



## Thomas Ward McMillen

August 17, 1940 - February 26, 2025

On August 17, 1940 Donald and Ethel McMillen welcomed their baby boy, Thomas Ward McMillen, into the world. From the beginning, Tom was a lively character. Throughout his life he loved a good joke and was a spectacular storyteller. His antics often got him in trouble as a child and he recalled as an adult that he thought it was worth it. Tom McMillen left this world on February 26, 2025. His presence will be greatly missed by his family and friends.

Tom lived a full life. He was raised on the family farm on East Elizabeth Street in Fort Collins along with brother Don and sister Ginger. Tom was active in 4-H showing horses, calves, and sheep. One time, he rode his horse from Fort Collins to Loveland to the Larimer County Fair. Wrestling was a sport he enjoyed, and he even won a state championship in his weight class one year.

After graduation from Fort Collins High School in 1958 he headed to California to join the Navy where he specialized in radio communication. He especially enjoyed being stationed in Japan.

Upon his return to Fort Collins in 1961 he re-connected with high school friend Ann Stephens and they were later married in Albuquerque, NM. Their daughter, Keli Rae McMillen of Olney Springs, CO, survives him, as does his son Donald L. (Kelly) McMillen III. As a family they resided in Albuquerque, where Tom loved riding his motorcycle and hunting. Tom and Ann were later

divorced.

In the 1970s, Tom returned to Colorado, bought a beautiful property in the Waverly area and farmed the acreage. He grew alfalfa and other crops, farming on the weekends and evenings. He had a full-time job with AT&T where he worked for many decades. When Tom retired, he built his dream home, a beautiful log cabin nestled among mature trees with views of the foothills. His asparagus garden was the envy of friends and neighbors who often stopped by to visit. Always industrious, Tom, with the help of his son Don, continued farming into his seventies.

Tom studied Spanish for years, visited Spain and Belize, and recalled sleeping in a hammock on the beach where he watched the turtles hatch and crawl out to the ocean.

Tom is also survived by his grandson, Donald L. McMillen IV, and his sister, Ginger Montgomery, with whom he had a dear and close relationship. He will be missed by many loving nieces and nephews, grand-nieces and grand-nephews. Tom was preceded in death by his parents and his brother Donald L. McMillen II.

Tom will live on in our memories as a cherished father, brother, uncle and friend, who liked to charm the world with his mischievous smile, laughter and unending sense of humor.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Alzheimer's Association or the charity of your choice.

# Tribute Wall

LS

“ I met Tom while working at AT&T. He never complained about his job and had a route that was very rural making it challenging at times of incumbent weather. He would get calls in the middle of the night because an alarm(s) would go off at one of the Regen station as he served northern Colorado and southern Wyoming. Sometimes he would have to drive from his home in Fort Collins/Waverly to Bosler, WY in the middle of a snow storm, at night, to make sure the equipment was still up and running. His route was quite extensive. He could always be counted on to take care of the problem. Additionally, he loved his farm growing different crops and tending to them. He wanted to build a log home, so with the plans he had, I helped him with the interior design. He told me he always loved that house.

Tom always made me laugh and could make a joke about most situations. I'm sure his humor here on earth will be missed as he will be but he is now sharing his humor with angels.

My sympathy goes out to all his family and friends.

Linda Stehle  
Green Valley, AZ

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**Linda Stehle** - April 12, 2025 at 12:17 PM

KM

Thank you, Linda! I know you and dad shared many wonderful moments together. Keep in touch! My email hasn't changed - keli\_mcmillen@yahoo.com

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**Keli Rae McMillen** - April 20, 2025 at 12:53 AM

SS

“ The passing of Tom, one I can count as a true friend, while saddened, triggered many memories.

*Tom served as Kathy and my “best man” for our wedding. Our honeymoon was a trip to Albuquerque by way of Aspen in our 1958 VW to be with Tom and Anne.*

*Tom and I joined the Navy together. After bootcamp we were separated. I was a crew chief for a Navy Helicopter squadron stationed in California while Tom was located in Japan. Every 12 months our fleet was deployed overseas so we managed spend time together. Tom lived off-base, had an amazing apartment in Sasebo, lived a Japanese life style (e.g. no chairs etc) and spoke reasonably good Japanese, at least he tried. But that was Tom*

*Very recently, within the last two years, Tom and I flew to Chicago to help Kathy and me move our daughter from downtown Chicago to Denver. I am quite sure the flight attendants and hotel employees will never forget Tom. He was a flirt! With a red ponytail and cowboy boots he did make a statement. But. That was Tom.*

*While we were sitting on the beach of Lake Michigan discussing life he looked at me and said “Sam I am really glad we had these moments. Thanks for inviting me to help with your move.” “I never have seen such a place. Then he spoke in Spanish “but I am ready to go home”... no radio, computers or other such stuff. We laughed. But that was Tom.*

*While working for ATT Tom would “patch” into a line and give us a call. He always wanted to know how Kathy was getting along. Our son-in-law works for ATT so they met each other. Nice to have your best man make that connection. Tom made memories where ever he went. That was Tom.*

*My last visit, recently, but I don’t remember when, late summer probably. I visited Tom. We walked and talked for a couple of hours*

*or so while he showed me around, again. I will miss seeing Tom.*

*Sam Solt  
Fort Collins*

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**Sam Solt** - March 10, 2025 at 07:00 PM

CS

*I grew up on East Elizabeth Street about a block from the McMillen family. Tom's Dad was my 4-H leader, and a very well known man in Larimer County, for whom the McMillen Building at the Larimer County Fairgrounds was named. Ironically, I also have lived in the Waverly area, and wish I had reconnected with Tom. I'm sorry I no longer have that chance.*

*Carol Kepler Story*

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**Carol Story** - March 13, 2025 at 01:20 AM

MM

*Sam and Carol, thanks for sharing your great memories of my uncle Tom, he certainly was all the things Sam so eloquently described. I can attest that he was a great uncle as well.*

*Marc Montgomery*

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**Marc Montgomery** - March 25, 2025 at 11:57 PM

KM

*Hi Sam and Carol, dad mentioned you over the years! He always spoke fondly of life-long friends. I'd love to hear more stories if you want to share - email me - keli\_mcmillen@yahoo.com. Thank you for sharing your kind remembrances.*

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**Keli Rae McMillen** - April 20, 2025 at 12:57 AM



“ Tom was our friend for 25 years and became family from day one. Anytime we showed up he greeted us with open arms and the best hugs ever! We will miss our after dinner visits on his deck, where he told story after story of his youth and times in the Navy. Rest well, dear friend, you are up there making the angels laugh. Sympathy to all your family and friends. Clarence & Sue



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**SD Buffington-Knox** - March 06, 2025 at 10:34 AM

KM

*Thank you, Clarence & Sue - what a lovely sunset photo of dad's wonderful deck - that is a beautiful image to remember! Sincerely, daughter Keli (not daughter-in-law Kelly, lol).*

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**Keli Rae McMillen** - April 20, 2025 at 12:58 AM