



Thomas Nichols McHaffie

August 5, 1957 - March 4, 2024

Thomas Nichols McHaffie was freed from his earthly body on Monday, March 4th, 2024 after a 6 year battle with Parkinson's Disease in Tallahassee, Florida.

Born in Chicago, Illinois, on August 5th, 1957 Tom grew up in Hialeah, Florida. While a student and football player at Hialeah Miami Lakes High School he met the love of his life, Jacqueline McGill. Jackie and Tom both attended Florida State University and married on March 24th, 1979. Tom was a first generation college graduate, earning a Bachelor of Science in Criminology from FSU in 1980. During college he attended the Tallahassee Police Academy and then worked as an Officer for the Tallahassee Police Department. During his 45 year professional career, Tom excelled at many trades and held many licenses, including State of Florida Registered Building, Electrical, Roofing, and Air Conditioning Contractor Licenses and Electrical Contractor in the State of Georgia.

In 1986, with three kids in tow, he moved his family to Chicago, Illinois where he worked as an electrical contractor to provide for his family while earning his Master of Divinity from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in 1989. During this time he spent many afternoons coaching teams, pulling his children around on sleds behind his car in snowy parking lots, and procuring Italian sausages with his grandfather. Upon receiving his degree, Tom moved his family to Russell,

Pennsylvania, and served as a pastor at Cable Hollow Church. He always had a gift for ministering to others and he never shied away from a good conversation (debate) on the hard questions in life.

In 1991, he moved his family back to Tallahassee, Florida and was a successful entrepreneur in many ventures as a custom home building contractor, real estate broker, private investigator, and operations and facility services contractor. His success as an entrepreneur was vast and led to his membership in many professional associations. In 2013, he was appointed and served on the Florida Electrical Contractor's Licensing Board. In 2016, he expanded his expertise in Healthcare Facility and Project Management at Moffit Cancer Center and Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside Hospital in Jacksonville, Florida.

Tom's love of learning made him a gifted teacher and beloved professor. He was an adjunct instructor of Construction Technology at FAMU from 1983 through 1986, and an Electrical Instructor at Tallahassee Community College in 2007. From 2010-2013, he instructed and developed curriculum for Photovoltaics and worked as a Field Inspector at the Florida Solar Energy Center. His last and especially rewarding teaching experience was at Florida State University's Jim Moran College of Entrepreneurship from 2018-2023. At FSU, his vast experience, love for education, and sense of humor captured the hearts of many of his students.

Tom loved running and hiking and over the course of his lifetime he ran many miles and terrains including marathons, triathlons, and mountain adventure races. Though he sunk when he swam, he provided many of his friends support in their Ironman training and completed a half Ironman himself. He was a member of the Early Girlz, who would meet for morning runs at "dark-thirty." He was famous for starting conversations on one side of an argument, and ending it on the other side, just to keep you on your toes. In 2007, at 50

years of age, he summited Mount Rainier, one of the biggest and more rewarding physical challenges of his life. Even in his last days, he somehow managed to get out to the Greenway to walk a trail.

The real and true passion of his life was his family. It was clear in the way he spent his resources, most notably his time. His three children and his nine grandchildren were his great loves. He invested himself in his three “Russell bugs,” raising his oldest 3 granddaughters as his own, standing in the gap and providing for their every need - most importantly a father’s love. He was passionate about the essential role of a father in a child’s life. He was the best coach no matter the sport, built the best tree houses and forts, and took his grandchildren on the best adventures. He taught them to look out for monsters in the bushes, which was of course an analogy for life, because everything he did had meaning and purpose. His provision, leadership, wisdom and generosity were apparent in his community but most evident in his family. He was a giver and a doer, always finding ways to care for people he loved from itty bitty to giant acts of kindness, whether it was dropping off a milkshake, handing out Chic-Fil-A coupons, or gifting cars and new roofs and everything in between. He always reminded us that a person’s circle of influence is most powerful when kept small, and his family was his circle, his central focus.

He was gifted in his ability to express himself through writing, from goofy books for his grandchildren to in-depth philosophical ponderings and wisdom that his family will cherish for years to come. Throughout his lifetime, he read innumerable books and always had a passion for learning and thinking. He gained knowledge and wisdom which he passed on through these written works, books, and journals.

Tom’s faith and love of God was his lifeblood. He spent his life seeking and sharing peace (shalom), knowing that only comes from God and will only be

found in our eternal resting place in Heaven. His hope was in Christ – the sweetness of God’s redeeming love, His scandalous grace, and His mercy were pivotal and primary in Tom’s life. Revelation 7:17

If you knew Tom, then you knew his love for everything Italian. The highlight of his trip to Italy was a grave capstone that captivated him with the words “IERI OGGI DOMANI SEMPRE CON TE” with a large nail piercing the stone. The words mean ‘Yesterday Today Tomorrow Always With You’ and he said the spirit of the Lord comforted him in that moment, he “admired the Glory of Christ, Our Hope, Our Savior, Our Victor.” Below a photo of this capstone, he recorded a verse from St. Paul to the Corinthians – “The last enemy to be destroyed is death.” He believed that Jesus conquered death so we could have eternal peace with God and that death shall NOT reign.

