album Memories Album



Jack Chason - August 17, 2018 at 06:49 AM

PW

Thanks for these pictures, Jack.

Peggy Wright-Cleveland - August 19, 2018 at 04:08 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Arthur Dale Cleveland.*



August 16, 2018 at 12:40 AM



“ *Such a beautiful obituary and a loving family! God bless you and keep u all!*

Michael Bartos - August 15, 2018 at 07:32 PM



“ *Art was a truly special person to me. He has been my confidant for many years, the person who could always make me laugh. I was very blessed to be able to call him family. I will deeply miss our chats. Art was a dear friend that will always be in my heart. My thoughts and prayer are with you all.*

Laura Mason - August 15, 2018 at 06:05 PM

RP

“ Dear Mrs. Cleveland:

My deepest condolences to you upon the passing of Art. My thoughts and prayers are with you during this sad time. I will always remember him fondly and have wonderful memories of the times spent with him when growing up. He leaves behind a wonderful family and I know you will all be a great source of comfort and support to one another.

With loving sympathy,

Robert Pullen

Robert Pullen - August 14, 2018 at 07:54 PM

LA

“ *I had the pleasure of working with him on several occasion through the FSU College of Social Work and I was struck by his dedication to the social work profession, his community, the children and families he served and the students he taught. His legacy of compassion and good works will ripple through all the individuals and communities he impacted. It was a pleasure to know him, if only briefly. I will remember him as a shining example of the values of social work and what it means to truly serve.*



Lauren Antista - August 14, 2018 at 03:40 PM



“ *Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Arthur Dale Cleveland.*



August 14, 2018 at 09:48 AM



“ *I always knew his work was excellent and found it an honor to be able to work with him on some of my patients. I will miss him*
Connie Speer

connie speer - August 14, 2018 at 06:20 AM



“ *When Art worked at Consultative Pediatrics there was a ongoing battle between Dr. Mary Beth Seay (Univ of Florida-gator) and Art (die-hard FSU fan) ...they had a little cage and a toy gator ...it was so much fun to listen to them as the gator was put in the cage if they lost that years football game or it got to stay out if they won...loved their interactions and spurt...love them both...what fun!!💕😊*

Liz Lewis - August 13, 2018 at 07:37 PM



“ *Janice Cooper Jones lit a candle in memory of Arthur Dale Cleveland*



Janice Cooper Jones - August 13, 2018 at 06:52 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Arthur Dale Cleveland.*



August 13, 2018 at 04:37 PM



“ *Trudy Barineau lit a candle in memory of Arthur Dale Cleveland*



Trudy Barineau - August 13, 2018 at 04:16 PM



“ *To have him as a friend was a blessing indeed. A rich friend.*

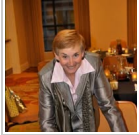
Ken Smith - August 13, 2018 at 04:14 PM



“ *His joy and enthusiasm for life always showed through and made me smile. It has been several years since I have been in his presence but his love for his work and family were always evident. My prayers are with his family.*



Heather Evans - August 13, 2018 at 03:39 PM

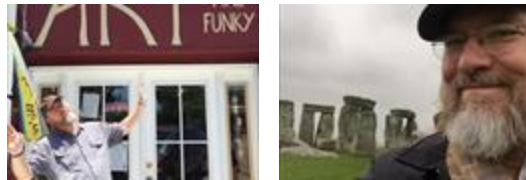


“ I remember double dating with Art and Peggy. Oh we were so young!!

Glenda Earwood - August 13, 2018 at 03:01 PM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Bevis Funeral Home - August 13, 2018 at 11:36 AM



Art served on the APT Board of Directors from 2012-2018, where he clearly placed service above self. We were all honored to serve with him, as he brought wisdom, a quiet and calm demeanor, and strong personal and professional convictions. His playful presence, wicked sense of humor, and positive character contributed to to the Board dynamics in a lasting way. He will be greatly missed. - APT Board of Directors & Staff

Kathryn Lebby - August 13, 2018 at 03:43 PM