



## Jeffery Scott Rausch Sr

July 27, 1954 - July 1, 2020

If you asked a hundred people who Jeffery Scott Rausch was, they would all give you a different story. A husband. A warrior. A father. A mighty lion. A superhero. The funniest man on earth. A lecturer of epic endurance.

Champion beach volleyball player. Creator of cornhole. 1988 Gold medalist Olympic horseshoe partner. Inventor of Nuclear Fission. 2019 Silver medalist Ping Pong champion (that upset was historic). King of disco. A lumberjack. US Navy Submariner (to President Carter's dismay). Manager for North Carolina's Kentucky refugee center. A movie star. An alien from an alternate universe. A good friend.

Jeff, aka Popi, Popa, or the Beast, was most of these things, perhaps even a little of all of them. He touched people's lives immediately and always left a smile or, at the very least, an important life lesson. He led a rich life that played out better than any Hollywood or Broadway story.

It's no surprise that Jeff featured as the hero of most of these stories. That is just the nature of his personality. It really was not his fault. He was born in Louisville, Kentucky on July 27, 1954. His parents, Lannus and Anna Rausch, had tried, unsuccessfully, the previous two times with his older brothers Lannus and Terry, to create the perfect child. As the saying goes, the third time's a charm. And from that moment, Jeff impressed the world. In fact, there is a story that says the Church was so impressed that it requested Jeff's

parents to keep up the good work! Jeff came from a huge family with the addition of five more brothers and two sisters, Phil, Dion, David, Jimmy, Angie, Doug, and Heather. It is a good family.

In many ways though, Jeff's story really began on a street called Wintergreen Road in an absurdly small house filled with absurdly large hearts. Louisville, Kentucky, a town that feels like a part of the entire family's DNA. Inside the tiny house there would typically be the smell of either old-fashioned chili or Salisbury steak and outside, that of an old cherry tree. And it was here that Jeff found two lifelong loves: cherries and a girl named Jackie. The year was 1974, and just after joining the Navy, with his bride by his side for what would be 46 years, our hero set out to conquer the world. That marriage was the vessel for so many adventures. They had a good and timeless marriage.

Later that same year, Jeff's first son, Jeffery, aka Scott, was born. Like his parents before him, he continued to give this world more and more. Jeremy, Jesi, and Jamie soon all joined the troupe and completed the merry group. Over time, Jeff's family continued to grow with the inclusion of his many loving grandchildren: Taylor, Josh, Sky, Jade, Holden, Violet, and Riley. In 2018, Jeff's first great-grandchild, Sofia, was born. It was a large family with more ups than downs and with grace and perseverance in the face of life's many challenges. It is a good family.

Jeff's adventures took him and Jackie far and wide. The many details of the stories all pieced together by his wide smile and mother's eyes. He lived a full and happy life and through life's ups and downs, he moved with wisdom, always taking the time to pass it on. Throughout the years, we all yearned for Jeff to say he was proud of us because that meant we were living our stories to the fullest, and that made him the most content of all. Here are just some of the memories of Jeff that his children treasure:

CPT Scott Rausch (USA Retired) and Moira Kavanagh

There's a character in C.S. Lewis books Chronicles of Narnia that always reminded Scott of Popi. In many ways, Popi was Aslan. Jeff was probably very aware that to Scott this was how he was viewed. On Scott's 16th birthday, instead of expensive gifts, Scott asked Popi for the book series and read them over and over for years. No matter what war Scott found himself, he always carried the lessons learned from those books, and like Aslan, always felt Popi's presence no matter the distance. In fact, little do people know, Scott's son, Joshua, was named after the character Aslan. Our stories continue, like the chronicles themselves, and one-day we will all find each other again.

Just a couple of years ago, out in the wild of New Hampshire, Scott, Josh, and Violet marched down the Appalachian Trail. We had 360 miles completed and we were tired, hungry, and eager for a home. Scott called Jeff, or Popi as we knew him, to break the news that we were not going to make it the total 2,100 miles. We told him that the three musketeers were better than ever but love and home kept tugging us away. Scott was anxious to see Moira. Josh was excited to see his wonderful partner Sam and start school. Violet was ready for some real food and her friends. Popi told Scott how proud he was of him as a father and like the markers on the trail, to always follow our hearts. These were the kinds of things Popi would say (when he wasn't lecturing). Without Popi's support we could have easily felt defeated. Instead, Popi's support and encouragement helped launch our little family to new worlds. In many ways, Popi helped Scott find closure within his own life so that Scott was finally able to let love find him. Scott soon joined Moira.

Our Brady Bunch is living out Jeff's legacy. We tease each other like Jeff teased. We joke and laugh, like Popi always did. We live life with integrity, just as Popi always wanted. Last December, Popi and Jackie (aka Meme) came to our home for dinner and games. You could see in Popi, even though he was

several months into his fight against cancer, that he was proud of our bunch and felt content in knowing Scott, Josh, and Violet finally found our way home to Moira and family. And it just may be that Popi, seeing that we were all fine, even forgave Moira for stealing the gold medal in Ping Pong earlier that summer. We made it Popi. It took me a while, but we made it, thanks to you for your long lectures and guidance. We know that you were forever proud of us and that shaped us to be who we are today. You taught us how to fight the good fights, to never give on each other, and to stay the course, even when losing at jenga. And, I won back the gold medal.

