



## Thomas Jason Rhoades (TJ)

February 2, 1970 - June 17, 2024

Born on the Suncoast of Florida in the winter of 1970, on February 2, the world welcomed a new and vibrant life at Sarasota Memorial Hospital in the heart of his hometown. His proud adoptive parents, Tom and Mary Anne Rhoades soon gave him his meaningful name and the Rhoades family was blessed with another member to call their own.

His infectious laugh, sweet, deep-set dimples, and drive to accelerate in all things, his childhood was filled with family, faith, and friends, living life to the fullest. His accomplishments continued as he excelled through his youth, making life-long friends along his journey while making sure everyone was always laughing and well-cared for. His wit, charm, and light-hearted spirit blessed all who knew him, and he was well-known for always being the first to lend a helping hand.

In September of 1988, following in his father and eldest brother's footsteps, TJ was accepted into the Sarasota County Fire Academy and began his career in public service. His career highlights include serving as a Firefighter, followed by a promotion to Paramedic in June of 1992. In 2009, he received his promotion to Lieutenant at Sarasota County's Fire Station 10. During his time in public service, he received many recognitions and awards for his outstanding achievements. Prior to leaving the fire department in 2013, he instructed at the Fire Academy in Sarasota and worked in the ER at Doctors

Hospital, saving countless lives in the community. TJ was also known for his love of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, the Devil Rays, and the Florida Gators. Golfing, fishing, geocaching, trivia, all things Halloween, were also pieces of life that brought him joy. Teaching, and anything that included his children, grandchildren, and family were of the utmost importance, and his family will be eternally grateful for all the good he did with the time God gave him on this earth. Life came with its valleys, but he continued to approach everything with God's grace and ever-faithful love at the forefront.

His two eldest daughters, Chloe and Cherith, were the apple of his eye and his love of fatherhood quickly became apparent. Known as, "the fun dad", he was also a strong provider, teacher, and later in life, a close friend. His daughter Carolyn came next and was truly daddy's little girl. He was blessed yet again with his daughter Teagan and was no longer just a girl-dad when he welcomed his last child, Lincoln, his firstborn son.

TJ's life and legacy were that of a loving father, friend, public servant, and follower of Christ, leaning on his faith when walking through difficult seasons. He continuously made a warm and welcoming space for those he loved and never met a stranger.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Thomas (former Sarasota County Fire Dept Chief) and Mary Anne Rhoades, and his dear sister, Debbie Bridwell. He is survived by his eldest brother, Steve Rhoades (former Sarasota County Fire Dept Lieutenant), sister Sandy Dysert, and brother Paul Rhoades. TJ leaves behind his beloved children and grandchildren, Chloe Rhoades (33), spouse Justin Babker, and children Emmett, Easton, and Eli. Cherith Vesely (31), spouse Matthew Vesely, and children Asher and Aurora. Daughters Carolyn Rhoades (21), Teagan Olsen (13), and son Lincoln Rhoades (10).

While his family is still grieving over his tragic and untimely passing, he will forever be missed but remain in their hearts and memories until they meet again.

TJ's funeral service honoring his life and legacy will be held on Saturday, July 6, 2024, at Toale Brother's Funeral Home, 40 N Orange Ave, Sarasota, FL 34236 from 4pm – 6pm.

All are welcome to join friends and family at Evie's Tavern and Grill, 4725 Bee Ridge Rd, Sarasota, FL 34233 immediately following the service for a time of fellowship.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to a GoFundMe for his children to the link below:

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-ease-the-burden-for-tjs-family?attribution\\_id=sl%3A52db3319-e039-4d4a-83ae-90765e94a574&utm\\_campaign=man\\_sha\\_resheet\\_dash&utm\\_medium=customer&utm\\_source=copy\\_link&fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR1A3IyxGTTii8smbyXmruGd2MUAqHs79e\\_P3fJo5nekjiwWECCcJXGsJXs\\_aem\\_6UDd\\_dv19TO6yZBu08NsFw](https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-ease-the-burden-for-tjs-family?attribution_id=sl%3A52db3319-e039-4d4a-83ae-90765e94a574&utm_campaign=man_sha_resheet_dash&utm_medium=customer&utm_source=copy_link&fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR1A3IyxGTTii8smbyXmruGd2MUAqHs79e_P3fJo5nekjiwWECCcJXGsJXs_aem_6UDd_dv19TO6yZBu08NsFw)

