

John “Brian” McNally

October 19, 2019



John “Brian” McNally, was born in Chicago, Illinois on January 23, 1943, to parents John and Dorothy McNally. His parents, and brothers Alan and Kevin predeceased him. Brother Craig McNally resides in Hawaii. Brother Tom lives in New Jersey, and sister Kerry resides in Massachusetts.

Brian grew up in Princeton, New Jersey. He was described in the Saint Paul’s Parish High School yearbook as “Einstein 2” and a “constant companion of mischief”.

He received his Associate of Arts degree from Mercer County Community College, graduating with honors in 1977. He became a licensed Land Surveyor in 1978 and received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Thomas Edison University that same year. His parents did not have the financial means to send Brian to law school, so he attended classes during the day and worked evenings to supplement his student loans. Brian graduated with high honors (Order of the Coif) from McGeorge School of Law in 1983. His legal career included work as a Deputy City Attorney in San Diego (where he prosecuted the “Charlie the Tuna” poaching case,) and Deputy Public Defender in Madera and Shasta Counties. It was at contract Public Defender Frank O’Connor’s office that he met his wife Erin O’Toole-McNally. Brian also worked for a

prestigious civil litigation firm in the Bay Area. He suffered through every moment of that job because he did not enter into the legal profession for wealth or status. He was happiest defending the people society forgot. Brian was more comfortable in his tan, polyester, "Public Defender suit" than he was in a tailored wool suit. He was an excellent trial lawyer.

Brian's love of science lead him to follow in his father's footsteps and work as an Environmental Health Specialist. He received his Environmental Health Specialist license in New Jersey in 1988. In the 1990's Brian decided he wanted to explore a career other than the practice of law. He had always found satisfaction as a Health Inspector. However, to work in this field in California, he would need to take and pass a statistics course because California imposed this additional registration requirement. Brian did not want to devote an entire semester in college to study the subject, so he bought a textbook and studied it over the weekend. He was allowed to challenge the course and take a test in lieu of the class.

Brian easily passed the exam. Brian went on to be employed by Environmental Health Departments in Shasta, Trinity, and Del Norte Counties. In 2017, after having passed tests that qualified him for specialized training by the Department of Homeland Security, Brian traveled to Area 51 to attend courses in the Introduction to Radiological/Nuclear WMD Operations, the use of Radiation Instruments, and the Response to Nuclear/WMD Incidents.

Brian, ever the student, obtained a Water Treatment Plant Operation Certificate from California State University, Sacramento in 1990. He also taught paralegal classes at Shasta College, and published novels. He was asked to write a column for a local Shasta County publication and submitted stories which primarily focused on gardening. However, he wrote on various other topics. One of his more irreverent stories dealt with septic systems and was titled "Just 'Cause You Flush it, Don't Mean it's Gone." He had an Irishman's sense of humor and never fully abandoned that constant companionship with mischief.

Brian and Erin have two daughters, Frances "Frannie" who is living in Portland, Oregon, and Anna "Annie" who resides in Redding, California. His girls were his pride and joy. When Brian was diagnosed with a terminal illness, his only concern was to take care of his family. Rather than dwelling on his medical issues, he spent his last moments taking steps to ensure his family was going to be taken care of after he passed.

Brian was an avid gardener and loved growing rare plants. Other interests he had were geology, trains, and travel. He did not trust airplanes. Brian developed a love for Newfoundland, probably because it was the closest he felt he could get to Ireland without needing to set foot on a plane. Brian detested bullies and had no interest in material wealth.

In his last days, Brian was able to be with his family and loyal friends. In addition to his wife and daughters, amazing people from the Crescent City community came forward to help with end of life care. The family thanks the many people who have provided kind wishes and support. They send very special thanks to Helen Ellsworth, Karen Restad, Sandy Brook, and friend Will.

Brian passed away on October 13, 2019, after a brief illness. His family requests in lieu of cards, flowers, or donations, for people to write and call the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors, the Del Norte Healthcare

District, and local officials to express their concern that Del Norte County lacks hospice and end of life care. Letters to the Editor of the local paper would also be welcomed. Del Norte County has an urgent need for end of life services which allow terminally ill patients to die in comfort and dignity in familiar surroundings. The family and caregivers were shocked to learn that Crescent City currently does not have a meaningful safety net for people who are sent home on end of life care. Brian worked so hard as a Health Inspector to improve the quality of 3 lives of those who resided in his county. His memory would best be honored by advocating for resources for people who are at the end of life in Del Norte County.

Celebration of life service will be held at a future date.

Arrangements are under the direction of Wier's Mortuary Chapel.

Please sign the family's online guest book at wiersmortuary.com