

I am so honored that you ALL are here to help celebrate his life. As I look around, some of you knew him as part of your family or knew him as a classmate, a neighbor, or as a boss or as a colleague or a combination of a couple of these. All of these categories made up the man Steve was.

Steve lived well, worked hard, and played just as hard. He was a man of great character and unwavering principle. Even if that cost him. He fought for what he believed in and you always knew where he stood. To know him was, for most, was to love him. And even though he didn't say it, he loved each of you here this evening.

Some of you know about our journey, but if you don't allow me to share part of it. For a few months Steve knew something wasn't quite right with him. The first signs he noticed were his handwriting and then speech. If you worked with Steve you know it took a very skilled eye to be able to read his doctor like handwriting to begin with. Well, it became even worse sometime early 2023. I am not sure when he first noticed it, because he didn't tell me. When it became difficult for him to type, focus on his reading and type, he finally told me he was having issues. He also thought he had aphasia because, to him, his words didn't come out right. I knew it wasn't aphasia because that is what began Mom's journey with dementia. July of 2023, Steve was in Raleigh on a business trip. He called me early in the evening and I knew immediately something wasn't right because he never called that early when he was out of town. He told me he fell at Jimmy V's restaurant and hit his head. Many of you know that Steve had a history of passing out in public for various reasons over the years. Falls were a common occurrence. He had two significant ones to the back of the head in 2022 and one early in 2023. His falls and injuries were just part of his klutzy nature. To me, this one in July was just another one of those. But it looked really bad, because of a torn rotator cuff in one arm and bone spurs in the other, he couldn't break his fall and hit the floor head first. When Steve hurt himself he would bleed like a stuck pig. Brushing against a feather would require a couple bandaids. This fall required EMS to check him out. His stubborn self allowed them too at the restaurant, but nothing more. He went to his room and called me. I, in turn, notified Julie, who was closer to him than I was at the time in case he needed help.

Shortly after this fall, our hellish journey to find out what was wrong with him began. Our first neurologist doctor diagnosed him with carpal tunnel and work stress. Tedder, work stress, right! Right? He lived to work. While he got pissed off from time to time, stress wasn't something Steve got from work. From me maybe, but not from work. He had to undergo psychological testing next. He actually failed it! Not because he had cognitive issues, but because he didn't follow the directions. He typed answers because he had a difficult time writing. So those results were useless. The second neurologist said it was a B12 deficiency and definitely not Parkinsons. That led to weekly shots. No improvement. Next was another neurologist, an ENT, an orthopedic surgeon. Then an MRI of his spine. That revealed a totally messed up back. The poor man had such an arthritic lumbar and cervical spine. I was hoping that for some reason that was causing his declining speech and vision. It became increasingly difficult for him to focus on the words on the left side of a page. But no, doctors said the two issues were unrelated. But at the same time as all the other issues were becoming worse, so was his back

pain. It hurt him to stand and walk. He often had a level 10 pain. Only sitting or laying down was he in less pain. We came close to cervical surgery but because of the risk of his speech being temporarily even more impaired, we chose to forgo it at that time. He had several rounds of spinal injections by another specialist to help temporarily relieve the pain until those no longer worked. Then we heard about a spinal cord stimulator. What a process that was! After another psychological evaluation to make sure he could handle a foreign object implanted in his body, the trial for that implant was a miracle! This pain went from 10 to 0 almost overnight! After a week trial the implanted wires had to be taken out only to have him wait in pain for another two months for the permanent implant to be scheduled. During this time, we had more neurologist appointments, physical therapies, speech therapies, vision therapies, and a very skilled occupational therapist evaluation. His speech became increasingly worse, his ability to read became almost impossible without computer apps to read to him and a voice recognition app to type to him. This worked up to the point that the computer couldn't understand him. January 3, 2024, we finally had an appointment with a neurological movement specialist after an imaging test called a DAT scan showed some very concerning signs that something was definitely wrong. This doctor gave us the diagnosis of what is referred to as a rare Parkinsonian disease that is called Progressive Supranuclear Palsy. Like Parkinsons, PSP, includes a dopamine deficiency in the brain, which leads to motor control problems. Those were his next symptoms, the inability to use his dominant right side.

Julie and I both didn't want to believe this diagnosis. I can't tell you how many combined hours of research we did to find another cause for his decline. I prayed he had suffered a stroke and that the therapies would cure him. I was sure he suffered a stroke in his chair right there. One evening, I swear his face changed right in front of me. It became asymmetrical and he even drooled a bit. It is sad that I was so glad it was a stroke. But we were told no. A second opinion by another specialist at UNC confirmed the diagnosis. That led to a trip to Richmond in hopes he could be enrolled in a trial for a drug that had a 60/40 chance of getting the meds that could slow the progression of the symptoms. You had to score below 40 to be accepted into the trial. His score? 40. His vision had declined too much. The Supranuclear part of PSP refers to your vision and causes square wave jerks or to simplify, focus. He also failed because he couldn't stand from an unarmored chair but only, due at that time because of his injured shoulders. As sad as it was to fail the requirements for the trial, we were both a bit relieved because it would be a year long of drinking a horrible tasting medication twice daily only for a 60% change it may make of slowing the progression of a terminal diagnosis.

June 30, 2024, Steve gave up his beloved job as the sole proprietor of Tedderfarm Consulting. I want to thank Black and Veech for their confidence in his abilities up to that point. If not for PSP, he would still be working. He loved his work. All 50+ years.

