



Ryan Thomas Bailey

Aug. 22, 1981 - Oct. 31, 2025

Ryan Thomas Bailey, 44, of Raleigh, North Carolina entered into the presence of his Lord on October 31, 2025.

Born in Morganton, North Carolina to parents Steve and Nancy, Ryan was raised in a love-filled home, shared by his younger brother Chris. He was part of the community of faith at First Baptist Church of Morganton, where he was baptized alongside his father. There, he participated in numerous church activities and developed a strong religious conviction that he would maintain throughout his life. He was heavily involved in the Boy Scouts, where he developed a heart for service and a love of the outdoors, and was awarded the rank of Eagle Scout. He graduated from Freedom High School where he excelled in academics, played saxophone in the marching band and was a member of the varsity soccer team.

He attended college at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he graduated with a double-major in Communications and Psychology. In his time there, he continued to excel in academics, developed a fierce passion for UNC athletics, and was heavily involved in Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. He later received a Master's in Professional Communication from East Carolina University. He employed his education and his talents as a gifted writer and communicator toward a successful career in pharmaceutical research design.

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Ryan's passions covered a wide spectrum. He loved spending time with his family, and brought the same enthusiasm to planning family celebrations or travel adventures as he did to reading Lord of the Rings to his sons before bed, or to the simple sharing of stories around the dinner table. He could always be relied on to

bring warmth, laughter and levity to any family gathering. He loved being engaged with the Church through worship, fellowship and service, most recently with Bright City Church in Durham, NC. He had an affinity for the written word, which he absorbed through favorite works of fiction and poetry, and which he exercised in word puzzles and in his own writings. He enjoyed cooking, with a particular penchant for anything involving a grill. He loved nearly every major sport, with his chief loyalties being to the UNC Tar Heels and the Carolina Panthers. He enjoyed hiking, backpacking, fishing, hunting and other outdoor activities that kept him in close proximity to God's creation. His heart was geared toward serving others, and he had a deep compassion for people struggling with mental health issues or substance abuse, as well as those experiencing homelessness.

His personality also had impressive range. He could be profound, punny, esoteric, silly, analytical, poetic, wise, and convivial, among many other traits, but always genuine, and overwhelmingly loving, kindhearted and tender. He was a bright spot in the lives of anyone who met him, whether a lifelong friend or brief acquaintance.

Ryan was part of a large and close-knit family, and in addition to numerous aunts, uncles and cousins, he is survived by his mother and father Steve and Nancy, his younger brother Chris, his wonderful sons Logan and Tyson, his wife of 17 years, Jessica, and his Great Aunt Frances. He had an abundant love for his family, and he was loved dearly by all of them. He will be profoundly missed.

A memorial service celebrating Ryan's life will be held at the First Baptist Church of Morganton, NC on Saturday, November 15th. Receiving will begin at 12:30 PM in the sanctuary, with the service starting at 2:00 PM.

Memorial contributions may be made via donations to the Durham Rescue Mission, PO Box 11368, Durham, NC 27703, or to the Mimosa Christian Counseling Center, 220 Burkemont Ave, Morganton, NC 28655.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall



Be at peace, my friend, for I have no doubt that you will forever live on in the many grateful but broken hearts of all those who were fortunate enough to know you.

—The Masons

I am heartbroken to hear of Ryan's passing. We worked together for many years. Ryan was always someone that could lighten the mood, make the team laugh, and at the same time pull truly exceptional work out of his teammates. Our kids were similar in age, so we often shared our experiences (good and bad) with pregnancy and raising small children. I'm sending healing prayers to Ryan's young family during this overwhelmingly sad time.

—Elizabeth Paynter

I first became friends with Ryan sophomore year at UNC when we wound up in the same Spanish 2 class. Our teacher wore bunny slippers on the first day as a way to show that learning a foreign language can be fun and silly. We were dubious, but appreciate the slippers that would become a joke for the remainder of our time together on this earth. The highlight of Spanish 2 was during the final oral exam when we had to act out a scene between a doctor y paciente where our comedic chemistry would help land us an A. Ryan would keep me laughing through the rest of college and into the years after as we shared meals, walks, trips, phone calls, emails, and texts. Our exchanges were either hilarity, serious heart-to-heart talks, or something in between. We often said "I love you, brother!" to

heart talk, or usually a combo of the two. We often said "I love you, brother" to each other and I'm grateful for the support and friendship Ryan gave me. My heart breaks that this incredible human has passed. He was my best friend--something many of us can say (best friend is a tier, not a single person). If you're reading this, I'm here for you. And together may we honor Ryan's memory and

take what he gave us to better ourselves and those around us. --Justin Shaddix, Tarheel, IV small group co-leader, fellow adventurer

Justin Shaddix



My sincere condolences to Ryan's family. My prayers are with you during this difficult time. I remember meeting Ryan back in our elementary school days

—Jerome Robinson

I was so saddened to hear of Ryan's passing. He was such a wonderful person, bringing humor, kindness, and fun to whatever was going on. I grew up with him at First Baptist Church Morganton and all my memories of him are fond ones. He seemed to go out of his way to say hi to me and make me feel welcome, which I really appreciated, and it was always a joy to have classes/groups together. He will be missed by many. My deepest condolences to all of Ryan's family and friends; you are in my thoughts and prayers.

—Jesse Blair

I knew Ryan from school. We had classes together starting in Middle School and had many friends in common. He always treated me with great respect and kindness. We even shared rides home from college our Freshman year and enjoyed talking about our science majors. My heart and prayers go to his parents, and his wife and children. He contributed so much to the world and it will be less bright without him. He will be missed. I'm so very sorry for your loss. ~Sarah and the Moore Family

—Sarah Moore Deyton

Steve and Nancy, we are so sorry to hear about Ryan's passing. We can't imagine the pain and loss you are going through. Please know you are in our thoughts and prayers as you go through this difficult time. Boyd and Ann Bennett

—Boyd and Ann Bennett

To the Bailey Family, So very sorry for your loss of such a great son.

—Tony E Smith

I'm so saddened by this news! I actually had a dream recently that I saw him and said I had missed him at our 25th class reunion. I was in the youth group with him in high school. Keeping you all in my thoughts and prayers.

—Bridget Clark



—Brandon McLaurin

Ryan and I worked together for many years. We learned clinical research together. He was brilliant with words. He could communicate complicated concepts in a way that made them easy to understand. He became my change management and communications expert on all the projects we did together. Ryan had the best sense of humor! He wrote 90's style rap songs about work stress to make our team laugh. But more than his talents, Ryan's character, his kindness, and how deeply he cared about the people he worked with stuck with me. He and Jess brought my family a meal when we were going through a hard time. We prayed together and talked about our faith in Jesus and shared parenting successes and failures. My deepest condolences and prayers go to Ryan's family. I am profoundly heartbroken for Jess, Logan, and Tyson and Ryan's whole family. He

profoundly heartbroken for Jess, Logan, and Tyson and Ryan's whole family. He was my friend; he will be profoundly missed.

—Shann Williams



How do you write a fitting tribute for someone who was so masterful with words? I worked with Ryan over the span of many years and was a fortunate recipient of his excellent work, his friendship, his fierce wit, his shenanigans, and his support. So many hard days were eased by his generosity with his jokes, his diplomacy, his praise, and his help. He was so patient in our response to his pranks, whether he arrive at work to find his Rubics cube had been encased in jello, glitter dusting his office, or a poorly placed peice of cornbread in his jacket pocket. My life has been blessed to have had him in it. It was not just a privilege to have known Ryan, it was an absolute honor. My heartfelt condolences to his precious family, and those who knew and loved him best.

—Kate York

I used to work in the same building as Ryan. We never directly worked together, but for several years sat next to one another. He was a unique guy who was not only very kind and articulate, but thought-provoking in our interactions about work/non-work things. Sometimes while working on totally disparate things we could simultaneously hold a conversation on music instruments or other things. He was unique because he had that rare ability to connect and care with a wide range of people regardless of how it may have advanced him in some strategic way. He also seemed to be a rare person who could reproject any situation into something dually positive and interesting. Work or non-work. In short he could make anyone feel welcome while also bringing amazing life insights at the same time. Thats pretty special. You will very much be missed, Ryan.

—Alexandre Lockhart

Ryan joined our team at Rho after he graduated from UNC, and I worked with him for nine years. Ryan was a valuable, conscientious team member; his work was consistently well-written and accurate. Ryan was kind, helpful, and thoughtful in

all of his interactions with his colleagues and our clients. My thoughts will be with Ryan's family during this difficult time. With deep sadness, Pat Zook

Pat Zook



Jessica, we are devastated to hear about your loss. Love,
the Jones family.

—Christina

Our family has many sweet memories of Ryan from those long-ago high school days. Every word of this tribute describes him. We are proud to have known him.

—Anne and David Leonhardt

Condolences for the family. Our prayers will be with you. So sorry for your loss

—Richard Whitt



Remembering Ryan Bailey from First Baptist Church along
with his parents and youth activities our daughters
participated in.

—Teresa Robinson

I had the pleasure of knowing Ryan during our time working together, where we worked on initiatives together and he was my cubicle next-door neighbor. He was truly a light in this world—kind, thoughtful, and always willing to help. We used to

celebrate “Good Neighbors Day,” which still makes me smile when I think of it. Ryan had such a gift with words; his writing and communication skills were remarkable. But what stood out even more was his genuine warmth and the way his face lit up when he spoke about Jessica and the boys. He was one of the most genuine people I’ve ever known. I’m heartbroken to know he’s gone. He will be deeply missed by everyone who had the privilege of knowing him. Please know how fondly he was thought of, how much joy he brought to those around him, and how warmly he is remembered. My heart is with you.

—Lisa Payne

—Tommy Lanca

My heart goes out to Nancy, Steve, and the family. Ryan’s great work and personality as a science student will never be forgotten.

—Bo Cash



Rest easy.

—Mark C



I’m saddened to hear of Ryan’s passing. We were next-door neighbors for several years, and in my interactions with him, he was kind, thoughtful and gracious. We also worked at the same company for several years - his role was in Communications, and, as I mentioned to him a couple of times, I found his writing clear, insightful and very engaging. A joy to read. He was a true master of his craft. My heartfelt condolences to Jessica, Logan, Tyson and his entire family.

—Chiedu Onwuemene

Hey, Steve. I am sad to learn of your son's passing. Know that there are many of us who feel for you and wish you peace. Grief is an unwelcome but impermanent companion. The sadness of grief is painful and cannot be softened right away but its rawness is not enduring. The harsh episodes in life can hold you in misery but the flow of life eventually embraces you and invites you forward. You are a man of strength and resilience. I will think of you as these days go forward. Keith Hester

—Keith Hester

Nancy and Steve, we are heartbroken to hear this sad news! Please know our thoughts and prayers are with you at this sad time. Love, Jim and Wilma Black

—Jim and Wilma Black