

THOMAS J. McCOOL



We are heartbroken to announce that our beloved husband, father, brother, and friend, Thomas Joseph McCool, departed this life on Wednesday, July 12, 2023, following a battle with leukemia.

Tom is survived by his wife of 41 years, Maria; his children, Rachel and Timothy, and daughter-in-law Kira; and his siblings Robert (Susan) and Jane (Peter). He was preceded in death by his

parents Russell and Maureen McCool, his loving in-laws John and Lillian Sutej, his daughter Julia Anne, and his beloved canine companions Sydney and Pippin.

Tom was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, the second of three siblings. He was enterprising, hard-working, and creative from an early age, working paper routes by bicycle, among other jobs. He attended St. Agnes Elementary School, and Salesianum High School. Upon graduation from high school, Tom enlisted in the Navy, serving on the U.S.S. Butte.

After his military service, Tom decided to return to formal education and enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh. He continued his graduate education at the Katz School of Business at Pitt, earning an MBA in 1980. Business school introduced Tom to new friends and career opportunities, but most importantly, to the love of his life, his classmate and future wife, Maria Sutej.

Tom loved his work and found a true passion in his jobs at the Hershey Corporation and later at PNC Bank. At Hershey, Tom worked in internal financial auditing and would regularly make quality control inspections of the company's Reese's Peanut Butter Cups and other goodies. Deciding to return to Pittsburgh, Tom began work at PNC, where he eventually rose to the position of Senior Vice President and manager of the Corporate Loan Workout Department, and later, after a brief period as a consultant, he returned as Senior Vice President for PNC Equipment Finance. Tom retired in 2015 having spent just over 30 years with PNC.

Tom's great pride and joy in life was his marriage and family. He and Maria were married at St. Philomena's in Squirrel Hill on August 28, 1982. They welcomed, in succession, Rachel, Timothy, and Julia. Tom was a devoted husband and stalwart support to his wife, Maria. Their sometimes contrasting personalities complemented each other perfectly, and Tom was always a source of comfort, advice, support, and humor.

He provided the same support to his children, who could always turn to him for help in a crisis, or for joyful celebration in moments of triumph. Tim and Rachel knew that everyone he encountered, from his colleagues and friends, to the baristas at Starbucks (where Tom drank his daily Venti Blonde Latte), would hear about their successes in life. Tom loved to share and discuss his children's activities and accomplishments, because he was unfailingly proud of them. Tom provided the kids with an example of someone who followed a strong moral code and was always willing to stick up for his principles. Tom was dedicated in defense of the people and ideas he cared about, while still approaching the world with a sense of humor and desire to continue learning throughout his life.

Tom was an enthusiastic reader and a consummate lover of learning, something he encouraged in his children. He instilled in them a love of classic literature like Tolkien and Kipling, classic films, and classic television, particularly Monty Python. Later in life, he became a voracious consumer of podcasts on a wide variety of subjects, from news to sports to science. Tom was a life-long sports fan, who could often be found on fairways and the occasional sand trap around Pittsburgh. He was particularly devoted to the world's favorite sport, soccer. Tom began following his beloved Liverpool FC after a trip to the city in 1983. His return trip to Liverpool in March 2019 was a dream come true, as it included a pilgrimage to Anfield Stadium to watch a game.

Tom and Maria traveled often and provided their family with many opportunities to see the world, ranging from early family outings "down the shore" in Wildwood, NJ, to Tom and Tim's epic baseball road trip, to numerous European adventures and cruises. Tom particularly loved his visits to Ireland, not least because as a left-hander, he felt everyone was finally driving on the correct side of the road. Tom loved visiting museums and historical sites almost as much as sampling the ice creams and pastries in the carts and shops located next to them. Tom always said that "he never met a carbohydrate he didn't like."

We would like to finish with these reflections from two of Tom's favorite books:

"The world is indeed full of peril, and in it there are many dark places; but still there is much that is fair, and though in all lands love is now mingled with grief, it grows perhaps the greater." — J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

"That's one thing Earthlings might learn to do, if they tried hard enough: Ignore the awful times and concentrate on the good ones." — Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five*

Friends received at **WOLFE MEMORIAL, LLC**, Forest Hills Chapel, 3600 Greensburg Pike, Pittsburgh PA 15221, on Sunday, July 16, from 12:00 to 2:00 and 4:00 to 6:00pm. A blessing service will be held in the funeral home chapel on Monday, July 17, at 11 am. Interment in Church Hill Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Woodland Hills Foundation to fund the Julia Anne McCool Memorial Scholarship for the Arts & Humanities, www.woodlandhillsfoundation.com, or to the Braddock Carnegie Library, www.braddockcarnegielibrary.org

Send condolences post-gazette.com/gb