



Brian M. O'Connell

May 21, 2008

Brian M. O'Connell, Esq., 47, of West Hartford, died Wednesday, May 21, 2008 at his home. He leaves his wife Sarah Cox. Born in Wethersfield to the late Robert F. and Elizabeth Shannon O'Connell he lived in the Hartford area all his life. He graduated from Northwest Catholic High School, Trinity College, and the UCONN School of Law. He practiced law in the Hartford area from 1987 to 1996 and was a professor in computer science and philosophy at Central Connecticut State University. He founded the Young Democrats of West Hartford, and was a member of DeMolay, a Mason, IEEE, and the Connecticut Bar Assoc. He loved his students, his friends, reading, music, robots, and rocketry. His memorial service will be held on Friday, June 13, at 4:00 p.m. at St. Alban's Church, 197 Bushy Hill Rd., Simsbury, CT Donations in his memory may be made to www.alleycat.org. Messages of sympathy and condolences may be made at www.molloyfuneralhome.com

Tribute Wall

CL

“ I had Professor O'Connell when I was a student at CCSU as a CompSci major. He was a great teacher and an inspiration. I wasn't aware that he had passed until recently, and I felt compelled to write something. He was always smiling and such a joy to be around. I am sad that I never got to go back and tell him how much I enjoyed his classes and his teaching. Rest in Peace.

*Chris Lajoie
CCSU, Class of 2001*

Chris Lajoie - September 08, 2023 at 07:16 PM

JR

“ I knew Brian when he was about 14-15 years old and was an intrepid volunteer at the Gengras Planetarium, part of the Children's Museum of West Hartford. This was way back in 1974-76 when I became the Acting Planetarium Director during my 2 year break from college. I know this is the right Brian O'Connell, from all the extemporaneous postings of previous friends, postings which express Brian's outgoing, cheerful and intelligent persona. I have not known Brian since that time, and am greatly pleased at his impacts on the people who worked with him, who taught him, and who he taught.

When I came to Gengras, Brian had been a volunteer for some time, even having an article on his planetarium expertise written in a Hartford newspaper. He and two other young volunteers often went with me to view the heavens out from Hartford, using my small refractor to search for nebulae and planets. Brian also manned the podium and controls for many planetarium programs during those years, giving me a break, with up to 5 shows a day and over 35,000 visitors a year. As Brian and the other two would show up after school, life at the planetarium would pick up! And looking back, I realize just how much that meant to me.

Brian was proud to be Irish, and now, years later, after having been there myself, I can understand why, with its deep culture, lovely scenery, and friendly people. His parents had me for dinner more than once and made me feel welcome in Hartford, far from my home in Richmond, Va.

I will always recall Brian's extroverted kindness, his deep interest in astronomy, and his cheerful personality. It was shocking to learn of his passing of 15 years past, as I sought to find him again on the internet, just as I have found some of the others who worked for the Children's Museum. I would love to hear from any of his family and friends.

Please accept my deep condolences in the premature loss of a truly fine person who inspired others.

John M. Roberts of Richmond Va.

john roberts - September 04, 2023 at 04:02 PM



“ *Unfortunatley I lost touch with Brian after I graduated and i had no idea he had Cancer or had passed away till today. I am completely floored and saddened. He was my professor for my 4 years at CCSU and i made sure i tried taking one of his classes every semester. I wish his family the best, because that is what he was. He gave me a light and path and will never be forgotten.##imported-begin##Ed A##imported-end##*

September 01, 2009 at 12:00 AM



“ *having known Brian rather well in the early 80's my wife, Carol, our son, Dan, and I were taken back in reading of his death. His funeral remembrances and reception were a fitting tribute to an exceptional person. Today, Dan brought down a picture he took of Brian in 80's. He has that same smile and hardly looks a year older. I'd like to send the picture along and add a personal remembrance. Jon Widing##imported-begin##jon widening##imported-end##*

July 15, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Brian was a wonderful person. He was my mentor, advisor, professor; but most of all my friend. He will be sorely missed by all whose lives he touched. He always had such good things to say about everyone. You couldn't walk away from Brian and not feel uplifted!

My deepest sympathies to Brian's family and his huge circle of friends!

With fond memories, Elke

June 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ I knew Brian at Northwest and had dealings with him later on as well at various law offices. He was a great guy, articulate, humorous, and caring. He will be sorely missed.

June 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Brian was one of my students at Northwest. We were both friends of Bill W. We stayed close until recent years when we lost touch. I am sad that we didn't reconnect. He was very special.

