



James "Geary" Morton, Jr.

December 18, 1947 - April 3, 2021

James "Geary" Morton Jr., age 73, of Raleigh, NC departed this life on Saturday, April 3, 2021. He was a loving and devoted husband, father, grandfather, and a cherished friend to many.

Geary was born in NYC's Women's Hospital on December 18, 1947. He was a curious and active child enjoying his early years living in the planned community of Parkchester in the Bronx. He spent a memorable 6th-grade year living with his grandparents in St. Petersburg, FL where he attended Mt. Vernon Elementary School. Following his time there, Geary lived in Nags Head, NC and attended Manteo High School. He had spent summers fishing and hunting on the Outer Banks and developed his deep affection for the area. After high school, Geary headed to Raleigh and NC State University to study Electrical Engineering. He soon landed a job with public television in the "Raleigh Studio" at NC State and his outstanding career was set. The coast was so special to Geary, he maintained a residence there and loved sharing this special place with friends and family.

Geary worked for UNC-TV—now PBS North Carolina—for 52 years. His coworkers became family to him. He was very dedicated to his career, working in many facets of production and sometimes it seemed, public relations. He worked many nights and weekends on projects in which he took tremendous pride. He was best known professionally for producing and directing "The Woodwright's Shop" with Roy Underhill, one of the longest-running series nationally distributed by PBS. He was best known personally

for his generous heart, steadfast friendship, and fun-loving demeanor. Geary met many people from all walks of life during this time working and traveling for UNC-TV, making countless lifelong friends. He never met a stranger. Geary was an avid collector of all things cool and unique. He was a man of many talents and he was never at a loss to share his expertise with anyone who needed his assistance. He was the “first” to try many things—Apple Computers, microwaves, car cell phones—just about anything that seemed to have potential and was interesting. It gave him great joy to give gifts and thoughtful tokens. He was an eclectic person who was always up to hearing and telling a good story and having a good laugh. It would be just like him to go out with one last dad joke and “blast off on 4-3-21.”

He was preceded in death by his parents, James Geary Morton Sr., who was a decorated WWII hero, and Love Brice Morton. Left to cherish his memory: his loving wife Carolyn, sons James Geary Morton III of Wilmington, NC and Cal Lawrence, his wife Sandon and their children Allie and Cooper Lawrence, all of Lake Gaston, VA, and a host of relatives and friends.

A memorial service over Zoom will be set for a later date - please check his Facebook page for details to be posted when arrangements are made. In lieu of flowers please make donations to

Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation,
c/o Triangle & Eastern NC
104 Westpark Drive
Suite 415
Brentwood, Tennessee 37027
(Memo: Geary Morton)

Tribute Wall

KV

“ Dear Carolyn, James and Cal -- The Morton side of the family shares your grief and misses our cousin Geary. Although we didn't see him often, Geary always made time for his younger cousins Lance and Kristen (his dad's brother's kids) when important events occurred, like the funeral of our mother in 2011. His warm, friendly, humorous presence was such a comfort and a joy to us during that very difficult time. He was a wonderful connection to our father, George, and our uncle, Jim, both of whom we lost to early in our lives. From now on, when we visit Arlington National Cemetery and the graves of Col. George C. Morton and Capt. James G. Morton (only three graves apart from one another), we will also lay flowers for Geary on his mom and dad's grave. We will remember his beautiful spirit and the times we were blessed to share his company. We hope to meet you someday, and until then, we hold you in our thoughts and hearts. Warmly, Kristen (Morton) Vance, Lance Morton and families

Kristen Vance - July 02, 2021 at 01:25 PM

KD

“ So sorry to hear this news. I remember one March when we had a snow storm during Festival at UNC-TV, Geary picked up me, Camille Patterson and Deb Darter and drove us to the RTP studio since the show had to go on. Geary was driving on old VW and I remember I could see the road through the floorboard of the car! Nonetheless, we made it to the studio, laughed the entire car ride, and Festival went on. He had such a kind heart and would give you the shirt off his back. Thoughts and prayers to Carolyn (who Geary met while at UNC-TV. Another fond memory) and family.

