



## Derek Kenneth Thieme

September 9, 1987 - November 27, 2024

Derek Kenneth Thieme passed away peacefully on November 27, 2024 surrounded by his devoted family and friends. He was 37.

Born September 9, 1987 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, to Susan (Ford) Thieme and Kenneth D. Thieme, Derek spent his childhood joyfully exploring the outdoors and mastering card games such as Euchre - pastimes he continued to treasure throughout his life. Some of his most cherished memories involved spending time at his grandparents' home in Decatur, Indiana, where he helped his grandfather build a cabin that still stands today. During high school, he nurtured his passion for nature and adventure through school-sponsored camping and canoeing trips to the Boundary Waters in northern Minnesota. He later graduated from Homestead High School in 2006.

Derek earned his bachelor's degree in economics from Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin, in 2009. While in college, he studied abroad in both New Zealand and India, embracing his adventurous spirit with experiences like skydiving in New Zealand. Continuing his academic pursuits, Derek attended a prestigious fellowship program at George Mason University in Arlington, Virginia, earning his Master's in Economics in 2013. He then embarked on a professionally fulfilling 11-year career as an economist at the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

In 2012, during his final semester of graduate school, Derek met the love of his life, Janine, at a mutual friend's New Year's Eve party. They quickly discovered the extraordinary connection between them and married on September 25, 2016, after three and a half joyful years together. Throughout their relationship, Derek and Janine shared a love of traveling, hiking, and creating a vibrant life surrounded by family and friends. In 2020 they welcomed their son, Theodore Carl ("Theo"), their greatest blessing. Two and a half years later, their blessings grew with the arrival of their daughter, Josephine Rose.

Six months after their engagement, Derek was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Following a successful surgery and round of treatment, Derek and Janine were blessed with clear and stable scans and excellent health for many years afterwards. In April 2023 they discovered that the tumor had returned. After a difficult 18-month battle - including two additional craniotomies, treatment, and rehabilitation - Derek went home to God.

Derek's unwavering strength, kindness, humor, and deep gratitude for the love and blessings in his life remained constant through every challenge. Not long before his passing, he repeatedly told Janine, "I'm so blessed. I'm so lucky." His profound faith in God and dedication to bettering himself and the world around him set a lasting example for all who knew him.

Ask anyone who knew Derek, and they will tell you he had the most infectious and joyous laugh - the kind that filled the room with happiness. His silly sense of humor ranged from being the quintessential "fun dad" to Theo and Josephine, to crafting nonsensical Spanish puns with his sister, Megan. His determination and drive to achieve his goals were evident in every aspect of his life, including his completion of four marathons and one half-marathon.

Above all, Derek was a devoted husband to Janine and the best father to

Theo and Josephine, showering them all with boundless and enduring love. Though his time with Theo and Josephine was far too brief, he imparted to them his insatiable curiosity, adventurous spirit, his love and thoughtfulness towards others and the world around him, and the most wonderful and goofy sense of humor.

Derek will forever be the brightest star in the skies of those who loved him. He is deeply and immeasurably loved and profoundly missed. May his memory be eternal.

Derek is survived by his beloved wife, Janine Bakalis Thieme, his son Theodore (4), and his daughter Josephine (2). He is also survived by his devoted parents, Susan and Kenneth Thieme; his sister Megan (Stuart) Chmielewski; his nieces, Vera and Audrey Chmielewski, his grandmother, Elaine Thieme, his in-laws, and his many aunts, uncles, cousins, and close friends.

The viewing will be held at Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral, located at 2815 36th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007 on Monday, December 9, 2024 at 10:00 a.m., followed by the funeral service at 11:00 a.m. Internment following the service will take place at 1:30 p.m. at Stonewall Memory Gardens, located at 12004 Lee Hwy, Manassas, VA 20109. Luncheon to follow at Giorgio's Family Restaurant, located at 4394 Kevin Walker Dr., Montclair, VA 22025.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Theo and Josephine's VA 529 college fund. The information for donations is listed below:

<https://www.virginia529.com>

Theodore Gift ID: 18YK91S

Josephine Gift ID: 66MJO76

# Cemetery Details

## Stonewall Memory Gardens

12004 Lee Highway  
Manassas, VA 20109  
<http://www.stonewallmemorygardens.com>

# Previous Events

## Viewing

DEC 9. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
2815 36th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20007

## Funeral Service

DEC 9. 11:00 AM (ET)

Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
2815 36th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20007

## Graveside Service

DEC 9. 1:30 PM (ET)

Stonewall Memory Gardens  
12004 Lee Hwy  
Manassas, VA 20109  
(703) 754-4210



# Tribute Wall



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Derek Kenneth Thieme.



