



Brian Joseph O'Leary

May 31, 1952 - December 15, 2023

Colorado resident, Brian O'Leary, passed away on December 15, 2023, in Fort Collins, Colorado surrounded by his wife, close family and friends.

Born to John and Josephine (Urbanc) O'Leary on May 31, 1952 in Cheyenne, WY, he moved to Peoria, Illinois when he was seven, graduating from Peoria High School in 1970. Brian quickly enlisted in the Air National Guard after graduating. He served in Illinois from June 8, 1970 until August 28, 1974. Desiring to go back to his cowboy roots, he transferred to the Wyoming Air National Guard, starting August 29, 1974, serving two more years. He was honorably discharged on August 28, 1976.

At 21, he decided to follow in his father's footsteps hauling for Monfort of Colorado as their youngest driver, and found his passion for being on the road behind the wheel of his father's truck. Brian would go on to receive many awards, he was named the Company Equipment Driver of the Year by the Truckload Carriers Association and Trucker News, had multiple awards from the Colorado Motor Carrier Association, and was honored by the Nebraska State Patrol receiving a Public Service award for his life saving measures. Trucking was truly in his blood, and just as his passion for his family history, it only made sense to follow what he was destined to do, but blaze his own path in doing so.

In 1976, he had moved on to work for Henry Hersh Trucking, under Hank Sr., where he was brought under Hank's wing, fueling even more passion for the industry. It was here he learned about the word "Clean" when it came to trucking, and if you knew him, he prided himself in always having a clean truck, being a clean driver and was clean in his speech.

By 1983, Brian met the love of his life, Claudia, in Laramie, WY and they were married on October 30th. Claudia would be instrumental in helping him blaze more trails, which he was always sure to credit her for - creating a bond unlike anyone else's. A penguin he once bought for her when she was sick, becoming an emblem for their relationship, starting a collection that boasts on their Christmas tree and within their home. This began another fun characteristic of Brian's, donning a road companion on all his travels - an oversized Gorilla, "Gramps" with his arm out the passenger window that became an icon.

After working for Henry Hersh Trucking, he moved on to Western Distributing Company, hauling beer, then produce, meat, and what would become his favorite - exotic, high-value cars. Here, he hauled for high-profile clientele, with many of them becoming friends and clients along the way.

A dream of his, O'Leary Transportation was born in 2006, after his gained experience, where he provided the ultimate enclosed transport service. Building his 1999 Peterbilt, and 53ft trailer, he was entrusted to haul for many big names like Chip Foose, Shelby-American Factory and Foundation, Garth Brooks' Teammates for Kids Foundation, the Wilson Collection, and so many more. One of his favorite and most memorable hauls was to transport the Chris LeDoux statue - "The Good Ride" to the Cheyenne Frontier Days Fairgrounds, where it's proudly located and visible from I-25.

Brian has seen more miles than one will see in their lifetime, always ready to

tell incredible stories, being a devoted CFD season ticket holder, listening to the best music along the way, and living the Cowboy way in everything he did. "Life is a Highway" was not just the quote on his truck, but a true testament to Brian's life. Here's to the Highway to Heaven - this one might just be the best ride of his life.

Brian is preceded in death by his parents: father, John O'Leary; mother, Josephine Urbanc; and son, Cal Ray Candelaria.

He is survived by his wife, Claudia O'Leary; sister, Kathy Rooney of Cheyenne, WY; brother, Tim (Dora) O'Leary of Cheyenne, WY; sister, Noreen (Frank) Hixson of Cheyenne, WY; Children; daughter, Jennifer (Geoff) Bradley; son, Bart Candelaria; daughter, Nicole (Shane Swett) Candelaria; Nieces and Nephews; Mike Rooney, Patty (Kevin) Wells, Shane Rooney, Shelly (Shawn) Nelson, Jason (Carla) O'Leary, Kelli Jo (Bill) VanHouten, Andrea Ahlf, Ryan (Nikki) Hixon, Nicole Meek, and a truckload of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

A viewing will be on Wednesday, December 27, 2023, from 4:00pm - 6:00pm at Bohlander Funeral Chapel in Fort Collins, CO. Services will be held on Thursday, December 28, 2023, at 11:00am at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Fort Collins, CO. A reception will be held immediately following at the American Legion (2124 Co Rd 54G, Fort Collins, CO 80524). Interment will be on Friday, December 29, 2023 at Greenhill Cemetery in Laramie, Wyoming.

In lieu of flowers, the family and Brian request that you donate to the Chris LeDoux Memorial Foundation, P.O. Box 266, Kaycee, WY, 82639, or to a charity of your choosing.

