



*Dr. Robert Cecil
McAdams, Ph.D.*

Jan. 17, 1949 - May 31, 2024

Dr. Robert Cecil McAdams, Ph.D., age 75, born January 17, 1949 died on May 31, 2024 from Neuroendocrine Cancer at Grace Ridge Skilled Care under the loving care of the Nursing Staff and Amorem Hospice nurses.

“If only all of us had the power of self to have lived as he did. A beautiful soul who cared for you and family, for the earth, for his mule, for his students, for others with such intention and clarity.” (Regarding Robert McAdams by poet Jeffery Beam)

From his maternal Cecil heritage, Robert became an educator, a revered and honored teacher for 38 years. With a degree in Art Education from Atlantic Christian College, he taught art in Wilson City Schools. With a Master in History Education from Appalachian State University and a Ph.D. in History from the University of Tennessee, he taught art, humanities, and history in Burke County. During his last 20 years of teaching at East Burke High School, he became a Nationally Certified teacher, and retired in 2009. He was awarded the Order of the Long Leaf Pine for service to NC education. A scholarship in his name is awarded at Western Piedmont Community College.

From his paternal McAdams farming heritage in Anderson County, SC, he became a farmer and gardener of small holdings, always cultivating his fields with mule, push-

plow, or hoe. Canning and freezing his harvest, cooking and heating primarily with wood, he lived a back-to-earth lifestyle. While in his 20s, he apprenticed two farmers who worked with mules and worked with several Pennsylvania Amish families during a Fall harvest. He worked rented small farms until buying his farm in Morganton. His

affinity for farming grew and always remained a deep love until his last garden planting on May first this spring.

Robert was predeceased by his parents, Robert Millard and Jean Cecil McAdams, and his sister Barbara McAdams Clark.

He is survived by brother John Neal (Donna) McAdams of Bend, Oregon, sister Margaret Helen McAdams (Dennis Deane) of Valdese, North Carolina, nephews Benjamin Robert McAdams of Seattle, Washington and Seth John McAdams of Bend, Oregon, niece Kathryn Clark Perez (Adrian Perez) of Geneseo, Illinois, four great nieces, Charlotte Marilyn Guerra-McAdams, Zephyra Eleanor, Xiomara Elizabeth, and Alicia Socorro Perez, a great nephew David Benjamin Guerra-McAdams, and by his long time friends Donald Ray and Dian Dernoeden Morgan of Cornelius.

Robert was a long time member of the First Presbyterian Church of Morganton. A Celebration of Life will be held at 2 p.m., Saturday, July 20, 2024 at First Presbyterian Church. Following the service, a reception will be held in the fellowship hall.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Dr. Robert C. McAdams Endowed Scholarship at Western Piedmont Community College or a charity of your choice.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with arrangements.

Tribute Wall

Dr. McAdams was one of the finest human beings I've ever known. He was a friend to all; compassionate and loving. He had a profound, positive impact on me and so many. Rest in peace, kind sir. Your time here was well spent enriching the lives of others. Now your heavenly Father is overflowing having you return home to Him.

—Marty Burns

I visited Dr. Mac at East Burke shortly after I graduated and I remember he wanted help learning about and accessing Facebook. It was a delight after that to keep up with him that way and for him to see all the adoring comments awaiting him, especially on his birthday. I also remember having him as a teacher and we talked about how he had gone to Caswell in the summer as a counselor, and all of the cool things he did when he was a teenager. Even though he retired only a year after I graduated, he never seemed old to me because there was always a twinkle in his eye and he was always passionate to learn something new. He was a great encourager and an inspiration for living your life exactly on your terms, and also gracefully supporting his community. Truly a great loss for Burke County.

—Christina Naylor Sarris



I was privileged to have Dr. Mac as my teacher through most of high school. He was an excellent teacher with a passion for history and his students and it showed every



day in his classroom. I am a teacher now and I tell my students stories about being in his classroom. He was truly one of a kind. Rest easy Dr. Mac.

–Heather Mull

Our world has lost a kind and loving soul. He will be greatly missed. Every time I returned to Morganton I hoped I would get to see him. He and my husband loved to talk about farming in eastern NC. Safe travels Robert.

–Kay Tasler Barrow

Outstanding teacher and great American. Extremely popular with students, fellow teachers, and community! Top 1 per cent of professionals I ever served with in the USMC (21 yrs) and in the educational environment (21 years). Rick Sherrill USMC Principal East Burke HS (1998- 2003)

–Charles Sherrill

I had the honor to work at East Burke High School with Dr. McAdams. A great humble man who apparently lived right down the road from my grandparents home on Enola Road.

–Aimee W Marler



All his students were so privileged to have experienced time in his classroom. He made everyone feel welcome, and as if their perspective truly mattered. He loved his subject, but he loved his students first. We are all grateful to him for showing us his heart, and giving us a genuine example of what it means to live deliberately.

–Amy Stephens Overbay

–Ronald Raybon

Mac was my AP US History and World History teacher at East Burke in 1992-1993. No teacher is as memorable or impactful. He touched so many lives of

students in NC. I'm so thankful I got to sit in his classroom and hear stories of Jack the ass and gain wisdom from one of the best educators of our time.



Dearest Margaret, Thank you for introducing me to your brother, Robert. It was an honor and a privilege to experience his beautiful light, which shone radiantly upon all whom he encountered. My he rest in peace.

–Cinnamin Herring

When one thinks of a master teacher, Dr. McAdams comes to mind. He was exemplary in every way. First of all, he was a Christian leader who loved his students and taught them to think critically and to love learning for a lifetime. Second, he lived a life of service to his community. Third, Dr. McAdams was a model of integrity and excellence for each of us to emulate. Please accept my sincere condolences in the loss of your family member and/or friend. I will be forever grateful that my son, Cole Wilson, was a student of Dr. McAdams and that I was honored to be his colleague in the school system.

–Susan Pollpeter