Tom is survived by his first wife from his first marriage (as he liked to joke), Jackie, of 45 years, and his three children and 9 grandchildren: Meredith (daughter), Skylar, Zoë, and Mckinley; Matthew (son) and Jaime, and their children, Cole, Mason, Taylor, and Tucker; Mark (son) and Kelly, and their children, Max and Maverick; and his sisters, Deborah Graffagnino and Victoria Doyle.

A memorial service will be held at Bradley's Pond on Saturday, April 6, 2024 at 11:00 am. In honor of Tom's legacy, FSU's Jim Moran College of Entrepreneurship has established a memorial scholarship in his name. If you'd like join us in honoring his memory and legacy, contributions can be made by visiting this link:

Tom McHaffie Scholarship | SPARK FSU

Breanna Green of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193 or www.bevisfh.com) is assisting the family with their arrangements.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

APR 6. 11:00 AM (ET)

The Retreat at Bradley's Pond
9002 Bradley Road
Tallahassee, FL 32309

Tribute Wall



“ *Bevis Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Thomas Nichols McHaffie*



Bevis Funeral Home - April 08, 2024 at 09:51 AM



“ *Bevis Funeral Home created a Memorial Service - April 6, 2024 in memory of Thomas Nichols McHaffie*



Bevis Funeral Home - April 06, 2024 at 07:32 AM

JM

“ I just found this obituary. I was looking up his contact information because I graduated Florida State a little over a year ago and had Prof. McHaffie in a few classes over the years. I had often stayed with him after class to talk about my dreams and goals in life as well as my business plans. He always gave great advice and was a professor that really believed in his students. I was looking up his contact information because I wanted to send him a letter to let him know how well everything was going and thank him for everything he taught me and for helping me on my journey. He was truly a great and special man and will be sorely missed.

Jerry Meyers - August 16, 2024 at 10:43 AM

JM

Jerry Thank you for your words-send us back that letter you were going to write-we would love to read it-Dean Susan Fiorito will forward. What a blessing to see his Spirit still lives in the legacy he left with all of us who are left here of which you are one-We appreciate your care and concern and your words. Blessings back to you and thanks again Jackie

Jackie McHaffie - September 01, 2024 at 07:10 AM

 BEVIS

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Bevis Funeral Home - April 10, 2024 at 10:10 AM

JA

“ We'll miss you, Tom.

Judy Alexander - April 06, 2024 at 05:47 PM

JS

“ I was deeply saddened at the passing of Tom. I worked with him at FSU when he first started at Jim Moran. He was so earnest about learning all he could about the technology and committed to being an excellent professor which in turn was great fo all students. We had cycling kids (now grown men with kids) in common and had lots of talks about sport. He was above all, so kind. Always kind. He will be missed.

Joanna Catherine Southerland - April 06, 2024 at 09:19 AM

ZH

“ I am greatly saddened to learn of Professor McHaffi's passing. I was a student of his in the Fall of 2023, and I quickly realized what a good professor and person he was. His genuine care for the success of his students was evident in his interactions and communications with his students. I had immense admiration and respect for him, as I saw how he taught his class with passion as he battled his medical condition. The Jim Moran has lost a true gem. My heartfelt condolences to his family. May they find comfort knowing that Professor McHaffi rests peacefully in the arms of Jesus.



Zayden Hadeed - April 03, 2024 at 04:11 PM



“ 3 files added to the album Fleet Foot Issue Featuring Tom



Bevis Funeral Home - April 03, 2024 at 10:01 AM



“ David Watson lit a candle in memory of Thomas Nichols McHaffie



David Watson - April 02, 2024 at 07:53 PM



“ I met Tom when I was in college working at SportsBeat. I was lucky to have our paths continue to cross over the years - whether seeing him at Bruegger's, on the soccer fields while he coached his grandkids, or sometimes just on FB. My heartfelt condolences to Tom's family. Such a nice man and I was saddened to read of his passing. Meredith

Meredith DaSilva - March 24, 2024 at 02:54 PM



“ Just one of the BEST humans ever! You will be well missed my friend.
xoxo...Jane

Jane Greenfield - March 19, 2024 at 01:40 PM

JO

“ I had the pleasure of taking a class from Professor McHaffie at FSU last year. I can honestly say he was one of my favorite and most influential professors of my college career. He showed so much care and respect for each and every student. He had a passion for teaching and it shows in how much I learned throughout the course. Professor McHaffie went above and beyond, providing his students treats and interactive lessons that have stuck with me. I'm very sad to hear of his passing and will have him and his family in my thoughts.

