

I'd like to thank the prosecutor's office and staff, and the courthouse staff and officials, for your work towards an outcome that is just.

David and I met at Guilford College in North Carolina when he was 19, and I was 18. He lived in the suite below me. Two and a half years later we started dating. If anyone at Guilford had chosen the least likely couple on campus, we were probably it. We got married in June of 1984 two years after David graduated, one year after I did. We were married for 33 years and 318 days, far fewer than we planned on. We were beginning to have the casual conversations couples have about what retirement might look like for us, what mattered, what didn't, what we might do if either of us developed a serious illness as we got older. We were doing the things that in the end made our relationship so much bigger and better than average.

I talked to David late in the afternoon of April 30<sup>th</sup> just before my friend Maureen and I headed to a retirement party for a coworker. David didn't mention that he was going to enjoy the beautiful spring afternoon with a bike ride after work because no cyclist plans to not finish their ride. Ever.

So on the last day of April in 2018 everything changed. Forever. In ways that no one imagines. David was the person who convinced me that it was ok to pull off the road and put our sleeping bags out under the stars in Rocky Mountain National Park for the night, that Oregon State University might be a good place to get my Master's degree. That I would recover after a careless driver almost killed our young family of three, and I spent over a year undergoing surgeries and physical therapy. That we could restore an old house outside Warthen, and then move a second one and restore it too. He took care of our daughter McKinsey when I had a stunning case of chicken pox while pregnant with our daughter Mary Michael. He supported me when I took on work that mattered to me down to my core beliefs and values. He was right about all of those "what ifs and why nots."

My daughters lost forever the man who taught them that you can substitute for just about anything in a recipe, that prepping walls and wood work before painting is just as important as the quality of the paint. He was the parent who looked forward to the math challenge each week that came home during middle school with the girls. David believed that experiences like summer camp mattered, and that yes, you can put your 12 and 16-year-old daughters on a plane to Italy by themselves to spend a week with cousins.

David was our wingman, our best cook, our handyman, our adventure leader. He was my husband and my lifelong adventure partner.

When our oldest grandchildren, Ella and Chase, would come through the back door, they called out for him first. David was the grandparent who showed Ella, when she was about four years old, how to light a blade of grass on fire with a magnifying glass. He was the grandparent who loaded Chase into his canoe so they could paddle across a tiny shoal on the Alcovy River because Chase had never done that. David convinced him they could easily manage it. In Chase's excitement after David paddled them through it, Chase managed to tip the canoe over, stand up in the shallow water, realize that they were ok, never mind that the cooler with the drinks and snacks were floating away from all of us, and ask if they could do the whole thing

over again.

Our grandson Parker, who was just 3.5 months old on April 30<sup>th</sup> 2018, will only know his grandfather, who was always called Dee, through stories and photographs. We can tell him that that two days before his grandfather was killed, we spent the day with him while his parents enjoyed a few hours away for lunch and errands. That Dee loved him, and planned to have adventures with him just like he had with Ella and Chase. And if there are ever more grandchildren later, David won't be waiting with me to meet them for the first time. There won't ever be any pictures of them with David, or shared adventures, because he didn't have the chance to finish his ride on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

So we grieve and mourn. Our hearts, mine, my daughters, our family, David's work family, his cyclist friends, our college friends, our community of friends and family here in Sandersville, Atlanta, Macon, Decatur, and North Carolina, are forever broken apart for David, who still had so many adventures ahead, and who just wanted to enjoy a little bit of time outside on a sunny beautiful day, riding the A Homer Hilsen bike he had already logged thousands of miles on, because all he really wanted to do that day was finish his ride.