



## Joseph E. Burger

June 15, 1957 - August 24, 2022

Joseph "Joe" Edward Burger

Joe Burger, age 65, died peacefully with wife and daughters at his side on August 24, 2022 in his residence in Vancouver, WA. On May 18, 2021, Joe fell while playing Pickle Ball, and sustained a severe Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Attempts at rehabilitation were thwarted by the rapid advance of the Parkinson's Disease he'd fought for 15 years.

Joe was born June 16, 1957 and adopted by George and Evelyn Burger, who raised him and his sister Teresa in Napa Valley, CA. After graduation from St. Helena High School, Joe attended the University of California Berkeley. He studied music and history and graduated in 1981. He then married his college sweetheart Jane Skeels and they moved to St. Helena, CA where Joe became a partner at Malloy, Imrie and Vasconi Insurance. He retired in January 2020. Joe and Jane had two daughters, Emilie and Suzanne. After their divorce they co-parented their girls, cheering them on through all the activities of their school years.

Joe and Debbie Monroe married in 1999, then settled in Benicia, CA. They met while searching for their birth parents and developed a friendship that later became love. Their four children lived with them part time. Joe convinced Debbie that a family dog was essential, so their first Vizsla, Frannie joined the family. He and the kids enjoyed teaching her tricks. After their children graduated, Debbie sold her construction company in Oakland and they moved to Napa, CA. After Joe's retirement, they were eager to move to the Pacific

Northwest to be closer to three of their four adult children, and their grandchildren.

Joe will be remembered by friends and family for his wacky sense of humor and corny jokes. He also loved training dogs. His first family dog, Chester, became an avid frisbee dog, so Joe organized an annual competition in St. Helena, CA. Zoe, Vizsla #2, became Joe's constant companion, entertaining strangers with her many circus dog tricks. Other hobbies included abalone diving on the Mendocino Coast and foraging for wild mushrooms. He was often seen riding his bike up and down the most challenging hills in Napa Valley. Joe organized friends and family and started making wine in his parents' garage, eventually producing vintages that won prizes at the State Fair. For many years, Joe sang with the St. Helena Chamber Music Choir. Another passion was the 200 gallon, built-in fish tanks he added to their homes in Benicia, then Napa.

At age 49, Joe started to lose his sense of smell, developed stiff muscles and cramps in his feet. The diagnosis was "Young Onset Parkinson's Disease." Joe confronted the diagnosis through exercise with his typical determination. At a conference, his Stanford Doctor called him out as a rare patient who actually reversed the disease progression. Joe dedicated himself to the Parkinson's community. He organized a support group in Napa, then ran it for over 10 years. He also raised almost \$100,000 for Parkinson's research and participated in several clinical studies.

Joe is survived by his wife Debra "Debbie" Burger and dog Zoe, daughters Emilie Vogt and Suzanne Burger Williams, stepsons Sean and Patrick Monroe, sons-in-law Jayson Vogt and Chris "CC" Williams, grandchildren Cameron Vogt and Jackson Vogt, sister Teresa "Terri" Butler and nieces and nephews Courtney Gollan, Kenzie Butler, Bo Butler.

In keeping with Joe's determination to combat Parkinson's, we donated his brain to the Mayo Clinic to advance their research into Parkinsons and Traumatic Brain Injuries. Very little is known about how to treat this all too common combination. It took 5 months of hospitalizations and doctors until

the right cocktail of over a dozen medications enabled Joe to move to a wonderful assisted living community.

There is no memorial service planned at this time, however If you would like to honor his memory, we invite you to support this research with a donation in his name to:<https://www.brainsupportnetwork.org/donate/>

# Tribute Wall

AB

“ Joe and I grew up with our parents surrounded by trees. I am so happy to have a grove of memorial trees planted in his name. Love to you all.

Aunt Terri, Courtney, Kenzie, Bo Butler - October 03, 2022 at 12:00 AM

HB

“ sending sympathy and support. I was so inspired by Joe's dedication to exercise and a positive attitude- he showed me how that can slow progression.

Helen Bronte-Stewart - October 02, 2022 at 12:00 AM

MT

“ The world has lost a precious and amazing human being . We are richer for having known him, and poorer for losing him.

Mary Turnbull - September 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM

AB

“ We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Evergreen Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Funeral Chapel and Crematory

A Memorial Tree was planted for Joseph E. Burger - September 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM