



# Briant K. Atkins

FEB 2, 1963 - JUL 6, 2023



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## **Briant K. Atkins**

FEB 2, 1963 - JUL 6, 2023

**B**riant K. Atkins, 60, of Locust Grove, VA, passed Thursday, July 6, 2023 at his residence. He was born February 2, 1963 in Virginia to Jean “Pat” Atkins and the late Jeremiah “Dickie” Atkins, III.

Briant's lifelong passion for firefighting ignited at the age of 16 and burned bright throughout his career in the fire service industry, until he was diagnosed with an occupational-related cancer in April 2022. His commitment to the field encompassed all aspects of firefighting, but it was his unmatched expertise in hazardous material response and his unwavering dedication to training and educating fellow firefighters that set him apart. For an impressive span of 31 years, Briant selflessly served the City of Alexandria Fire Department, rising through the ranks to ultimately retire as a Captain in 2013. Even after retiring, his desire to make a difference in fire education led him to take on a new role as the Campus Fire Safety Officer at the University of Mary Washington (UMW). There, he continued to leave an indelible mark on the field. But Briant's desire to protect and support firefighters didn't stop there. Following his time at UMW, he transitioned to the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP), assuming the position of Chief Safety Officer. In this role, he became a champion for firefighter education and advocated for legislation to safeguard the well-being of active-duty firefighters in the state of Virginia. During his tenure at VDFP, Briant also began to raise awareness for firefighters diagnosed with occupational-related cancer, becoming a powerful advocate for their cause. In 2022, driven by his true passion for hazardous materials response, Briant embraced a new role as the Civilian Hazardous Material Coordinator of Prince William County Fire Department. This allowed him to delve deeper into his expertise and continue making a difference on the frontlines. In addition to his illustrious professional career, Briant was an active member of the volunteer fire departments of Salem and Mine Run, dedicating his time and energy to serving these communities for a number of years, including being a charter and life time member of Salem Volunteer Fire Department. His commitment to firefighting extended far beyond the boundaries of his professional duties, leaving a lasting impact wherever he went.



## Obituary

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Outside of his professional career, Briant found immense joy in the company of his family and friends. Together, they embarked on numerous adventures, always approaching them with a smile and a "hell-yeah" attitude. One of his greatest passions was traveling, particularly to destinations blessed with sunny skies and sandy beaches. Additionally, he shared a special bond with his brother and close friends, as they enthusiastically followed the world of horse racing. When it came to sports, Briant was an avid supporter of the Philadelphia Eagles. Always cheering on his beloved team on game days, full of excitement, as he gathered with family and friends to share in the thrill of each touchdown.

He is survived by his wife, Leitha Burke Atkins; children, Eliza K. Richards and husband, Phillip F. Richards, and Madelyn K. Atkins; brother, James P. Atkins (Susan Graves); sister, Kim D. Atkins; and many other family members and cherished friends.

In addition to his father, Briant is preceded in death by his beloved grandson, Liam F. Richards.

A funeral service will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, July 12, 2023 at Salem Fire Hall, 13428 Scotts Mill Rd, Culpeper, VA 22701 with Gregg Hoffman and Michael Burke officiating.

Following the service, the family invites those who attend to join them at Pepper's Grill, 791 Madison Road, Culpeper, VA 22701 for a traditionally Irish wake, as Briant requested.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be donated to the Virginia Firefighter Cancer Support Network at <https://firefightercancersupport.org/how-you-can-help/donate/>, the Mine Run Volunteer Fire Department at [https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted\\_button\\_id=THZW7E9BCNFZY](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=THZW7E9BCNFZY), or Salem Volunteer Fire Department at <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/SVFDInc>.

The family would like to thank his care team with Virginia Oncology, particularly Dr. Manan Mehta and PA Jessica Castiglia; and, the staff who treated him at Mary Washington Hospital.

Honorary Pallbearers serving the family will be Lon Fugate, Dempsey Young, Fulton Lucas, Mike Bailey, Dave Bogozzi, Glen Rudner, and the fellow members of his rookie class from the City of Alexandria.

An online guestbook and tribute wall are available at [www.foundandsons.com](http://www.foundandsons.com)



## Obituary

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Found and Sons Funeral Chapel of Culpeper is serving the family.




# Events

**Briant K. Atkins**

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## Funeral Service

 **Wednesday**, July 12, 2023

 11:00 AM ET

 **Salem Volunteer Fire Department**  
13428 Scotts Mill Road , Culpeper VA 22701





# Tribute Wall

**Briant K. Atkins**

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**R Rabe** posted:

Leitha, and the girls, Thank you for sharing Briant with us. Brian was a loving husband, father, grandfather, friend, and neighbor. Every one he interacted with was amazed by his positive, and charm. As you all know, he could light up a room. I know. I came later into Briants life when he taught along side many of the instructors that represented the Statewide Traffic Incident Mgmt. Committee. Briant's abilities to connect to students was valuable. I would like to think his abilities resonated and saved many first responders lives. I will personally miss his phone calls and conversations. Please remain patient during this time of healing. We're all always a few doors down. Many prayers for your family. Kind regards, Robert and Michelle Rabe

July 12 at 10:32 AM



**Jared Goff** posted:

I just learned of Briant's passing and I share the sadness with his family and many friends. Cancer sucks, yet it is comforting to know that he is no longer suffering. I was first introduced to Briant while going through basic law enforcement school. Briant would stop by from time to time to visit us, to ensure that things were safe. One day, we jokingly challenged him to join us for the OC spray day. He gladly joined us, which forged a bond that is unexplainable. I admired his spirit and determination, and from that point forward, we became friends. I will miss you Briant. Rest easy.

July 12 at 4:59 AM



**Lynda Hartman** lit a candle in honor of Briant.

So sorry to the Atkins family in the loss of Briant. My thoughts and prayers are with you all in this difficult time. Lynda Hartman

July 11 at 5:44 PM



**Thomas Jarman** lit a candle in honor of Briant.

Briant, my friend, I wish you final peace. The light you brought to everything you did will live on. The citizens, firefighters, and coworkers in the Commonwealth will forever be grateful for all your "can do" contributions to Public Safety. I will be personally and professionally grateful for your friendship, teamwork, and go to expertise. My sincere condolences to your family. You will truly be missed my brother!!! TOMJ.

July 11 at 4:49 PM





## Tribute Wall

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JP

**Joyce Pullen** lit a candle in honor of Briant.

Our thoughts and prayers goes out to the entire family of Briant. Rest in peace now Briant you will be greatly missed by all.Joyce Pullen and family.

July 10 at 4:43 PM



**Anonymous** sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Atkins family.

July 10 at 3:37 PM



**Anonymous** planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Briant.

July 10 at 3:37 PM



**Anonymous** sent a Country Basket Blooms to the Atkins family.

July 10 at 1:00 PM



HS

**Heather Smolka** posted:

To Leitha and the Atkins family,I am so sorry to hear of Briant's passing. He has been truly missed since he left VDFP but was always a phone call away. He left an indelible impact on everyone he knew and worked with. As Fran just mentioned, I am blessed to have had an opportunity to work with him.With sympathy,Heather SmolkaVDFP HR Manager

July 10 at 10:11 AM

FR

**Fran** posted:

Leitha, I am so sorry to hear of Briant's passing. I feel very fortunate to have worked with him at VDFP. He was so passionate about the fire service and an advocate for so many. Briant RIP my friend.

July 10 at 9:33 AM



## Tribute Wall

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DL

**Denise Lohr** posted:

My sincere condolences to the entire Atkins family.

July 10 at 9:26 AM

TP

**Tom Polera** posted:

My deepest condolences to Briant's family. We met as firefighters over 30 years ago. Our paths crossed here and there over that time. Last year, when he heard about my cancer diagnosis and tracked me down. He informed me about his battle and provided me so support. He is an inspiration to so many because of his fight and his caring love for others. May God Bless you and your family my friend. ❤️

July 10 at 7:08 AM

JD

**Jim & Kim Dwyer** posted:

Aunt Pat, Kim, James and the rest of the family, We are so sorry to hear of your loss. We hope your memories will bring you comfort at this difficult time. You all are in our thoughts prayers. Jim, Kim, Jamie Dwyer and family

July 10 at 4:32 AM

JB

**Jeff Bailey** posted:

Briant spent his entire adult life in the fire service, both as a volunteer and paid, protecting, and serving people. It was not just a job for Briant, it was a way of life for him. He did get it honestly from his Dad, who just passed away in January. Briant was very dedicated and passionate about firefighting and the effects it had on the safety, health, and wellbeing of all firefighters. Briant was a comrade, but more importantly he was a friend. If there is a fire department in heaven, I am sure God has asked Briant about joining, along with his Dad and many others who have gone before him. Thoughts & prayers are with the family during this most difficult time.