Jesi and LCDR (USN) Kelly Nobles

Seven years ago in a once tiny little town called Apex, Jesi was engaged to a girl named Kelly Nobles. Her fiancée had finished graduate school and was trying to decide what to be when she grew up. One day, while walking their dogs, Kelly told Jesi that she wanted to join the Navy. This called up memories in Jesi's mind of how her dad had been in the Navy and was often gone when she was a child. Jesi had vowed to never be a military spouse and she was upset at the thought of her fiancée being in the Navy. As was often the case, Jesi called her dad, aka Popa, for advice. Jesi told her Popa that she didn't know what to do because she did not want to be a part of the military. Jeff interrupted Jesi and asked her one simple question, "Do you love Kelly?" Jesi said she did love Kelly more than anything else. Jeff then told her, that is your answer. He said that Jesi would do whatever she needed to do to support the person she loved. He told Jesi that she was strong and could handle whatever came along in life because she is his Belle and, as the Beast, he had taught her how to be strong and get through anything life throws at her to be with the person she loves. Jesi listened to Jeff's advice, they joined the Navy, and Jesi has had the adventure of a lifetime with the person she loves most. Thank you for always steering me in the right direction. Fair winds and following seas, Popa. I love you, your Belle!

Jamie and Jim Halpin

It is a cliché to say someone who has passed would give others the shirt off of his back, but in Jeff's case it was literally true. Jeff lived his life selflessly and always made the wants of his family and friends his priority. Jeff's life story is full of examples of him putting the happiness and welfare of his family at the forefront. There was the time Jamie wanted to get married to Jim Halpin in the backyard of Jeff's and Jackie's house, so he cut down a massive tree and built her the most amazing wedding palace for her wedding. Or the time his grandson, Holden, was tired of walking at the National Zoo in D.C. so Jeff decided to carry him on his shoulders but ended up falling down some icy stairs breaking both legs. Yet he would still carry him on the wheelchair so that his grandson would know that it was all good.

Or the time when Popi and Riley, better known to Popi as "Ri-Guy", had an ongoing arm-wrestling competition. After doing push-ups to prepare, Riley would laugh hysterically as he wrestled Popi, time after time. No matter how repetitive it became, Popi was always ready for another match, as long as it kept Riley smiling. This story reminds us all of Popi's character.

There were the times he took Jackie to New York City for expensive shopping trips and Broadway shows instead of enjoying one of his favorite pastimes — napping on the couch with a football game or NASCAR on the television. And if you ever mentioned needing some work done around the house, you can bet Popi would be pulling out his tools and heading to the hardware store before you could even figure out the scope of what had to be done. His desire to help and protect his family continued even as his health began to fail. By the time he moved out of his apartment in New Orleans in the spring, everybody knew his situation was growing increasingly dire. What his family didn't know was that he actually fainted in his bedroom while disassembling some furniture on that day. Popi confided in his son-in-law that he knew it was a bad sign, but he said he didn't want everyone to worry about him. In fact, he

kept much of his suffering to himself right up until the very end, telling his children he was feeling OK even when it became painfully clear he was not. But it's not that he was being stoic. He really wasn't trying to be macho. He was just a man trying to protect those he loved the only way he could. So he chose to suffer in silence. And his silence said it all.

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The stories of Jeff are endless, and an everlasting gift to his family and abundance of friends. He will continue to bring laughter, astonishment, comfort, tears, occasional exasperation, joy, and so much more to all who knew him for many years to come. Jeff was a good man.

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There is no scheduled funeral or memorial service. Jackie and Jeff's family plan to gather sometime in the near future for a memorial service. In place of flowers or gifts, we kindly request that you consider making a donation to a veteran's service non-profit or museum/memorial in memory of Jeff. There are many causes Jeff supported or encouraged his family to support. Please feel free to choose something that reminds you of Jeff and would honor his memory.

American Legion, specifically Post 44, where Jeff often volunteered and supported: <https://centennial.legion.org/alabama/post44>

National Veteran's Memorial and Museum- <https://nationalvmm.org/>

# Tribute Wall

JM

“ I just finished reading your tribute wall and it made me so happy to know that Jeff and Jackie enjoyed such a full and loving family life - the years go by so fast -

*I was just telling my own granddaughters about knowing Jeff and Jackie way back in Navy housing at Bainbridge, MD when we were all still a bunch of big kids finding our way - Jeff and Jackie had just moved in downstairs from us, having been living in their car in Baltimore while Jeff's ship was in the harbor there - their possessions were the absolute bare necessities, but they finally had a roof over their heads - Sailor Jeff, gaining a slot (I think in the Navy's Nuclear Power School), and bringing a pregnant Jackie, and a cat named Spanks -*

*With the six couples in our building, we all sat outside in the evenings sharing what snacks we had on hand, laughing at each others' stories and having simply good times -*

*Today, my 13 year old granddaughter was making frosting for a cake and said she was glad I showed her how to make it and I told her that Jackie Rausch taught me many years ago, and I have always made it the way she taught me -*

*I am so sorry the great story teller and character, Jeff, passed away, but his legacy lives on in his wonderful wife, kids and grandkids - Jeff and Jackie, with "Rotty Scotty," made a memorable contribution to our lives and we were sorry to see them move to New York, but really enjoyed their visit with us when we moved to Groton, CT -*

*Jackie may remember us -*

*- Bob and Jeannie Golden (top of the stairs in Bainbridge housing)*

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**Jeannie (Golden) Meyer** - June 29, 2025 at 07:46 PM

BW

“ I first met Jeff on Labor Day 2006 when my husband, Barry, and Jeff reconnected after many years. Jeff treated me like we were old friends.

*My deepest sympathy to Jackie and family.*

*~Billie West~*

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**Billie West** - July 04, 2020 at 11:53 AM