



Anthony "Tony" Ray Souders

April 7, 2025

Anthony Ray Souders made his transition to the peaceful after life on April 7, 2025 after a long battle with cancer.

'Papa' Tony was a father, grandfather, brother, son, husband, uncle and friend. He is survived by his Daughters Briauna Pulis and Ellysa Souders, Granddaughters Mariyah Matheson and Jadya Munford, Sister Teresa Miller and many loving friends and family. Tony's life was rich with music, fishing, rock climbing, hunting, family camping trips on the "Pines" and riding his Harley! He proudly honored Veterans and was the Commander of the Sons of the American Legion, Post 4 for 17 years until he passed.

A celebration of his life will take place at the Laporte Presbyterian Church, April 22, 2025 at 11 a.m. followed by a luncheon at the American Legion at 12:30 p.m.

__Anthony Ray Souders Eulogy by Elizabeth Knight 4.22.2025__

Anthony Ray Souders was lifted up to the light on the morning of April 7, 2025. After a six-month battle with cancer, and a short stay at Pathways Hospice in Fort Collins, CO, Papa Tony made his transition to the peaceful after life surrounded by the spirit of God, beautiful angels and a soaring eagle's spirit.

Born October 15, 1956, Tony was a father, grandfather, brother, son, husband, uncle and friend. His parents were Raymond A Souders, who came to Fort

Collins from Sterling, CO to work on the building of Horsetooth Reservoir. Raymond loved the area so much that he brought his mother Netty and his brothers Dale, Marvin and Lloyd to the Fort where they would also make Fort Collins their home. Ray retired as a lineman at the City of Fort Collins and spent time in his retirement making whirly birds and woodworking crafts, Tweety, Sylvester, Spider man, ducks, angels, table basketball, clucking chickens and more.

Marlene Souders (maiden name Blehm) worked as a waitress at the Silver Grill in old town Fort Collins, she also managed Ted's Place and worked at the American Legion and CSU in the food service industry. She proudly served Veterans and volunteered at AA to help those in need of recovery. Early on, the family lived out on a farm in SE Fort Collins, where Prospect was the south end of town and Harmony was nothing but farmhouses and corn fields. We've all seen how the times have changed, and, in the end, it concerned Tony as he missed the simple farm life of the early days.

Ray and Marlene had three children, Tony, Steven and Teresa. Tony went through the Poudre School system and graduated from Poudre High School in 1975. He continued to live in the Laporte area working for Dr. Chappelle, at the vet clinic when he met his first wife Laurie Miller. They were married in the late 70's and had their daughter Briauna Ray Souders in 1980. They spent time in the Poudre canyon while getting to know rock and roll and becoming young parents.

Tony loved to elk and deer hunt and would spend time with his cousin Stuart, and he shot his first deer in 1975. From there, hunting trips became more frequent, and he got his first elk in 1979, followed by a successful deer hunt with a bow in 1982. Tony continued to hunt throughout the years, mostly with his bow, so the success rate was low, but he more so enjoyed being in the woods.

In 1991, Tony met Elizabeth “Lizzy” Knight, and they were married September 9, 1995 at Beaver Meadows Resort in Red Feather Lakes, CO. In July of 1999, Lizzy found a 35-acre property and a small cabin in Sand Creek Park on the Colorado/Wyoming border, and they knew it was the “one”. Known today as Howlin’ Pines, they worked to create a private space for family retreats and to get away from the growing popular Poudre Canyon camp sites. Together, Tony and Lizzy lived in Laporte and went to the mountain property on the weekends for R&R, fishing, campfires, nature breaks and a good Wyoming wind.

When their daughter Ellysa Jade Souders was born in April of 2001, she was bundled up and taken to the Pines for mountain adventures. Papa and Elly were always watching out for hummingbirds, moose, elk, deer, chippers, summer thunderstorms and woodland fairies who would bring treats to the good kids. Tony always enjoyed camping with his girls, and all his friends and family who came to the Pines during the summer months for weekend retreats and holiday camping. Tradition was for the Purcell’s and kids to come up every fourth of July with plenty of bacon and eggs, smores around the campfire, family, friends and furry friends too. The time was always well spent with fishing and hiking, or carving our initials into tree stumps and telling stories around the fire.

Early in his career, Tony worked on circuit board manufacturing equipment at Cencorp. He then became a prototype machinist for the data storage industry, IBM, and Maxtor. At Starsys he made aerospace components and was so proud of his parts going up into space. He made jigs and fixtures, intricate ice-climbing gear, special farm equipment parts, custom hot-rod parts, gunsmithing and more. His creative side kept him making medicine pouches, cribbage boards, chess sets, and he enjoyed sewing and leather tooling in the

early days with his brother Steven. He spent time with the crew at Cooper Auto Body and was a well-known associate at the Laporte Hardware store who could help you find the “thing’ that fixes ‘you know that thing’ that looks like this and does that!! He was good at puzzles and always had a way to put the pieces together. He enjoyed complex jigsaw puzzles with Elly to pass the wintertime blues and together they would test their speed on who could finish the 1000 piece puzzle the fastest.

Tony’s life was rich with fishing, rock climbing, music, hunting, family camping trips on the “Pines” and riding his Harley Davidson! He felt “free” on the bike and would continue to ride until 2022 when the bike was struck by a crazy driver in the American Legion parking lot. Fortunately, he wasn’t on it, and unfortunately for Tony, he never rode that 79 Harley FX Lowrider again. It broke his heart and crushed his spirit to see it in pieces in the garage. His rock-climbing adventures led him up Devil’s Tower, over Edwards Crack, to the top of The Priest and Nuns, and even a trip to Yosemite, California. We even climbed at the tropics in Fort Collins below Horsetooth dam at the end of Laporte Avenue before it was closed off to the public after 911.

He proudly honored Veterans wherever he went and always thanked them for their service. He would go out of his way to thank a Veteran who was wearing a WW2 hat, Korea or Viet Nam t-shirt and he honestly felt that he missed his chance to serve our country. He gave over 20 years of volunteer service to the American Legion Post 4, as a SON and was the acting Commander of the Sons of the American Legion for 17 years until he passed away on April 7th.

Tony is survived by his Daughters Briana Pulis (And husband Jimmy Pulis) and Ellysa Souders, me, Elizabeth Knight, his wife of over 25 years, Granddaughter Mariyah Matheson (and new husband Shane Matheson) and Granddaughter Jadya Munford, Sister Teresa Miller (and husband Eddie Miller. Mother-in-law Elaine Bailey, and many loving friends, and family who

stood by Tony's side through his cancer treatments. In the end, he had a bucket list and a couple items were to climb Horsetooth rock, go horseback riding with Elly, and see the trees change color in east with his good friend Richard in the fall.

We will all miss the years ahead without Papa Tony and know that he is resting now in heaven. When you hear the roaring of the thunder and feel the fear of lightning, think of Tony and know that he is keeping an eye on us all. May the eagles' wings lift you up my friend and take you on the freedom flight you've always wanted! Go in Peace!

Tribute Wall



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



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