Kim Elliott Dittmann

Kim Dittmann - June 04, 2021 at 11:00 AM

ST

“ So grateful for the help he gave to my uncle and aunt in Manteo. He was a pleasure to know, a diligent worker, and a good friend to them.

Susan Tripp

Susan Tripp - May 17, 2021 at 08:45 AM

ME

“ I first met Geary at UNC-TV when I volunteered to help at their pledge events in 2003-4.

Geary was not only directing the show, but also "herding cats" as he organized a chaotic set, talent, premium displays and a large crew including both professional technicians and volunteers like me.

I quickly got to know Geary and marveled at our parallel interests and much common background. His sense of humor kept us engaged and helped form a cohesive team that worked well together.

Eventually, i applied to work full time for UNC-TV as a technician, and I'm confident one reason I was employed there for 10 years was Geary's recommendation and friendship. That's when the real fun began. For over 38 seasons, Geary directed "The Woodwright's Shop" after helping create the show back in the late 1970's with host Roy Underhill. I served on that production crew producing UNC-TV's longest running network show until my retirement in 2014. I'll long remember the show that included our state's governor as a guest woodworker.

Far too much Bojangles Chicken (thanks Roy!) was shared by this crew between show tapings Sunday afternoons...

A small group of Geary's friends got together every year to setup together at the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society's annual "HamFest" - an electronics oriented flea market and swap meet. Geary was a natural "wheeler - dealer" that embraced Ebay like it was made for him, taking his hobbies to an international level.

Geary contributed a lasting legacy to the world in many ways. I'll always remember his laugh, his humor and the way he lead the many teams that joined him.

It's with condolence that I lose my friend, but cherish the memories

and think of Carolyn and James.

Marc Erickson

Marc Erickson - April 17, 2021 at 06:44 PM

MR

“ *During the toughest time of my life, Geary was there for my family. My sister, Janet Royster, a UNC TV employee was a patient at Hospice of Wake County. Geary was there every day. He surrounded us with love and support until the end. I could not have endured this time without his warm smile and steadfast friendship. We will always be grateful to him. Thank you Carolyn for sharing him with us. He will be missed more than I can say.*

Mackie Biggs Reeves

Mackie Reeves - April 16, 2021 at 02:43 PM

MC

“ *All my love and prayers Carolyn, Jamie and all the family. Love in Christ, Margie*

margie crocker - April 16, 2021 at 11:17 AM

CO

“ *We were saddened to hear of Geary's passing. He was a generous and fun-loving soul. Geary was one of those people who invited newcomers into the fold and made them feel welcome. I can still hear his silly comments on the headset during fundraising drives and remember his stories about different public television projects. He will be missed.*



Carla Osborne - April 16, 2021 at 09:50 AM

GD

“ I was so sad to hear that Geary passed away. He was a unique and talented person and a great asset to UNC TV for many years. I knew him through my work in Human Resources. He was always good for an entertaining story and a creative solution to any problem. My condolences to his family. I share their feeling of loss.

Gayle Davis - April 15, 2021 at 06:26 PM

MW

“ We have lost not just a good, generous and humorous man, but the very soul and spirit of kindness. I shall always recall his memory and the delightful times beginning at North Carolina Television - Channel 4 - Western Boulevard, Raleigh. He shared with me so much of his experience and knowledge about the communications world of which I knew nothing and so much friendship that my cup was never half empty. I'm eternally grateful for having known him. I wish for the family comfort and peace.



