

In Loving Memory of
Matthew O'Neill



November 16, 1980 - August 9, 2014

"As time flies by me, I can hardly even notice it anymore. In fact, if I look back it only seems like yesterday when I was a small, weak, and defenseless Cub Scout. Since those days I have grown into something that I would like to think as being a little bit more evolved than that old image of myself. And that is why I have gathered all of you here today, to help me remember where I have been and what it is that I have accomplished with your help. When I receive the rank of Eagle Scout it is not because I did a project and some merit badges. But, it is because I was blessed enough to have the guidance and wisdom of this audience on my side. Everyone here was invited for a special reason. Today I ask you to stand back and reflect on where our lives intersected and how you were able to influence me in a most positive manner. This is your ceremony. If it were not for all of you then I would not be here. So eat, drink, and make merry as you participate in a solemn service and then a reception that holds high promise. I have only you to thank. Good travels wherever the road takes you"

Matthew O'Neill
Eagle Scout
April, 1998



Donations in Matthew's name can be made to:
Guide Dogs for the Blind, San Rafael, CA; Cal-TASH; or
NewDirectionstravel.org



Following the service you are invited to join the family
in a Public Service Campaign and invitation for local drivers to
"Change Lanes to Save a Life."

This will be a brief gathering on the corners of
East H Street and Paseo Ranchero.

The family also invites you to join them in continuing to celebrate
Matthew's life with a reception in the fellowship hall and quad.



Matthew Troy O'Neill was born in San Diego, CA on November 16, 1980. From an early age he had a passion for learning. His preschool years were spent at First United Methodist Preschool; followed by Kindergarten through 6th grade at Halecrest Elementary in Chula Vista. While in elementary school Matthew became involved with Cub Scouts, Crossing Guard, and playing the trombone. Matthew rose to the highest rank of Major in Crossing Guard. During the summer months, Matthew enjoyed Zoo Camp, camps at the various Balboa Park museums and Boy Scout Camp.

While at Bonita Vista Middle School, Matthew continued his academic pursuits. During the two years at BVM he received all A's in scholarship and citizenship as well as perfect attendance. Every summer Matthew attended a different scout camp - Mataguay, Lost Valley, Emerald Bay, Camp Geronimo, AZ, and Cherry Valley were favorites.

Matthew's four years at Bonita Vista High were very busy for Matthew and filled with many extracurricular activities and academic excellence. Matthew was an ASB commissioner for technology, School Newspaper editor, a member of the band, and a speech and debate club member. He continued with Scouting and earned its highest rank of Eagle Scout. His activities in High School invigorated his thirst for knowledge and adventure. It afforded him the opportunities to travel to Washington, D.C., Valley Forge and Seattle, WA among many others. Matthew graduated with honors, earning many scholarships, and the Presidential Scholar Award. He was the only one in his class to receive the award of Perfect Attendance for all four years of high school.

Matthew attended Boston University for one year and then transferred to UC Santa Cruz. UCSC was a perfect fit for Matthew and he excelled in all of his classes. It was during his time at UCSC he became involved with Geocaching; using the moniker "Iron Chef." There are still many active Geocaches out there placed by Matthew. It was also during his years at UCSC that he began his passion for bicycling. As he trained, he developed the skills and love for extreme long distance bicycling. Matthew worked at the university for almost four years after graduation.

At Whittier Law School he found another passion - children's rights advocacy. Matthew was a Children's Rights Fellow and the Executive Editor of the Whittier Journal of Child and Family Advocacy. He loved law school and was very motivated to graduate in two and a half years to save tuition costs. After graduation Matthew worked with families of children with disabilities on special education issues through the Children's Rights Clinic at Whittier and other Southern California law firms.

The University of California at Santa Barbara was next in his journey of lifelong learning. He was to begin his final year in the Ph.D program in Special Education, Disabilities, and Risk Studies. While in the Ph.D. program he worked as a Clients' Rights Advocate for Disability Rights California's Office and served clients of California's unique Regional Center system that provides services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities. His passion was seeking ways for children and young adults to have inclusive and communicative experiences in public schools.

When he was not found in an academic or legal environment, Matthew could be found partaking in his other great passion, long distance cycling. A member of the PCH Randonneurs he was considered the heart and soul of the organization. Matthew completed and supported numerous rides of distances up to 1200 km throughout North America, Europe, and Japan. He was looking forward to participating in the 1200km brevet in Perth, Australia in October 2014. Matthew often said that he needed cycling like he needed air; it was a way to express himself and was his absolute passion.

While attending UCSB Matthew met the love of his life Jennie Passwater and they planned on getting married when he graduated. They lived in Carpinteria, California with his career-changed guide dog, Autumn, Jennie's cat Luna and his garage full of bicycles. On August 9th, 2014 Matthew was tragically struck and killed on a rural Santa Maria road while riding his recumbent bicycle on a 1200km brevet through the California Central Coast. Matthew lived 12,319 beautiful days and saw 12,318 sunsets. His life was full because of all the places he went and all the people he met. To reference his favorite book, The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, "So long, and thanks for all the fish!"

Celebrating the Life of Matthew O'Neill

August 30, 2014

+ Indicates to please stand if able

Gathering Music Brass Quintet

Prelude *In Heaven's Eyes* McHugh/Tunney

Greeting Rev. Dr. Brian T. Parcel

Special Music *On Eagle's Wings* Michael Joncas

Prayer Nick von Stein

Scriptures 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

Homily

Words of Witness
Josh Kane
Susan Gungur
Stacy Kline
Sean McIntosh
Jennie Passwater, Craig O'Neill, and Kevin O'Neill

Special Music *You Raise Me Up* Brendan Graham/Rolf Løvland

Prayers of Commendation

The Lord's Prayer

+Benediction

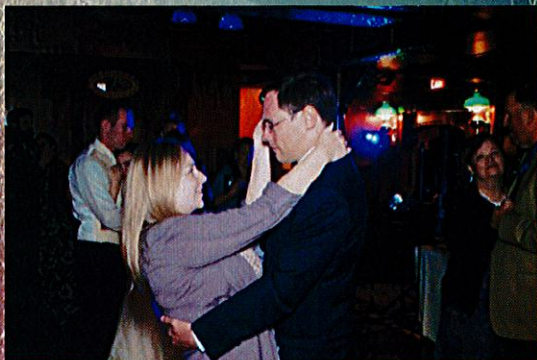
All are invited to join a procession led by bagpiper, Ian Kelly,
to gather on the street corners to remind drivers to
"Change Lanes to Save a Life."

"If ever there is tomorrow when we're not together...there is something you must always remember. You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think. But the most important thing is, even if we are apart... I'll always be with you."

- A. A. Milne

**CHANGE
A LANE
SAVE A
LIFE!**

<http://www.facebook.com/RememberMatthewONeill/>



So long and thanks for all the fish.

**First United Methodist Church
1200 East H Street ~ Chula Vista, California**

Saturday August 30th, 2014

Participants in Service:
Rev. Dr. Brian T. Parcel- officiating
Nick von Stein - assisting
Michiko Lohorn - pianist
Juan Carlos Acosta - soloist

