



Joseph John Sumakeris Jr

October 4, 1967 - November 7, 2016

Joseph J. Sumakeris Jr. passed away on November 7th at home, surrounded by his family, after a courageous battle with prostate cancer. Joe was born on October 4th, 1967, to Joseph J. Sumakeris Sr. and Mary Elizabeth Ivey Sumakeris. He grew up in Fayetteville, and graduated from Westover Senior High School in 1985. He received his BS in Materials Science and Engineering from NCSU in 1989, and his PhD in Materials Science and Engineering from NCSU in 1995. He spent his entire professional career at Cree Inc., working with silicon carbide semiconductors and devices. He was a consummate critical thinker and problem solver, who invented or optimized many engineering processes at Cree, and was awarded 12 patents during his career.

Joe was a loving husband and a devoted father, who cherished spending time with his family. He prioritized spending one-on-one time with his wife and each of his children, building a lifetime of memories with them over shared experiences, both as elaborate as rafting the Grand Canyon, and as simple as Harry Potter movie marathons. He continually strove to be present in the lives of people that he cared for, and always fully supported the interests of his family. Joe was happiest when he was tinkering with an engineering project of some sort, such as private aviation, adding custom features to his house or his vehicles, brewing beer and mead, and building model rockets. He loved his dogs, and was passionate about helping fight the egregious cruelty of

puppy mills.

Joe is survived by his wife of 21 years, Elisa Sumakeris, and children Kathryn, Joanna, and Lucas of the home; sisters Marriann Easom of Fayetteville, and Lynn Heinrich of Caldwell Idaho; brother-in-law Greg Fox and wife Becky of Clemmons NC, nieces Mary Waggoner and husband Zach of Caldwell, ID and Jessica Heinrich of Nampa, ID; nephews Daniel Sumakeris and wife Lindsey of Fayetteville, Roy Easom of Fayetteville, Joshua and Jackson Fox of Clemmons; and grand-nephews Harrison Waggoner and Joseph Sumakeris.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Tuesday, November 15th, at 7PM at The Matthews House, 317 W Chatham St, Cary, NC 27511. In lieu of flowers, Joe requested that donations be made to the North Carolina Veterinary Medical Foundation, 1060 William Moore Drive, Raleigh, NC 27607, designated to the Joe Sumakeris Memorial Fund, in order to support the fight against puppy mills.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Service

NOV **15**. 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

The Matthews House
317 W. Chatham St.
Cary, NC 27511

Tribute Wall

XZ

“ *Xuan Zhang lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



Xuan Zhang - October 24, 2017 at 04:32 AM

TD

“ *Tammy Sumakeris DeSpain lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



Tammy Sumakeris DeSpain - December 12, 2016 at 08:22 PM

CC

“ *Charlene Cowell lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



Charlene Cowell - November 15, 2016 at 08:47 PM

YK

“ *Yucheng And Kong lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



Yucheng and Kong - November 15, 2016 at 12:56 PM

SE

“ *Sei-Hyung lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



Sei-Hyung - November 15, 2016 at 11:52 AM

JL

“ *Joanne And Punkin Langan lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



Joanne and Punkin Langan - November 15, 2016 at 09:48 AM

JL

“ *Joanne And Punkin Langan lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



Joanne and Punkin Langan - November 15, 2016 at 09:47 AM

HS

“ *Hedi Stack lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



Hedi Stack - November 14, 2016 at 09:57 PM

TF

“ *The Stack Family lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



The Stack Family - November 14, 2016 at 09:55 PM

MC

“ *Joe was kind, soft spoken and well respected among his peers. He always had a positive outlook, which is a special trait in Cree employees. We will remember him and his family in our prayers.*

Mike Calus - November 14, 2016 at 04:46 PM

VB

“ *Joe and I got to know each other over the years we worked together, making an instant connection when we realized that our kids went to the same pre-school. I am not surprised when I read through the tributes for Joe...he was brilliant, funny and kind. At work, it was clear he embraced going after the technical challenges. And the clarity with which he spoke of the solutions, made his depth of understanding abundantly clear. In addition, he consistently displayed great kindness and empathy towards others. I am fortunate to have known Joe... he will be missed!*

Vijay Balakrishna - November 14, 2016 at 02:31 PM

SS

“ *Saptha Sriram lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



Saptha Sriram - November 14, 2016 at 01:30 PM

DC

“ *Denise Carollo lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



denise carollo - November 13, 2016 at 03:58 PM



“ *Cara McCarthy lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



Cara McCarthy - November 12, 2016 at 08:17 PM

DH

“ *Joe was a caring and wonderful man that brought smiles to the faces of everyone he met, he will truly be missed. Our thoughts and prayers to his family and friends.*



Dave Henshall - November 11, 2016 at 07:01 PM

TB

“ One of my favorite memories of Joe was when we flew in his plane to the mountains for a meeting. This was my first time in a small plane and I was pretty nervous. Joe was meticulous in his preparation and I soon found out he was an excellent pilot. His calm and cool approach soon had me settled down. He was brave enough to let me fly a little bit which we both quickly agreed was not a good idea. The best part of the trip was spending time with Joe and talking about flying, trips with our families, and our hopes and dreams for our kids. Joe was a very special person and gifted in many ways. He will be truly missed by me and many others that were lucky enough to know him.

Taylor Budd - November 11, 2016 at 04:54 PM



“ Becky Lewis lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr



Becky Lewis - November 11, 2016 at 10:52 AM

MF

“ Marie Fien lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr



Marie Fien - November 11, 2016 at 10:36 AM

JG

“ I knew Dr. Sumakeris about a year ago from work and met him in person in Sicily on an international conference last year. Was collaborating with him on a paper back then. Dr. Sumakeris impressed me a lot with his deep love for the career and the great sense of humor he has got. His positive attitude towards life has always been cheering me up. Thank you, Dr. Sumakeris, for the light you have been shining on the world!