This horrific disease also made his eyes close involuntarily. He had to pry them open in the mornings and often throughout the day. You can only imagine how hard it was for him to admit that it was time for him to no longer drive his truck. But with my Dad's engineering ingenuity, he built a system for him to use his walker to get to the golf cart to drive to the barn to use handrails to get on a platform to step onto his mower. He was determined to get out each day if only to mow one field each day. I knew the last day he mowed would be his last. That was a very sad day. Even though he was determined to do this chore, it was so difficult for him to move. While I insisted on getting an electric wheelchair, he only used it once in the house and once outside.

He was too proud. Even when it became almost impossible for his right foot and leg to cooperate, he would only let me push him while sitting on his walker chair. By this time, his speech was almost so impaired we could hardly understand him. We hated to ask him to repeat himself. But believe it or not, he was way more patient than I thought he would be when he tried so hard to give me all the instructions to maintain the yard, the mowers, the trucks, the tractor, the water stove, how to use the chainsaw, split and stack wood, build a fire, the home maintenance schedule. The list goes on. For the last couple of months, his eyes became so sensitive to the light, we had to put up black out curtains in the house even though he often wore special tinted sunglasses inside.

Another horrible symptom that happens with PSP patients is the loss of your throat muscles. Not only was he a fall risk, he was at risk of choking even just sipping water. Like dementia patients, the cause of death with PSP patients is complications due to falls or aspiration pneumonia. I was determined neither would happen to him.

In our last days together at home, under the care of Hospice, the only way we could communicate was by holding hands while I recited the alphabet for him to squeeze my hand when I got to the letter in the words he wanted me to figure out. When he could no longer swallow his liquid meds, we had to leave home. Five days later, I lost my warrior husband. Throughout this journey, he was so strong with the parts that still worked. Many PSP patients also suffer dementia. Steve never lost any cognitive abilities. And while he didn't want to linger in the Hospice home, his heart was so strong it wouldn't stop beating. At 5am the day he passed, I told him I was going to rest for a couple hours. I set the recliner up just as close to the way we slept each night at home. I held his hand and told him how much I loved him. I saw and felt him ever so slightly stroke my hand with his thumb. I must have fell asleep immediately after. I woke 45 minutes later to a room full only for his dear sweet night nurse to tell me he had just passed.

While I know he is whole again, able to freely move, see, and speak and once again in the company of his parents and our pets, including Daisy who passed just a couple days after he did, his loss has left a deep hole in my heart.

A few weeks before he passed, I told him I had to go see someone but I didn't tell him who or why. That person was the Chief of our nearby Sauratown Volunteer Fire Department, Wayne Barneycastle. This is the same position and title that Steve's dad, Ira held years ago as a founding member of the department. Ira trained Wayne. That was Ira's call truck. I asked Wayne for a big favor and he didn't hesitate to say yes.

What some of you don't know is that Steve held the title of Chief of the Water Quality Section in the Division of Environmental Management for many years under the leadership of our dear friend, Preston Howard.

When I got home I told Steve that the hell we had gone through would not be in vain. I told him his legacy would live on to help others. He was touched to the point of tears when I told him I was starting the Chief Tedder Rescue Foundation. While I can't bring awareness to PSP like it so desperately deserves, what the foundation can do is help those in need who can't speak for themselves. We will start in Stokes County and see how far our help can reach. Steve wore these three devices each day for his last year. This chain was the first thing he put on each morning and last thing he took off to charge each night. It gave us both peace of mind knowing that help was only the push of a button away. And it worked! One day, I came home to EMS

vehicles down at the barn because he fell getting off the mower. He didn't have his phone so he pushed the button and they came to help him up. Another time, when he was supervising me, Julie, Liam splitting wood, he passed out and slowly fell to an awkward position on the ground. Chief Barneycastle was the first to respond followed by several other volunteers and then the EMS truck. One of these devices has a QR code that when scanned has all Steve's emergency contacts, medications, information of his disease, and insurance cards. Wayne had never seen such a device. He couldn't believe all that information was stored within a tiny QR code. Together, Julie, Liam, Chuck, Chief Barneycastle and I make up the board of the Chief Tedder Rescue Foundation. Before Steve passed, the foundation was officially set up with the North Carolina Secretary of State's Office and with the federal government. We are official y'all. We have started a website and social media pages. They are still in the beginning stages, but tonight we are making it public with the gifts we want you to take away with you this evening. We are in the process of getting the foundation name trademarked. While we have ideas to make the three devices into one, and had a 3D mock made of one of the ideas to incorporate two of them into one, the patent process to put all three into one, while unfound in the market, our attorney says it would be difficult to get approved because it is close to what is on the market. Knowing that would probably be the case, I have reached out to the company that makes this fall alert device. They called me the same day I wrote to them. We are hoping for some sort of partnership with them to develop the idea and allow us to purchase them at low cost so we can give them to those in need. Those stricken with diseases that take your voice like Steve, those like my sweet Mom who, those with special needs like Donna Lou, non-verbal autistic children, and even pets with special needs. And to help give peace of mind to caregivers who can't be with their loved one 24/7. The monetary support we have received since Steve's death has not been touched. We are building a foundation to have the funds to have the ability to match grants that Liam is helping research. I made this promise to Steve and it will be my lifelong mission to fulfill it.

To get your takeaway gift, learn more about the Chief Tedder Rescue Foundation, and PSP, please stop by the table by the mailbox on your way out this evening. The QR code on your takeaways leads you to our page to make donations to the foundation if you choose to do so. We would also appreciate you sharing our story and helping us gain awareness of our mission.

Thank you for being so patient and allowing me to share the journey Steve, our families, and I went through. And thank you for your support.