June 11, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ My deepest sympathy to all the members of Brian's family. I had Brian in class at NWCHS and remember him as one of the best! Know that I will hold each of you in prayer. May you find strength and comfort in your belief that in death life is changed not ended.##imported-begin##Sister Mary Faith Geelan, O.P.##imported-end##

June 10, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ I was fortunate enough to know Brian at the very beginning of his career. He clerked for me when I had an office on Hungerford Street. Of those of my former clerks whose careers I have been aware they all did well and were a credit to the profession and I have no doubt that Brian was the same. I so well remember his enthusiasm to learn and be helpful, always popping his head into my office with a question or an idea. I remember his growing a beard just to look older and less boyish and I truly liked him and think he liked me too. To say I was shocked to learn of his passing at a time when he should be coming into his own saddens me more than I can say. If he carried into his life the traits he had when we spent so many days and not a few evenings together his loss is great not just to those he loved, but to those who he helped through difficult times and all those he would have been there for in the years taken away. Gods speed Brian, you live in the memories of those whose lives you touched and were better for the experience of knowing you. I was more than your 'boss'...I was your friend and wish to tell those who loved you and will miss you every day, that the memories of you are the gifts you left behind and they will always live in the hearts and minds of those who knew you, honored you, cared about you and will keep you alive in their minds.##imported-begin##Dwight Owen Schweitzer##imported-end##

June 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ In college, law school and practice, Brian was a generous spirit and compassionate man. Our heartfelt condolences.
Mike Isko and family.##imported-begin##Michael Isko##imported-end##

June 05, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ I met Brian only once -- when he came to the first meeting for an NSF grant on which we were PIs. He was enthusiastic, engaged and knowledgeable, and I looked forward to his contributions. Sadly, they were not to be. He continued to live in hope that things would look up and we continued to hope the same. But I am glad that we had that one meeting. It was a privilege. And my condolences to Sarah, whom I have not met but whom my colleagues tell me is delightful.

John Kleinig

New York and Canberra##imported-begin##John Kleinig##imported-end##

June 01, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ As a member of the IEEE SSIT, I was shocked to learn of Brian's passing. I was acquainted with him only through his print editorials in the magazine, but appreciated and was impressed by his vigor and enthusiasm in discharging the duties of president of that society.

My deepest sympathy to his wife, Sarah.##imported-begin##George F. McClure##imported-end##

May 28, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Meeting Brian at an APPE meeting some years ago was an unexpected treat and in the years since then his friendship brought rewards too numerous to count, including a delightful brunch in Northampton with you, Sarah. Here's a tale you may not know. After one memorable and contentious professional meeting, Brian dubbed me LT -- short for "Little Tiger," in honor of my ability to stand my ground -- only to lament that he had no nickname of his own. He declared that "Scoop" would be a cool moniker, bringing to mind journalists of old, with notecards tucked in their fedoras and a truth-seeking mission to guide their work. My cell phone contains no entry under Brian or O'Connell, but Scoop is there still. He was at once principled and silly -- two of the reasons we got on so well and two of the reasons he will be so missed. Rest in peace, my friend. - LT##imported-begin##Sarah Pfatteicher##imported-end##

May 28, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ I was so shocked and saddened by the news of Dr. O'Connell's passing. I took his Computer Science ethics class just this past Spring semester. I saw the passion he had for teaching and for his students. He was so helpful with any questions anyone had. He would joke around in class and make it fun and interesting. I was looking forward to taking a class with him again. He will be very missed. My sympathy goes out to his family and friends.##imported-begin##Joseph Maciejko##imported-end##

May 27, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Sarah,

Brian brought his enthusiasm and ideas to the Connecticut Section of IEEE a number of years ago. Our section is better for having had Brian as a member of the Executive Committee and as Chair. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Bill Wessman

Past Chair CT-Section IEEE##imported-begin##Bill

Wessman##imported-end##

May 26, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ *Prof. O'Connell was a wonderful man. He will be greatly missed in the Computer Science department at CCSU. My prayers go out to his family.##imported-begin##Christina Janeiro##imported-end##*

May 26, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ *He was a great friend. Always a friend before a professor. A great advisor for both life and the computer club. He will be missed.##imported-begin##Rahul Samanta##imported-end##*

May 26, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ *I was deeply saddened with this news. Brian was a dedicated educator, a selfless mentor, and a great friend. His contributions to the Society on Social implications of Technology are unparalleled. I will miss his infectious laughter and his love of a good debate. This is truly a great loss.##imported-begin##Missy Cummings##imported-end##*