# Previous Events

## Funeral Service

JUL 6. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Toale Brothers Funeral Home & Crematory - Colonial Chapel  
40 N. Orange Avenue  
Sarasota, FL 34236  
(941) 955-4171  
info@toalebrothers.com  
<https://www.toalebrothers.com/>

## Gathering of friends and family

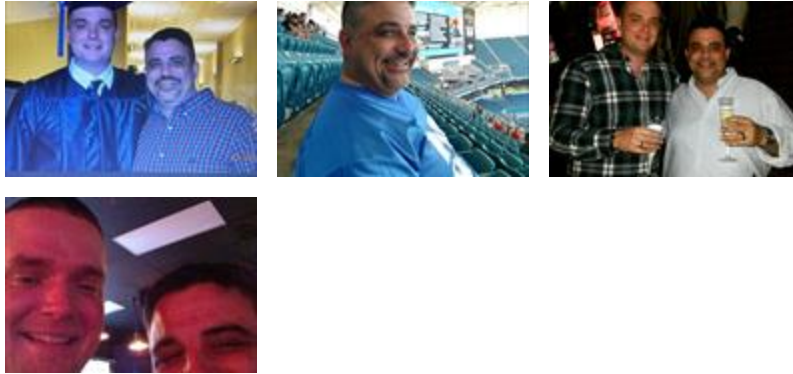
JUL 6. 6:00 PM (ET)

Evie's Tavern and Grill  
4725 Bee Ridge Road  
Sarasota, FL 34233

# Tribute Wall

RH

“ Great memories. Thank you for being a great friend and brother. Watch over us bro.



Ryan Hixson - July 19, 2024 at 08:09 AM

PS

“ We still can't believe you're gone. You left us with many cherished memories, TJ. Thank you for sharing your life with us. You had such a big, kind heart. The many evenings we sat outside sharing stories. It breaks my heart whenever I pass by the front window and you aren't here, laughing and enjoying your time with Michelle out on the porch. So often you helped all the ladies in our building, especially my mom before she passed. Momma always had a big smile on her face whenever she saw you.

The light went out when you left us. Sarah and I both send love to you. I sincerely hope you and momma are dancing in the heavens. Save the next dance for me ❤️

Patricia Scherrer - July 15, 2024 at 02:22 PM

MA

“ TJ, I want to say Thank You for the last 5 years of memories. You have been a great "brother in law" Thank you for loving Michelle and planning a future that will never be. She loves you so much as you did her.

You have left us with many fond memories to be cherished.  
Thank you for being a part of this family.

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**Marcy** - July 10, 2024 at 01:12 PM

NB

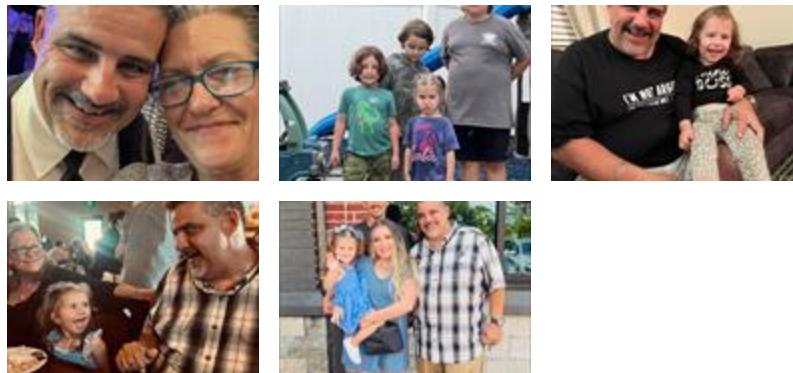
“ Sending thoughts and prayers to his kids and grandkids, you all are his heart. I have only fond memories of TJ. He loved to organize and entertain, he made Jensen Beach trips, Sunstate Holiday Parties and even just hanging out that much more enjoyable. TJ has always been willing to help me whether it be at work or my home. I remember he watched my kids during school breaks while I worked, he has invited us for Easter when we didn't have plans and if I needed work advice or support he was always there! I already miss him! May he rest in the peace.

