

THOMAS G. DURKIN



Age 74, of Port Allegany, PA, formerly East Pittsburgh, passed away on September 11, 2024, following a courageous fight with cancer.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Thomas R. Durkin and Lois L. (McDavitt) Durkin. Tom was born during a time when physically handicapped and mentally challenged individuals were often excluded from schools, social settings, and the workforce. However, his

parents, especially his mom, were determined for him to have a full life. Public school quickly proved to be inadequate for those with "special needs" in the 1950s. The Home for Crippled Children and later Western State School and Hospital provided better life-skill learning environments. It was at WSSH where Tom learned to keep house, grocery shop, use public transportation, find work, manage money, and become self-sufficient. What they didn't teach him were his family values; resilience, perseverance, and "your work comes first"!

In 1972, he was employed by Montefiore Hospital (now UPMC) where he worked in housekeeping for over 45 years. On nice days, he often walked the two miles home from Oakland to Shadyside. When it snowed, and the buses were not running or late, he'd walk two miles to work.

His ability to remember dates, birthdays and product purchases (TV, microwave, eyeglasses, etc.) was second to none. His conversations were often disarming. One could divulge a life story before recognizing his innocent and inquisitive interrogation style. His sister and cousins were his biggest fans. They watched Tom go through life with the use of only one arm/hand and one crippled leg/foot. He didn't complain and never looked for special treatment.

After moving to Port Allegany, Tom was finally close to family. He quickly learned to enjoy boating, fishing, camping, and eating at Eddie's on Main.

This amazing man will be missed by all those who knew him. But especially by his favorite sister, Karen Durkin Sewell; nephews, Joshua Przybyla and Jayson (Carrie) Przybyla; great-nieces, Olivia and Emilia; and great-nephews, Noah, Ben, and Miles. Other members of this blended family are Jason Sewell, Kelly (Harold) Graves, and Emma Sewell; Amber Silsby and daughters Katie and Alice; all of Tommy's cousins, but especially Brian; members of the Port Allegany First Presbyterian Church; Tom's camping friends, especially Cindy and David Ackerman.

Friends are welcome on Monday, September 16, from 4-7 pm at **PATRICK T. LANIGAN FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY, INC.**, 700 Linden Ave. at Cable, East Pittsburgh, PA 15112, 412-824-8800 where a Blessing Service will be held on Tuesday at 11 a.m.

Tom will be laid to rest in Braddock Catholic Cemetery.

Memorial donations in his memory may be directed to Port Allegany Ambulance Service, 22279 US-6, Port Allegany, PA 16743.

Send condolences post-gazette.com/gb