May 25, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Professor O'Connell will be deeply missed. He was always very proud of his students, proud of teaching them, and had such a passion for watching them learn and grow into professionals. Every moment around Professor O'Connell was enjoyable and an opportunity to spend time with an honorable, intelligent, optimistic and very humorous person. His classes were always full of laughter. He will be in my thoughts and prayers. God bless him and his family.##imported-begin##Richard Goodwin##imported-end##

May 25, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Brian was my colleague in the Department of Computer Science. I was a member of the committee to hire him, and a member of the committee for both of his promotions. He had a broad range of publications and his interests included robotics, philosophy, law, and ethics. He was kind and liked by his colleagues, and his students. God bless him and let him rest in peace. Our thoughts and prayers go to Sarah wishing her to be brave the same way as he was in his battle with the severe disease.##imported-begin##Irena Pevac##imported-end##

May 25, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Professor O'Connell was a wonderful teacher and will be greatly missed. The one thing that I remember most about him was his huge smile, one that he would keep up until the students would join in. He was also always involved in so many things yet would always have time for us. God Bless him and his family, and I'm grateful for the life lessons you've given me.##imported-begin##Jose Guzman Jr##imported-end##

May 25, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Brian was a very close and good friend through High School. Although our paths took us in different directions, they would cross every now and then. When we did connect, it was like we had just talked yesterday. I was so sad to hear of his passing. Our 30th Reunion is next year and I was hoping to see him. Please know that he left a mark here and will be remembered.

May he rest in peace.##imported-begin##Michael Morgan##imported-end##

May 24, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Brian's friends and colleagues in the IEEE Society on Social Implications of Technology were saddened to learn of his untimely death. A former member of the Board of Governors and President, he was an enthusiastic spokesman for the Society who inspired many to become active in the Society. We shall miss his intelligence and wit, his thoughtfulness and leadership. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Sarah at this difficult time.##imported-begin##Janet Rochester##imported-end##

May 24, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Brian, with whom I went to law school, was one of the gentlest souls I knew. We were very close in those first years adjusting to the world of practicing law. Brian rose above the pettiness and rivalry we so often see within our profession. He was a true scholar and intellect. Finally, he can rest in peace. Sarah, may you find strength in your memories. I am truly sorry for your loss.##imported-begin##Linda Kaufman##imported-end##

May 23, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Sarah,

Please accept our wishes of sympathy.

We met in DeMolay and that Brotherhood lasted a lifetime.

The lessons we learned were exemplified by the way Brian lived his life.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this time.

*Art & Linda Stauff##imported-begin##Captain Arthur Stauff,
USN##imported-end##*

May 23, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ *I had the privilege of co-teaching HON 140 with Brian on three occasions. He was a perfect partner for this enterprise. His broad range of interests and expertise inspired our students to view all of knowledge as their domain, to become like Brian, a?? Renaissance?? women and men. Brian chose texts that were provocative and provided a springboard to discussion and debate??from *Playing Darts with a Rembrandt* by Joseph Saks to the *Little Book of Plagiarism* by Richard Posner. During this past year as he waged his battle with cancer, he kept up his spirits. On the days he was able to come to class his enthusiasm for teaching and for his students was still evident. We have lost a great teacher and a dear friend.*

Tim Craine

Professor of Mathematical Sciences

*Central Connecticut State University.##imported-begin##Tim
Crane##imported-end##*

May 23, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Sarah,

I am very sorry. I knew Brian for 2 years and I can tell you he was one of my favorite friends. Always of good cheer, positive and had a great outlook. I will miss him and hope you drop us a note once in a while to stay in touch and of course if you are ever back in Tucson it is a must you visit. Mike and Alexis###imported-begin##Mike and Alexis Popovich###imported-end##

May 23, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Brian has left a permanent impression and legacy at CCSU. I was a member of the search committee when he was hired, and I was impressed even then with his wide range of interests in computing, philosophy, law, robotics, bioethics, and bioinformatics, to mention just a few. We became close colleagues, and I was looking forward to taking his robotics class this fall, as he had persuaded me that I wasn't too old to learn. That's the effect, multiplied many fold, that he had on students in all his classes. He'll be missed and remembered for many years to come.###imported-begin##David Blitz###imported-end##

May 23, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Dear Sarah,
I am deeply sorry for your loss.

Big part of me refuses to accept he is gone. Impossible, no way. No, no, no.

Brian was a wonderful teacher, an extraordinary mentor, and a truly dear friend. I deeply cherish every conversation we had and every moment we spent together. There are no words to accurately describe the extent of my sorrow and the huge sense of loss. He passed away too soon and won't be replaced. I will always love him, with all my heart.##imported-begin##Anna Gawkowska##imported-end##

May 23, 2008 at 12:00 AM