July 10 at 2:35 AM



# Tribute Wall

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**Bob Wallach Past Chief 16** posted:

Kim - I'm so sorry to hear of Briant's passing. May the wonderful memories help you and his family through this difficult time. My sincere condolences and sympathies to all. Briant had a great deal of knowledge in the fire service and helped me as I began firefighter training as Reva Fire and Rescue started and provided much needed advice as I continued for the next 15 years. RIP

July 9 at 2:34 PM



**Bill Mackay** posted:

Briant and I shared a passion for Haz Mat, he with Alex and me with FXCO. Both retired, our paths crossed at VDFP. Briant was passionate about protecting firefighters ( many times from their own bad habits and behaviors) as evident from his push to get regulations established to ban the use of OSB in training environments. Rest well my friend.

July 8 at 3:46 PM



**Dave Stewart** posted:

Briant it was always fun times working with you and having you around. Your HazMat knowledge was unmatched as far as I am concerned. Rest easy we have it from here sir.Dave Stewart

July 8 at 1:47 PM



**Jacqui Howington** lit a candle in honor of Briant.

On behalf of John and Jacqui Howington, your thoughts and prayers are with the Atkins Family

July 8 at 7:58 AM



**Debbie Feaganes** lit a candle in honor of Briant.

To the Atkins family I so sorry for your loss of Briant! I know he was truly loved by everyone who knew him. he has touched a lot of hearts. I would like to thank him for all his service as to being a firefighter. You have My Deepest sympathy. Things will never be the same after he is gone. You all are in my thoughts and prayers.Sincerely,Debbie & Doyne Feaganes

July 7 at 5:18 PM





## Tribute Wall

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SA

**Sarah** posted:

Briant and I started at UMW on the same day in 2013. He was so very kind and I enjoyed working with him!!

July 7 at 1:48 PM

TC

**Tibby Clegg** posted:

Atkins Family. Very sorry to hear Briant passed away. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family.

July 7 at 1:06 PM

WG

**Wayne Grimsley** posted:

One of the saddest days of my life in Briants passing. Friend and colleague in fire training. You will be missed. Heaven needs a Captain. RIP

July 7 at 12:43 PM



## Tribute Wall

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DB

**David Boverman** posted:

I am sending thoughts, prayers, and condolences to everyone who has suffered Briant's leaving us, particularly his family and loved ones, including his firefighting community. I was blessed to have had the opportunity to have worked with Briant when he came to my shift as a new 'Rookie' at W57C in Alexandria. Our shift was unique for a few reasons, and Briant demonstrated an uncanny ability to always be humble with pure motives and intentions, not to mention to 'roll with the punches' with a smile. Whilst I left Alexandria Fire in 1983 and wound up many many miles away, I was again blessed to have caught up with him briefly on Facebook and Messenger in 2020. I miss knowing Briant's no longer on this mortal earth, and will continue to, and wish all those suffering and grieving God's Blessings, peace, and happiness. God bless mate, I'll see you on the 'other side'. Kindly, David Boverman Sydney Australia

July 7 at 9:55 AM

LF

**Lon And Pat Fugate** July 10 at 7:24 AM

Sending prayers to Leitha and the girls on "B's" passing. Lon and I were blessed to be considered friends. Remember the football games when we rooted for the Redskins and Briant would root for his Eagles. The cookouts and pool parties were great and I am glad I got his potato casserole recipe which I will cherish. Briant, thanks for being such good friends to Lon and Shannon. They loved you so much and told us such good stories of your vacations together. The servant Paul writes in the book of Romans 1:7-Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ and Romans 6:8-Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. I know that Briant is in heaven with our Lord and looking down smiling. Rest in peace "B" we love you and will remember and think of you often.

BK

**Bill Kehoe** July 9 at 4:31 AM

Enjoyed working with him and his crew. Good times. Volunteer Bill Kehoe



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Briant by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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