Margaret White - April 15, 2021 at 05:14 PM

RO

I agree. He added much to our little family at Western Blvd, and here I started. He always had a smile that said, "C'mon, see through it all and laugh more."

ronald_plummer@outlook.com - April 22, 2021 at 07:30 PM

HM

“ So sorry to hear this!!! Quite a shock!! Sincere sympathy to Carolyn and family!! Heyward and Donna Maynard

Heyward and Donna Maynard - April 15, 2021 at 04:25 PM

JM

“ I just found out about Geary's passing, and it was a shock. We were boyhood friends and had some great times. We have pretty much stayed in touch over the years, and I always looked forward to his funny Christmas cards. May he rest in peace. John McKimmey and my wife, Deanne (Dee).

John McKimmey - April 15, 2021 at 04:01 PM

MD

“ So sorry to hear about Geary. He was a special guy! We first met Geary when he came to a yard sale at our house about 30 years ago and bought just about everything. He is the only person I know that has more “stuff” than my husband. He will me missed!

maggie daidone - April 15, 2021 at 01:38 PM

SP

“ My college experience would NOT have been the same without Geary and all his albums! His home was a sanctuary for me and my then-boyfriend... I just wish he had played a whole album, at least once!

This hit me like the proverbial "ton of bricks"... Geary was one of those friends who, I was SURE, would be around forever. I can't think of Raleigh existing without him.

Baruch Dayan HaEmet - Blessed is [God] the True Judge (for only HE knows all our days). Carolyn, may you receive the comfort that only God can give. And may your memories of Geary always be for a blessing. Much love.....

Suzanne Pomeranz - April 15, 2021 at 12:56 PM

PH

“ Geary was no longer my official brother-in-law but always remained my brother-in-love. He probably never really knew how much he meant to me. He was so kind to my children & you know that always gains a special place in a mother’s heart. I will miss our annual birthday calls & just knowing he was there to offer expert advice when needed. RIP to my brother & friend. Carolyn, James, & Cal my prayers are with you for comfort during this time.

Pat Helton - April 15, 2021 at 11:58 AM

DM

“ Geary was like a big brother - caring, protective and so much fun! I'll miss him always. Cheers to such a good man 😊🙏❤️

Donna Murison - April 15, 2021 at 12:29 AM

RP

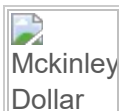
“ Geary always had a smile that said " Enjoy what you are doing!" He was an inspiration and a real talent. RIP

Ron Plummer - April 14, 2021 at 09:54 PM

RK

I first met Geary in 1966 when we were both college kids and we became friends immediately. We went our separate ways and re-united ten years later in the same career-- Geary at UNC TV and me at NC State. There were countless jokes and shared laughs over the years. I never heard a negative word from anyone about him-- truly one of the funniest, warmest guys I ever knew. Rest in peace, my friend.

Ronald Kemp - April 20, 2021 at 08:25 AM



I met Geary when we both went to work at the WUNC Raleigh studios in 1967. We've been best friends ever since. I'm going to miss him terribly.

Mckinley Dollar - April 29, 2021 at 07:35 PM

DG

I've been friends with Geary for 54 years and his was a friendship I'll always cherish. The early memories are of adventures we shared, later memories are of steadfast loyalty.

Geary was a beacon of light in the world, and I too will miss him terribly. Carolyn, James and Cal my thoughts and prayers are with you.

Dean Graybeal - April 30, 2021 at 11:52 PM

KS

My husband and I just watched a show on PBS that was produced by Geary and it sparked a memory. We were sad to learn Geary had passed away. Many years ago we were in Beaufort NC in the boiling sun selling my husband's watercolor paintings from under a tarp at a street festival. A man stopped in to browse and my husband struck up a conversation with him over his t-shirt which advertised The Woodwright's Shop with the Moe Howard quote "I've cut it twice and it's still too short". Of course it was Geary. Later that day he reappeared with a t-shirt for my husband. My husband wore it with pride for years, but he retired it before it faded and we still have it somewhere. Such a nice man and we never forgot him.

Kathy Stone - July 03, 2021 at 10:40 PM