

Hiawatha , KS



Thomas K. (Tom) Wilhelm, 58, of Hiawatha, with his family by his side, passed away peacefully at his home Wednesday evening, January 19, 2022.

Tom was born November 21, 1963, in Axtell, KS by the ole' country doctor, Dr. C.B. Hash. He was the youngest of five children by nine years of Lester and Virginia Lehmkuhl Wilhelm. Tom grew up just south of Seneca on the family farm. He graduated from Nemaha Valley High School in 1982 and graduated from North Central Kansas Area Vo-Tech School in auto mechanics in 1983.

Two weeks after graduating from high school, Tom met the love of his life and best friend, Roxan Kaster. They were united in marriage on June 16, 1984. From this union, came two wonderful daughters, Stacie and Stephanie.

Tom and his family have lived in Hiawatha since 1986. During this time, Tom worked several careers which included being a Foreman at Flairfold /Abitibi-Price, a blackjack dealer, and a manager at several convenience stores. He also sold cars, insurance, wholesale lumber, and worked in a hardware store. While doing some of these jobs, he also worked part-time delivering papers in the mornings, selling business promotional products, working part-time at convenience stores, and as an umpire. For the last ten years, Tom has worked for Airlanco as an inside sales rep in Falls City, NE. Tom loved this company because Airlanco treated his family so well, during his employment and illness - proving that you can have a second family at your workplace.

Participating in ball was a life-long passion for Tom, and he played in 600 plus softball games before retiring from the sport. In addition to his participation in ball, Tom coached his girls in summer softball and attended the ASA National Umpire School where he became an ASA umpire and a Kansas State High School Activities Association Girls' softball umpire for five years. In addition, he served on the Hiawatha Girls Softball Board for three years, two of which as president.

Tom's biggest joy in life was doing things with his family. He felt blessed and comforted

knowing his daughters had met the loves of their lives and would have someone who would always be by their side. When his granddaughter Henley came into this world in 2009, his life changed for the better, ten years later in 2019 his second granddaughter Maren was born, and his first grandson Lathan was born in 2021, making his happiness even greater. He loved all animals, especially dogs. For years, Tom could be seen walking around Hiawatha with one of his pet dogs. Tom loved his sports, especially the KC Chiefs and the KC Royals. He had a passion for Baseball history and Cowboys and the old west history, collecting many books, and memorabilia. He also loved attending auctions teaching his granddaughter Henley about how auctions worked and looking for “good” stuff.

Tom was diagnosed with salivary cancer in January 2019, during surgery to remove a baseball size mass deep in his neck and under his jaw. He beat cancer once, but it later metastasized to his lungs. While he knew his days were numbered, he found a way to live each day, and to be strong for the family he loved. He would encourage his family and friends to follow all preventative measures for cancer and to make the most of the time given. He would want us all to continue to be kind, work hard at whatever our life’s calling is, and take advantage of every opportunity to enjoy the blessings we are given.

Tom was preceded in death by his parents Lester & Virginia Wilhelm, his brother Bob Wilhelm in 2010, and sister Charlene Collom in 2019, and his Brother-in-law Sam Collom in 2017.

Survivors include: Wife Roxan Wilhelm, Daughter Stacie Shoemaker and husband Dugan, granddaughters Henley and Maren Shoemaker, and grandson Lathan Shoemaker, all of Hiawatha. Daughter Stephanie Norwood and husband Matt of Topeka. Brothers Dale Wilhelm of Seneca and Wayne Wilhelm of Topeka. Father and Mother-in-law Roger and Rowena Kaster of Bern. His beloved dog, Scout. Numerous nephews, nieces, and in-laws.

Friends may call at Chapel Oaks Funeral Home after 12 noon 5 Sunday afternoon and where the family will meet from 2 until 4 that afternoon.

Prayer Service will be held at 10:30 a.m. Monday, January 24, 2022, at Chapel Oaks Funeral Home, Father Dan Gardner will officiate. Cremation will follow service

Memorial contributions are suggested to Brown County Humane Society or Hope Brown County, sent in care of the funeral home, 124 S 7th St., Hiawatha, 66434. A special message or note of remembrance may be sent to the family at [www.chapeloaksfuneralhome.com](http://www.chapeloaksfuneralhome.com)