JQ

Jianqiu Guo - November 10, 2016 at 04:10 PM

JU

“ Julia lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr



Julia - November 10, 2016 at 04:05 PM

 Iain Hamilton

“ So sorry for your loss. When I think of Joe, I cannot recall a crossed word, or a mood other than happy and content. Joe had many stories, and rarely left any conversation without the addition of laughter and levity. I will remember Joe fondly and I am truly thankful to have had privilege of calling Joe my friend.

Iain

Iain Hamilton - November 10, 2016 at 04:04 PM

AM

“ *Andrew Mackenzie lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



Andrew Mackenzie - November 10, 2016 at 04:03 PM

JY

“ *Jon Young lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



Jon Young - November 10, 2016 at 03:25 PM

RO

“ *Smart, caring, kind, funny, gentle ... are all words I have heard used to describe Joe as people reflect on his life and how he touched us. They are all accurate. To these words I would add, “centered”. He always knew what was important (like his family) and he seemed to draw strength from that awareness. This quality showed up numerous times in the over 20 years I have known Joe. I could walk into his office stressed about something (he often noted that I stressed too much!), and he would know how to say the one thing that would send me right over the edge. Just as I started to get angry, that wry smile would form, he’d give a slight wink and then start laughing. No matter how big the problem was he always knew that we’d solve it and there were much more important things in life. He helped me remember that. Whenever I think of Joe, it is calming and centering. Thanks, Joe. You left my world better than you found it.*

Rob - November 10, 2016 at 01:44 PM

MD

“ My heartfelt condolences go out to all Joe’s family and friends. I was very saddened to hear of Joe’s passing but feel assured that he is in a better place looking down on his loving family right now. I am proud to say that I had the pleasure of doing research with Joe over a period spanning some twenty years. Joe and I explored the wondrous world of defects in SiC crystals and Joe was a real expert. He had great scientific vision and always delivered brilliant lectures – as for example was typified in his lecture in Giardini Naxos just a year ago. In all my interactions with Joe he was always the consummate professional and an absolute gentleman – a true man of integrity. He also had a fantastic sense of humor and was a lot of fun to be around – cue stories about Karaoke singing in Otsu, Japan and mechanical bull riding in Cleveland Ohio! Whilst observing posts on Facebook over these past several months Joe has taught me what true courage is all about. What more perfect example is there of a father and husband? The world will be a little sadder without Joe but his profound influence will live on as will his legacy through his wonderful family.



Michael Dudley, Professor

Michael Dudley - November 10, 2016 at 01:09 PM

DG

“ Dave Grider lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr



Dave Grider - November 10, 2016 at 01:01 PM

JZ

“ *Jon Zhang lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



Jon Zhang - November 10, 2016 at 12:59 PM

AG

“ *I am so sorry for your loss. Anytime I talked to Joe, he would talk about his family and his whole face would light up. He cherished his family very much. We will miss seeing him around Cree.*



April Gressel - November 10, 2016 at 12:35 PM

BS

“ *Bob Sutton sent a virtual gift in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



Bob Sutton - November 10, 2016 at 09:57 AM

WR

“ Joe and I went to Westover together. I remember going to his house and swimming in his pool, hid dad grilling salmon, and us talking about all sorts of things, much of which was far above my head. Once in the 11th grade, as we sat in Electronics class after finishing an assignment, Joe was trying to help me understand how to do proofs in geometry. I didn't understand, and my frustration showed, but Joe patiently explained the process to me. I STILL didn't get it, but Joe didn't treat me like an idiot. He continued to be patient with me. I never heard a cross word come from his mouth. After graduation we lost touch. I would see him sporadically through the years, and he was always the same: kind, patient, and brilliant. The last time I saw him was less than a year ago. Our mutual friend Ray and his wife Stacy, myself and my wife, and Joe had a wonderful dinner together as we reminisced about old times. Joe was even humbler (if that were possible) when I saw him last. I told him then, and believe now, that he was a gentle genius. I will miss this man.

William Rauser - November 10, 2016 at 09:23 AM

ME

“ Marion Epperson sent a virtual gift in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr



Marion Epperson - November 10, 2016 at 09:12 AM

ME

“ Marion Epperson lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr



Marion Epperson - November 10, 2016 at 09:10 AM

SL

“ Susan Lane lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr



Susan Lane - November 10, 2016 at 08:39 AM

SL

“ I've known Joe since his graduate college days. I remember when I first met him I couldn't tell if he was pulling my leg half the time or if he was serious. Over time I learned he liked to play the prankster on occasion in good nature. His strong gentle nature was present in his life and how he loved his family. But he was ant above telling his kids tall tales to prompt them to tell him, Daddy you're full of hooey!" Joe you are loved and missed. You live on in the memory of those who knew you.

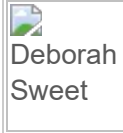
Susan Lane - November 10, 2016 at 08:37 AM

CJ

“ Charlotte Jonas lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr



Charlotte Jonas - November 10, 2016 at 08:35 AM



Deborah Sweet

“ *Deborah Sweet lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



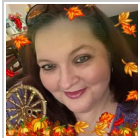
Deborah Sweet - November 10, 2016 at 07:49 AM



“ *Lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



Donna Barrett & E. C. Mabe - November 09, 2016 at 09:37 PM



“ *Alesia Horne lit a candle in memory of Joseph John Sumakeris Jr*



Alesia Horne - November 09, 2016 at 09:26 PM