December 12, 2024 at 09:10 AM



“ A grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Derek Kenneth Thieme.

December 08, 2024 at 10:47 PM



“ Derek was a true light with everyone he came in contact with. He seemed to put everyone at ease when he was in the room. Most of all I will miss Derek's laugh and smile.

**Mark Montoya** - December 08, 2024 at 10:45 PM



“ Please accept my sincere condolences. Derek went out of his way to help and encourage me with work and inspire me through his leadership with Toastmasters. He was dedicated to public service and uplifting others. I remember the time he played the guitar at a mutual colleague's retirement reception and shared some amazing memories that no one could have said any better. I am grateful for his music, stories, and passion that we were lucky to hear.

**Andrew Overton** - December 08, 2024 at 08:33 PM

NS

“ *Dear Janine and family*

*We are so sorry to hear of the passing of Derek  
May his memory be eternal*

*Nick and Darlene Samaras*

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**nick samarad** - December 06, 2024 at 11:12 AM

CK

“ *Cousins Anna, David, Telly & Louie Kouba  
purchased the Divine Light for the family of Derek  
Kenneth Thieme.*



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**Cousins Anna, David, Telly & Louie Kouba** - December 05,  
2024 at 04:51 PM

PD

“ *Very saddened to hear this news. Derek impressed everyone he touched with his honesty and charm. I hope hearing how impactful he was for so many people can bring a smile to his family and loved ones. I met Derek at a Toastmasters Club, and I am sure he made everyone feel motivated and inspired to keep coming back. I could tell he was tenacious. One evidence of it is he overcame a top fear that people mostly avoid: public speaking. And he did it by showing that with practice and a positive attitude, everything is possible. I remember his laughter as I write this note. I am sure he would have wanted everyone to smile when we think of him.*

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**Paola Diaz** - December 03, 2024 at 09:20 AM

ET

“ You were one of the kindest, smartest, and most genuine people I know; I will miss you dearly.

Erica Tholmer - December 03, 2024 at 07:02 AM

RF

“ I am So Very Sorry To Hear of Your Loss of Such an Amazing Young Man .... Wishing The Thieme Family's .... PEACE for Your Hearts ~ COMFORT for Your Souls and STRENGTH To Endure The Days Ahead ... ❤️

Rosie Fairchild - December 02, 2024 at 08:14 PM

KK

Wishing you peace and comfort in these difficult days. ☐

Kelly and John Kravec - December 02, 2024 at 11:13 PM

KA

“ Kelly A. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Derek Kenneth Thieme.

Kelly A. - December 02, 2024 at 07:24 PM

AH

“ Im going to miss you my friend.

Ahmad

Ahmad - December 02, 2024 at 07:02 PM

BM

“ Sending our love and prayers asking God to extend much strength, comfort and peace to Janine, Theo, Jasmine, Ken & Susan and the rest of all their extended families and friends.....we are so sorry for your loss....I am a college friend of Ken's from Ball State back in the '70's, and have been just a tiny part of Derek's journey over the past several months via periodic phone calls with Ken. I just got off another phone call with him today, and while we talked, I read Derek's obituary....told Ken..."Derek sounds like a person I would have enjoyed knowing and spending time with." Tho' I have never met you, Janine, I feel like I know you a bit from my visits with Ken

*My wife Terri and I will continue to lift you in our prayers....hang on to Jesus and those many memories of Derek.*

*Bruce Miller, Bluffton, Indiana*

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**Bruce Miller** - December 02, 2024 at 05:05 PM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Derek Kenneth Thieme.



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December 02, 2024 at 03:40 PM

BA

“ Derek, it was an honor to know you through the Innovation Club. Your creativity and passion left a lasting impact. Rest in peace.  
*Best, Bala*

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**Bala** - December 02, 2024 at 03:14 PM



“ *Sending our deepest sympathies and love. Joe, Janet and Jared  
Petitto* ”

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**Janet Petitto** - December 02, 2024 at 09:05 AM