To view Brian's service, visit the link below:

<http://youtube.com/c/SaintJosephCatholicChurchFC/live>

Previous Events

Funeral Mass

DEC 28. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (MT)

St. Joseph Catholic Church
Fort Collins

Burial

DEC 29. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (MT)

Green Hill Cemetery
455 N 15th St
Laramie, WY

Tribute Wall

PF

“ Sorry to hear of Cousin O'Leary's passing. From The Urbanc
Traenkenschuh Frerking family

Paul Frerking - March 24, 2024 at 10:23 PM

SL

“ I am so sorry to hear about Brian's passing. I remember meeting
Brian in 2005 in Barstow California. He came over to see my ole
359 at Ripp Griffin's Truck Stop before it became a TA, and I
recognized him from the cover of Truck News. I had a copy in my
truck and he autographed it for me. I still have it!
Condolences to family

susie lyons - December 29, 2023 at 12:29 PM

MA

“ Today we said goodbye to one of the most amazing men we all have had the honor to know. Claudia and Brian both have a heart of gold. They both took the time to make us feel like we are the best friend.

Today listening to everyone's memories I realized that Brian impacted us all this way. He took the time to call everyone. Who does that? My husband Dave wanted to say something by couldn't speak because he knew he would brake down. Dave treasured the time spent with Brian at car shows. Dave felt honored that Brian asked him to assist in loading cars. We enjoyed our dates with Brian and Claudia. Brian took my brothers car from Colorado to Chicago. It meant the world to my mom. Mom prayed a rosary every day for you Brian. She gave you both a special treasure of hers. A prayer book. Brian you connected with an 83 year old woman to the core. When I called her crying about your passing, she broke down. I hope that you are having Margaritas, fried pickles, wings, Steak, blooming onions, Trucks and monkeys in heaven.

We will miss you so much! We know we are all headed the same direction and you will greet us with your kind soul. We love you Brian! Love Marlene and Dave

Marlene Aragon - December 28, 2023 at 08:15 PM

BP

“ I met Brian at the John Shupe terminal in Greeley, CO in the summer of 74 or 75, not sure. We kept in touch on and off through out the years. I don't remember the exact date, but I know Brian was driving for Western Distributing out of Denver. I had made a trip to the west coast and I was coming back to Denver and just coming out of the tunnel so I tuned into 850 KOA. Paul Harvey was on at the time, and he mentioned the name Brian O'leary. He said Mr. O'leary had 3 1/2 million accident free miles over the road, and that he was " the best of the best". That was way back then and Brian went on many many more miles than that. Rest in peace ol friend. St. Peter says, "No more Dot checks on the way up".

Bill Pirie - December 21, 2023 at 03:40 PM

MB

“ Claudia and family, we are so terribly sorry to learn of Brian's passing. He was an incredible man who was so very kind, and it was always a delight to see him at SEMA and at the collector car auctions nationwide. We truly can't imagine how crushed you must be.

What is grief, but love persevering.

*Muffy and Gary Bennett,
www.HusbandAndWifeCarTeam.com*

Muffy and Gary Bennett - December 20, 2023 at 04:13 PM

MH

“ Claudia and family, I am heartbroken for you that Brian has passed. I am blessed and so thankful to have had the chance to get to know him and see his abounding love for you in action, and to be counted as your friend - even for this short time. My prayers of peace, comfort, and strength in the times to come are with you now and in the future. Melinda Henderson, Little Rock, AR

Melinda Henderson - December 20, 2023 at 03:27 PM

CC

“ He was a great supporter of the Chris Levels foundation, and was there every year. he will be missed dearly. god bless.

Chuck wood auction co. - December 20, 2023 at 03:22 PM

DH

Nous avons rencontré Brian sur le chemin du Sema, en 2018. Il a eu la gentillesse de nous montrer son chargement de voitures extraordinaires à nos yeux de routiers français, et était impatient de retrouver son épouse à Las Vegas. Nous présentons nos condoléances à Claudia, leurs enfants et amis, depuis la France.

Durand Huguette - December 21, 2023 at 12:40 AM

TF

Claudia I am so sad about the passing on Brian. As you know he hauled my cars all over the country on so many car tours, pebble beach, auburn and on and on. He was a special friend to me as we always talked about cars. He would call me from a auction and tell me get your check book out because I found a car you need to buy. We had a lot of fun together and I want you to know he was a great guy. Thank You Tony Ficco

tony ficco - December 26, 2023 at 03:48 PM