



## Thomas E. Cicchitti

July 3, 1940 - February 9, 2017

Thomas Ernest Cicchitti, Jr. passed away peacefully at home with his loyal companions Shadow and Bullet by his side on February 9, 2017. He laid down to take a nap and just didn't wake up. He was 76 years old. Tom was born in Chambersburg, PA to Juanita and Thomas Cicchitti on July 3, 1940. He was raised in Shippensburg, PA and went into the Navy at 17 years old. After he got out of the Navy, he came to Seattle to work at the 1962 World's Fair and ended up staying out here. He married Ginger Rigg and had 2 beautiful daughters, Lonnya and Tonnya.

In 1963, he became a member of the Baha'i Faith of which he was a devoted follower for the rest of his life. Tom was a self-taught man and an avid scholar and respected teacher of the Faith. He taught regular classes right up until the last few weeks, when cancer treatment had drained much of his energy. He loved to share his knowledge and ideas and would drop everything and give his complete attention to answering questions and finding references and quotes. He was fair and honest and an excellent example of what a caring person should be like.

The 60's and 70's were a time of "free-spirits" and, at that time, Tom fit in perfectly. Around 1971, he and his 2nd wife, Connie, came to Bellingham to find their friend, Jelly Bean, who they had met at a rock festival. She had moved up here to a place called Happy Valley, which sounded absolutely

perfect to a couple of that time that had their bell bottoms and tie-dyed shirts and all of their belongings in the back of a station wagon. They never found Jelly Bean but they did find a great area of the country to live in. Tom and Connie had 2 amazing children, Joshua and Tiana. Tom had a few different jobs in Bellingham, but the one that led to his pizza career was working at Uncle Aldo's Pizzeria on State Street. He was "sold" a couple of times with the place to new owners and worked there for several years mostly for Pat Malone, who is a dear and cherished friend. Of course, one of the down-sides of being a free-spirit, is that settling down is difficult and, after several years, his marriage to Connie ended although, fortunately, their friendship did not and they remained in contact all of these years.

Tom was a really good pool player – one of the best in town at the time. During his League play, he ran across the Love of his Life, "Debra" and finally realized that the whole "free-spirit" thing wasn't working so he settled down and he and Debbie were happily married for "34 long, long, long, long, long, long, long years", as he so eloquently and often put it. Deb had 2 beautiful daughters, Niki and Tanna already, and then they added 2 more to the "Yours, Mine, and Ours" picture – more beautiful daughters, Taria and Sarah. He used this all as a Math test. He used to say, "We have 8 kids. I have 6 and Debra has 4. Hmmm. That makes 10, doesn't it? You figure it out."

Tom and Deb together became avid pool players and promoters and started the WCPPA (Whatcom County Pool Players Association) around 1980, which boasted well over 100 4-person teams – one of the largest and best-run Leagues in the State. In 1983, they started Cicchitti's East Coast Pizzeria at the old Uncle Aldo's location, which was a smashing success and quickly developed somewhat of a cult-following. In 1994, they combined the two passions and opened Cicchitti's Pizza and Billiards, which was a gorgeous facility that seated 350 people and housed 15 9-foot Murray Pool tables and 1 Billiard table. They used to have 3-4 large pool tournaments a year with a field

of over 100 participants from all over the country. Nearly 800 different Players played in Cicchittis' tournaments and, although the pool hall has been closed for years, the players fondly talk about them to this day. Today, their daughter Niki, and son-in-law Dennis still carry on the Cicchitti's Pizza business in a very cool Red, White, and Green Pizza Trailer that can be seen around town and at events around the state. Check out their website...

Tom adored his family and spent much energy "building memories" with them. The family spent time playing pool at River City Billiards owned by their good friends Joe and Joan Landi in Mount Vernon WA ; going to big, professional pool tournaments in Reno and watching and meeting the pros; spending weeks at the cabins at Silver Lake and fishing; travelling across country to visit the relatives on the East Coast, and watching the kids play sports. Tom and Deb watched the kids do Fastpitch, Track, Basketball and Volleyball for several years, spending a few of those years travelling up and down the Coast watching the youngest ones play elite basketball – one time ending up at Disneyland – and then watching them play college basketball and volleyball. After the last ones got out of college and quit playing sports, Tom and Deb had some free time on their hands and started playing League Pool again at the Village Pub in Bellingham with their old friends, which they continued every Wednesday night. Tom spent many hours there sharing his passion for the sport, telling stories, and entertaining everyone. Through his many years' experiences, he had met and befriended many famous and colorful players and loved to share their stories and antics.

