



Zach Davis Cox Jr.

May 15, 1947 - March 14, 2020

** Due to the current state of affairs, the family would strongly prefer making a memorial donation to the charity of your choice in lieu of flowers. We appreciate you honoring their request at this time.

Zach Davis Cox Jr. born May 15, 1947 passed away Saturday March 14, 2020 at Duke University Hospital after a long battle with end stage liver disease. Zach was the fourth of seven children born to Zach Davis Cox Sr. and Mary Gwin Oliver in Mount Olive, North Carolina.

Zach grew up in Mount Olive graduating from Mount Olive High School in 1965 then joining the U.S. Navy following graduation. Zach trained as a weatherman in the Navy, a passion he followed his whole life. He was trained at Moffat Field in Mountain View, CA and enjoyed the many opportunities living in the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1960's afforded. Later, while deployed to Vietnam he was stationed in Cửa Việt, where he was probably exposed to Agent Orange, a likely cause of his liver disease.

After the war, Zach traveled widely, and according to one story, was recruited to an Israeli kibbutz, though declined when he learned he would have to give up his U.S. citizenship. In the midst of his travels he went to a party at Virginia Ward's house in Wilmington, NC on July 20, 1969, the day of the Apollo 11 moon landing. At this party he met his future wife, Evelyn Vance Wilkins. According to one story, Zach was outside the house staring at the moon with no telescope, and Evelyn was not impressed. Yet, they began to date and were married a year later on August 1, 1970 in a small ceremony at their dearly loved cousin Virginia Ward's house.

After marrying, Zach and Evelyn lived in Silver Springs, MD while Zach worked for the federal Flood Control. They returned to North Carolina after a few years and settled at Evelyn's childhood home in Rose Hill, North Carolina. Zach commuted to Wilmington, NC to complete his undergraduate degree in mathematics funded by the GI Bill while Evelyn taught elementary school at Rose Hill Magnolia Elementary. During this period their first

child, Virginia, was born. She was colicky, but they kept her anyway.

After completing his undergraduate degree, Zach and Evelyn moved to Chapel Hill, NC where Zach enrolled in Mathematics graduate program. Some of their dearest friends were made in the multi-unit apartments that made up “married student housing” at UNC Chapel Hill.

After completing his Master’s Degree in mathematics, Zach and Evelyn moved to Louisburg, NC where Zach taught at Louisburg College and Evelyn Taught at Epsom Elementary. In Louisburg, their second child, Anna, and third child, Robert, were born. Zach moved into the newly created software industry where he spent the rest of his career, and the family moved to Raleigh, NC in 1986.

Zach loved the natural world and was endlessly fascinated by astronomy, physics and mathematics. He was a lifelong learner and encouraged his children to do the same. One of his proudest achievements was completing the American Lung Association “Big Ride” from Seattle Washington to Washington, DC in 2004, and valued the close friendships made on that ride. He also regularly rode in the MS150 to raise funds for research into the causes and treatments for Multiple Sclerosis.

Zach is survived by his wife, Evelyn Wilkins Cox, his three children, Virginia (Ginny) Cox Delaney and her partner Joseph Robert Delaney of Hayward, CA; Anna Wilkins Cox and her partner James Anthony Owens of Columbus, OH, and Robert Stephen Cox of Raleigh, NC. He is also survived by his siblings, Gwin Lee Cox of Holly Springs, NC, Elizabeth (Betsy) Ann Cox of Upper Marlboro, MD, Laviece Cox Ward and her spouse Paul McPeak of Holly Springs, NC, James (Jim) Oliver Cox and his spouse Ruthann Nelson of Seattle, WA; Mary Cox Smith and her spouse Baxter Cornelius Smith of Charlottesville, VA; and John Needham Cox and his spouse Clare Johnston Cox.

A celebration of life will be planned once the COVID-19 pandemic has abated.

Comments



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Gray Thomas - March 26 at 01:38 PM



“ Zach had such a zest for life. This picture was from his last visit to Florida for my daughter's high school graduation. We had been playing Left, Right, Center, and as you can see from the picture my daughter raked in all the cash..perhaps with a little help from Uncle Zach. :)

We had such a fun time with him on that visit. He enjoyed every activity from boating and playing games, to Sarah's hours long graduation ceremony that started at 8 a.m. an hour away from the house. The rest of us wishing for an extra cup of coffee, or two, but Zach was bright eyed and bushy tailed.

While he was here I mentioned a problem I was having with a computer program and he immediately started writing me a computer program to deal with it - all the while enthusiastically explaining what he was doing - which of course went completely over my head. But he managed to engage my other daughter Emma, who is minoring in computer science, and they sat for hours talking python. It was something to observe how his amazing mind worked.

I miss you Zach - Love, Gray

Gray - March 27 at 10:57 AM



“ I was so sorry to hear about this but I knew he had been quite ill. Zach and Evelyn became dear friends during 74-78, when I was minister of their Universalist Church. I came to know and love their extended family and the love, intelligence and decency of all of them deeply improved and informed my entire life and profession.

Darrell Berger - March 26 at 09:05 AM



“ I was so sorry to hear of Zach's passing. I didn't know him well, but I remember a visit when I was a child to the house in the woods where Zach and Evelyn lived. I always enjoyed Zach's enthusiasm for learning and life.

Jim Ward - March 26 at 08:27 AM