



Robert Xavier Morrell Jr.

January 28, 1951 - May 17, 2020

Robert Xavier Morrell, Jr. died at his home in Raleigh, NC on May 17, 2020. Rob was born in Los Angeles, CA on January 28, 1951 to Margaret Shepard Morrell and Robert Xavier Morrell.

He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Maureen FitzGerald Morrell, of Raleigh, NC; by sons Justin Robert, 41, of Albemarle, NC; Michael Gregory, 37, (Elizabeth Sweezey Morrell) of Durham, NC; Patrick James, 35, (Clay Riley Morrell) of Davidson, NC; and by four grandchildren widely regarded as the most beautiful and talented in the world (Nina Kearns Morrell, Thomas Oakley Morrell, Michael Turner Morrell, and Alice Jane Sweezey Morrell). He is also survived by his three older siblings: Toni Morrell Short (Jim), of La Quinta, CA; Michael Xavier Morrell (Ellen) of Washington, DC; and Gregory Robert Morrell (Carol) of Newport Beach, CA. Rob was delighted to be a FitzGerald family in-law and the proud uncle of many remarkable nieces and nephews.

Rob was raised in Los Angeles, seizing the “geographic cure” at 17 to attend Georgetown University in Washington, DC. Though Rob did drop out of college twice, finally graduating after five years, he took pains to remind anyone who would listen that he had actually finished his undergraduate degree in just 3-1/2 academic years.

After making the best decision of his life in marrying Maureen FitzGerald on June 23, 1973, Rob completed a Master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education at UNC-Chapel Hill. Subsequently he taught in the Minneapolis Public Schools for two years while Maureen completed her Master's in Public Health at the University of Minnesota (aka “dah U”).

After following several of Maureen's siblings from New York to Kentucky and working for a year as a hospital orderly and an operating room technician, Rob returned to school for two years, taking pre-med science courses. In 1979, he began medical school at the University of Louisville, graduating in 1983 (in the regulation four years). He and Maureen then returned to Minnesota with their first two sons, where Rob completed residency

training in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) at the University of Minnesota. (And, in a marvelous display of the humor of the cosmos, oldest son Justin was enrolled in the same school where Rob had taught seven years previously.)

After completing his residency training in 1986 (and with a third son now in tow), Rob and the family returned to NC, living in Greensboro for almost three years before moving to Raleigh in 1989, where Rob lived until his death.

Rob was the founding partner of his private practice, Carolina Rehabilitation and Surgical Associates, and helped design and open WakeMed Rehabilitation Hospital. He remained the managing partner of his group until his retirement from clinical medicine in 2005. During his years at WakeMed, Rob served as the system's Chief Medical Officer for six years (1998-2004) and also completed the executive MBA program at UNC-Chapel Hill in 1999. Subsequently he worked part-time with Community Care of North Carolina (CCNC) for several years, and taught a healthcare elective to MBA students at UNC for five years.

Rob was known to have a wonderful (and frequently irreverent) sense of humor, and was blessed to have a wide circle of friends, most of whom laughed at his jokes (or at least pretended to). He loved college basketball, books, movies, theater, and music (even singing in a small choir in the final decade of his life). Rob could have been described as a lifelong searcher, and spent the last 15+ years of his life on earth exploring and deepening his spiritual journey.

A funeral service will be planned for the future when it is safe for family and friends to attend. It was Rob's fond hope that such a gathering would be a wonderful opportunity for his great mix of family and friends to come to know one another and trade stories, tears, and laughter in a raucous, and only moderately tasteful, manner.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a contribution - as outlandishly large as you may be moved to make - in Rob's memory to GHA Autism Supports (where Rob and Maureen's oldest son, Justin, resides) in Albemarle, NC

<https://www.ghautismsupports.org/>

Comments



“ I had the honor and pleasure to work with Dr Morrell for 16 years at WakeMed Rehab. It was the most challenging and most rewarding time of my near 38 years as a PT. He mentored me in rehab as well as in life in general with his grace and knowledge. I look forward to his emails as a window to being thankful and honest. He pushed me to be the best therapist I could be in those years and it is doubtful those conditions will exist again. I am lucky to have had you in my life and am forever grateful, Dr Morrell. I will miss you terribly.
Debbie Thompson,PT

Debbie Thompson - May 19 at 02:19 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Renaissance Funeral Home - May 17 at 06:47 PM



“ One of the most influential people in my life when I first started working at WakeMed. One in a million. He will be missed by all who knew him.

Karen Vasquez - May 19 at 06:58 AM



“ I worked with Dr Morrell during the early years of Wake Rehab Hospital's program. As an inexperienced PT, he was a great mentor, pushing for excellence from all to build a great rehab program. He was always approachable and his passion for patient care was obvious. He will be profoundly missed. Condolences to his family.

Mary F Martin

Mary Martin - 10 hours ago