The list of people struggling to cope with life without Tom is long. His devoted and loving wife, Debra, his 8 children and their spouses: Lonnya Leikem (Craig), Tonnya Beehler (Scott), Joshua Cicchitti (Christine), Niki Shannon (Dennis), Tiana Miller, Tanna Anderson (Jeremy), Taria Byrd (Nolan), and Sarah Cicchitti (Dylan); Sister Chrissy Robinson (Garry); Father-in-Law Tom

Hughes; Brother-In-Law Bill Tollum (LaWanda); special cousin Sally Long (Gary); nieces Julie and Janay; 2 great-nephews Dusty & Dylan; numerous cousins and their kids on the East Coast; his pets Shadow & Bullet; his adorable grandchildren and great grandchildren: Zach (Leslie) and little Wyatt; Brittany (David) and little Emylee & Elliott; Tycko, Shelby; Colby, Portia, Tristian; Nakasha and little Anthony, Braxton, Braeden, Malakai; Cameron, Hunter, Kyleigh; Natalee, Truman, Trinity; Axton, Hazel Joy and Bailey; his many, many friends, impossible to list here, but a few very close ones that need to be mentioned: Suni, Curt, Wayne, Stan, Mikey, Chico, Gerald & Susie, Kimberly, William & Leslie, his pool buddies, the area Baha'is, and his devoted pizza fans.

A small gravesite Baha'i Burial Service will be held at Greenacres Memorial Park – 5700 Northwest Drive, Ferndale, WA 98248 – on Tuesday, February 14, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. A much larger (hope we can fit everyone in the building...) Memorial Service will be held on Sunday, February 19th at the Northwood Hall, 3240 Northwest Ave, Bellingham WA 98225 from 1 – 5 p.m. Please come.

# Tribute Wall

SH

“ Sending hugs and healing prayers to you all. Tom was such a kind man and I only have fond memories of him. I know hearts are heavy, but find peace and joy in the amazing memories he blessed you with. You will see him again...Love always,  
Shelly (Dahl)

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**Shelly Dahl Hofmann** - February 09, 2017 at 12:00 AM

AB

“ So sorry for your loss—was fortunate to meet this last year @ Strawberryfest Tourney that Kimberly Kirk brought Debbie to—he was very nice and we had fun—I will keep Debbie and his whole family in my thoughts and prayers.

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**Angie Jones Burklund** - February 09, 2017 at 12:00 AM

CM

“ To the Cicchitti Family: Before we ever knew or became close to Josh and Christine Cicchitti, we were devotees of Cicchitti’s East Coast Pizza place and would arrange to meet many friends here to spend quality family time with the ones we love, because it was a casual friendly family atmosphere. A place you could go to have good food and good conversation and feel like you were part of the family! Eating here also reminded us of where my husband and I were raised – a slice of old childhood memories. Although we were not fortunate to know Josh’s father Tom well, we admired him from afar for his love of family, food and friendship; we also have heard so many loving, hysterical and treasured memories of Josh’s dad’s life and experiences over the years and knew how much Josh and his family truly loved him. We could see that Josh’s dad’s dedication to business, family and friends mattered, and we continue to witness his children carry on this tradition and fine set of values. All of the Cicchitti family members have enormous love, dedication and great bonds to share with people and their capacity to share love and friendship with people is evident. We are honored to be a part of sharing life as special friends of his son Josh’s family and we are sending ALL OF THE CICCHITTI FAMILY MEMBERS all our love, our prayers, our sorrow at this difficult time. May the joys you have shared with Tom – whether as your husband, your father, your friend, your grandfather, your partner – help carry you through this difficult time. Please accept our condolences and love. The Miller Family

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**Connie, Craig and Russell Miller** - February 09, 2017 at 12:00 AM