Jackie Oshaben - March 19, 2024 at 12:08 PM

KM

“ OMG where do I start. I worked for Governor Square Mall establishing a professional relationship with Tom. He always was the same, nice, kind heart person and treated me with respect with a smile on his face, no matter what. This is shocking to see this news. I know he is at rest and in a better place. Rest in peace!!!

Keisa McBride - March 19, 2024 at 11:12 AM

JH

“ Prof McHaffie changed the course of my life by standing up for me and ensuring I made it into the JMC. He was the first professor to invite me into his home and the first faculty mentor I had on campus. I will never forget our lunch discussions or the time and wisdom he shared with me. Rest in peace, power and love. 🙏



J.R. Houston - March 18, 2024 at 04:00 PM

GD

“ Thanks for the 40+ years of friendship, fellowship and spiritual guidance. Gonna miss our regular lunch get togethers and your smile. Thanks for building my house and praying with dad, while he was in the hospital. Good job my loyal and faithful servant!

Garret Dozier - March 15, 2024 at 09:22 AM

CM

“ CYNTHIA MCCALLUM MAXWELL lit a candle in memory of Thomas Nichols McHaffie



CYNTHIA MCCALLUM MAXWELL - March 14, 2024 at 02:00 PM

CB

“ Tom grew up across the street from me on W. 60th Terrace in Hialeah. He was the younger brother of my best friend Debbie, his sister I have very many fond memories of him when he was a little boy. My deepest sympathy goes to the family may he rest in eternal peace

Cindy Guthrie Brown - March 10, 2024 at 08:16 PM

WP

“ Tom was a very special man who inspired our students and me. He was the perfect person to guide and support first-year students in the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Learning Community. His smile and sense of humor will be sorely missed by all of us in the Jim Moran College.

Wendy Plant - March 08, 2024 at 09:32 AM

LS

“ I will never forget how Tom got out on the field and play kickball with our Junior and Senior students. It was an even that we put on for our new students that are joining our College, and he was just like one of the students out o n the field enjoying his time. He was always exciting and enthusiastic about joining the students in the different events that we put on. I laughed so hard and he was enjoying himself to the fullest. He will be greatly missed by the Jim Moran College of Entrepreneurship.

Lisha Stafford

Lisha Stafford - March 08, 2024 at 09:25 AM

CM

“ I met Tom and his wife Jackie when they were our youth pastors at my childhood church in Russell, PA. All these years we've kept in touch. Tom gave us such amazing memories rooted in faith as he was always so much a teacher, mentor and friend! My prayers are with you, Jackie and your children during this time! Much love and continued prayers! Christy Passinger Moore

Christy Passinger Moore - March 07, 2024 at 08:23 PM

SH

Rest in peace, Tom. You know Fisne, Sherri and I will take care of Jackie. I'll miss your goofiness, your strong faith, out talks about religion and life. Most of all your friendship and love. You were always willing to take care of us. Im sending prayers that your soul is reunited with our Lord and your family in our Lord's kingdom. I pray God will keep Jackie, Meredith, Matt, Mark and their families in the palm of his hand as they travel the road of grief. God's speed, Tom. 🙏🙏❤️❤️

Susan Denton Harris - March 07, 2024 at 09:27 PM

EB

“ *My deepest condolences to the family. I wish you peace and comfort during this difficult time.*

Ellen Berler

Ellen Berler - March 07, 2024 at 07:47 PM

AH

“ *We send our love and caring thoughts and prayers to Jackie and her children and grandchildren. I remember Tom fondly from my days at FSU as a Chi Omega. He was my big sister's boyfriend, and he was always so warm and kind with a great sense of humor. I know he will be missed by so many.*

Deepest Sympathy-Anne & David Heard

Anne Heard - March 07, 2024 at 06:33 PM

BF

“ *Kathy and I were saddened and shocked to hear of Tom's homecoming. We knew Tom and Jackie from our days at Piedmont Park Alliance Church in Tallahassee. Tom was gifted above measure. There was nothing he couldn't do or figure out. He was truly powered by his love for the Lord, his family, and others. He leaves a void that makes us poorer and heaven richer. Our heart rejoices knowing he heard the words, "Well done, my good and faithful servant" upon ending his journey here as he was welcomed by Our Lord and a great cloud of witnesses standing in gratitude for his faithful service to the Kingdom. Our love and prayers are with dear Jackie and the family during this time of separation.*

Bruce C Ferris - March 07, 2024 at 05:26 PM

CP

“ Jackie,
Sending prayers during this sad and painful time. That said your
faith and Tom's will keep you close in spirit. Godspeed, Tom💙
Cissy

cissy petty - March 07, 2024 at 05:22 PM