

Thomas Merritt Pattison, 60

Oct. 12, 1957 - Feb. 3, 2018

HARLAN - Thomas Merritt Pattison, son of Wilbur A. "Pat" and Ruthe I. (Hetzler) Pattison, was born in Denison on October 12, 1957.

Thomas was baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran Church. Tom was born with Downs Syndrome in the days when these children were usually placed in a state school for the mentally retarded. Instead, the Pattisons kept him at home and became community activists in educating the public, finding other children who were handicapped, and obtaining educational, recreational, spiritual and occupational services for them. Tom started school in a trainable education class at age 6 in a renovated (by volunteers) country school house near Denison.

The family moved to Harlan in June of 1967, and Tom attended special education in a school provided trailer on the campus of New Park School in Harlan. In 1973 when he was 16, he became the first resident of Lead-Way Center (later known as REM) in Shelby. He lived and worked in their sheltered work shop there and in Avoca until 2008, when he moved to a REM group home in Harlan, shared with two other men. He worked in the REM workshop in Avoca and at Concerned, Inc. in Harlan.

Tom enjoyed visiting his family and friends, and especially enjoyed being at their vacation cottage, Patspatch, on Bull Shoals Lake in the Missouri Ozarks. He loved his family, including his brother Brad, sister-in-law Lisa, and nieces, Megan and Courtney. He was a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Harlan, and gave out hugs to everybody. In later years, he developed age-related dementia which presented another challenge for him, his family and the people who served him. In spite of his handicap, he was a joy and gave constant, unconditional love to his family and others.

Tom died at Rose Vista Home in Woodbine on Saturday, February 3, 2018 having reached the age of 60 years, three months and 22 days.

Tom is survived by his parents, Pat and Ruthe Pattison of Harlan; his brother Brad and his wife Lisa of Doniphan, NE; nieces Megan Pattison of Chicago, IL; Courtney and her husband Johnny Venegas of Omaha, NE; uncle Robert Hetzler of Manhattan, KS; cousins; and many friends.

A 2 p.m. Celebration of Life was officiated by Rev. Phillip Nielsen on Friday, February 9, 2018 at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Harlan. Inurnment will take place at a later date at the Harlan Cemetery in Harlan.

Pauley Jones Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.



Pauley Jones
FUNERAL HOME & CREMATION

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