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**Nicole Banks** - July 06, 2024 at 06:15 PM

VI

“ 5 files added to the tribute wall



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**Viv** - July 05, 2024 at 08:22 PM

WV

“ We have known TJ for about 20 or so years. We met while our probably too young teens.. {Matt and Cherith} started dating . This was the beginning of a relationship that eventually let to us being bonded together forever through our granddaughter Aurora. I think she resembles him and I know they just adored each other. Thankfully I was able to share dinner with him on Father's Day, which ended up being the last time we would all see each other. We joked, laughed and gushed over our granddaughter proclaiming LOOK AT WHAT WE MADE..!!!!!! :) was a fine time. I will not let Aurora forget him..!!!! Our universal positive thoughts and prayers go out to Chloe and Cherith especially and all of his kids grands family, extended family and much loved friends. Peace to you and yours TJ.  
Mark and Vivian Vesely Rest in Peace TJ.....

Vivian S Vesely - July 05, 2024 at 06:25 PM

AM

“ TJ. Where do I start from your dimples your smile everything about you you lit up a room and made everyone laugh you will be missed my friend. Paul and I are very thankful for the time we had with you and all the cookouts and pool parties. You and Michelle or a beautiful couple loved each other to the fullest. We'll take care of her until we see you again my friend



Amy - June 30, 2024 at 12:30 PM

LM

“ My late husband, Cody Marsh, was TJ's lieutenant, and TJ was one of the first people I met after I married Cody. I remember him "sizing me up," making sure I was good enough for his friend! I can still hear the laughter and practical jokes TJ played on everyone, and his racy jokes about Cody and my honeymoon!! Because Cody didn't drink, TJ was at a loss for what to do for a bachelor party, until they decided to go to Disney World. I still have the picture the guys took at Disney World hanging in Cody's office, with TJ's big smile front and center. I remember he asked Cody about taking the lieutenant exam, and Cody encouraged him; how proud he was after he found out TJ made lieutenant.

Thank you, TJ, for helping a new bride from Utah feel at home in my new firefighter family. Lib Marsh

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**Lib Marsh** - June 29, 2024 at 11:11 AM

MK

Beautiful tribute and memories... 💕

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**Mervin Kennell** - July 05, 2024 at 01:23 PM

RH

“ Where can I begin to say T.J was my best friend and brother to me. From the great trivia nights at Linksters where we would always dominate the competition. To watching the Bucs and going to games. Helping me in my life though hard times of losing my father in 2018. T.J. was there for me no matter what. My condolences to everyone that were family and close friends of T.J. Thank you for being in my life and you will always be in my heart.



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**Ryan Hixson** - June 27, 2024 at 01:24 PM

TS

*When you were around TJ, you were having fun!  
From Trivia and Halloween parties at Linksters to the big slides at the local fair with family. I will miss your smile and friendship. You can be proud to say TJ was a loving dad.*

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**Terri Smith** - June 27, 2024 at 04:29 PM

JE

*What a wonderful neighbor and friend both TJ and his girlfriend Michelle have been. TJ's fun y stories and quick wit kept me in stitches laughing all the time. We both shared a love of food and were constantly swapping recipe and dessert. Ideas. He would never let me lift a finger if there was a way for him to help me in some way. He loved decorating outside for the holidays and made our little apartment. Living community a little brighter with each holiday. It will be dearly missed by all of us. Sincerely, Jessica*

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**Jessica** - June 27, 2024 at 05:29 PM

DN

*Remembering TJ when he was adopted by Tom and Mary Ann Rhoades and attended Faith Assembly of God when i was the pastor. What was the cause of his death?*

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**David Norris** - June 28, 2024 at 02:38 PM