

Randy Jay Thresher



DURHAM -- Dr. Randy Jay Thresher of Durham died Tuesday December 14, at UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill.

Born in Concord, Mass. November 10, 1955 to Harold and Rita Thresher, he grew up in Billerica, Mass. with 10 brothers and sisters.

He graduated from UMASS Boston with a degree in biology and went on to work at the Duke Eye Center in Durham. He continued his education at UNC Chapel Hill and received his PH.D in Molecular Biology. Early in his career he performed research at the Lineberger Cancer Center and later as a Research Assistant Professor in the Genetics department was the director of the Animal Models CORE Facility at UNC Chapel Hill. He had numerous publications in scientific journals and presented at several conferences.

Randy studied karate for many years at Carolina Martial Arts Center, achieving a brown belt. His father, who was a carpenter, taught him to work with his hands and Randy used this skill throughout his life building furniture, doing home renovations, and working on cars and motorcycles. Randy had a profound love of animals and enjoyed hiking and playing fetch with his Chocolate Lab and Golden Retriever.

Randy is survived by his two sons, Jason and Erik; and his ex-wife, Jill to whom he was married for 25 years. He is also survived by his mother, Rita McKee; nine brothers and sisters; and his girlfriend and partner, Vanessa Brock.

A remembrance gathering will be held on December 28 at 3 p.m. at the Carolina Inn in Chapel Hill. In lieu of flowers, his sons ask that donations be made in his honor to the Autism Society of NC, Bowles Center for Alcohol Studies at UNC, or the Animal Protection Society of Durham.

The family is being assisted in Durham by Clements Funeral Service, Inc.