



## Brett William Braaten

August 28, 1959 - February 17, 2025

Brett William Braaten passed away peacefully at his home with family at his bedside in Flowery Branch, GA, on Monday, February 17, 2025, at the age of 65. Brett was born on August 28, 1959, in International Falls, Minnesota, to Leona and Elmer Braaten. He graduated from International Falls High School in 1977 and went on to earn his degree from the University of Minnesota in 1982.

After college, Brett began his career as a customs inspector at the International Falls border, where he served with dedication. In 1983, he met the love of his life, Patti Holden, and the two were married later that year, beginning a beautiful journey together that lasted 41 years.

Brett was a man of many talents and passions. His adventurous spirit led him to explore scuba diving, earn his pilot's license, and DJ for the Rainy River College radio station. He also shared his love of music as a keyboardist for the band Nebula. Brett's sharp mind and curiosity knew no bounds.

He spent 29 years working with U.S. Immigration and Customs, retiring as a special agent in charge at the remarkable age of 50. Not long after, Brett and Patti traded snowy Minnesota winters for the warmth of Georgia, where Brett embraced his faith and community. He became deeply involved with his Catholic church, leading Bible study and men's groups, and pouring his heart into service.

Brett was also an author, publishing the book *Homeland Insecurity*, and an accomplished speaker, eventually serving as president of his local

Toastmasters club. He lived his faith with grace and strength until his very last breath.

Brett is lovingly remembered by his wife, Patti; their children, Rachael (Steve) and Ryan (Cheryl); his parents, Elmer and Leona; his brother, Darin (Tammy); and his cherished grandchildren, Maria, Michael, Madeleine, Melanie, Charlotte, and Cora. He is preceded in death by his grandparents, William and Eudora Stone and Laurence and Ethel Braaten.

Brett's legacy of love, faith, and adventure lives on in the hearts of all who knew him.

The family would like to express their sincere gratitude to the care team especially Whitney, Sykwana, Michael, Heather, Kendra, Traci, Dennis, and Patricia at Hospice of Northeast Georgia for their compassionate care.

A funeral Mass will be held at Prince of Peace Catholic Church in Flowery Branch, GA, on Friday, February 28, at 1 p.m. The family will receive friends at the church after the Mass.

Brett's burial will take place at a later date at St. Thomas Aquinas Cemetery in International Falls, MN. Donations can be made to Hospice of Northeast Georgia.

# Previous Events

## Funeral Mass

FEB 28. 1:00 PM (ET)

Prince of Peace Catholic Church  
6439 Spout Springs Rd  
Flowery Branch, GA 30542

## Visitation

FEB 28 (ET)

Prince of Peace Catholic Church  
6439 Spout Springs Rd  
Flowery Branch, GA 30542

# Tribute Wall

JD

“ Dear Patti and Family,

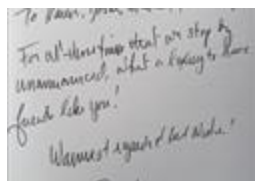
*We are saddened to hear of Brett's passing but we are grateful that he is no longer suffering! He had a strong caregiving team supporting him!*

*I have known Brett for over 60 years. When we were toddlers, we lived a block from each other and would play every day whether it was just simply running around the yard or tricycle racing! We went to school together and both graduated from Falls High School in 1977. Fast forward 20+ years later: by this time both of us were married and had kids and our family ended up moving to a neighborhood that was only a mile from Brett's. In fact, Brett and his dad helped us move into our current home. Those are just a few of the fond memories I have.*

*Brett was always a deep thinker, strongly committed to his faith, and active in his church. Of course, he was also a published author! Here is a signed copy of his "Homeland Insecurity" book that he gave to us. I will have to read it again!*

*Brett, may you rest in peace!*

*John and Karen Dalton*



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**John Dalton** - February 25, 2025 at 03:11 PM

MP

“ I got to know Brett in the Knights of Columbus and our friendship deepened as I served as an officer in the KofC. I saw him regularly at daily Mass but my most vivid memory of Brett came in January 2020 when I had major back surgery and he was the first visitor I had the following morning in the hospital . What a kind and caring man! Mark Peterson

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**Mark Peterson** - February 21, 2025 at 04:52 PM

RT

“ Rest in Peace buddy of so many years. From St. Thomas elementary school onward. I've attached a photo of you sneaking a peak from the "back row" at one of my birthday parties. And I remember your Rainy River FM radio voice ... the cool radio style. As adults, I enjoyed your opinions and writing. They were strong and articulate; two shots of whiskey in wine spritzer world. Now suddenly I remember a call you made to me a few years ago. You seemed wistful and we talked about the meaning of life. Deeper stuff. It occurs to me now that I missed a clue and that you were embarking on a long health journey. And we lost touch. For that I'm regretful and I hope that you were surrounded with love in these final years. Ron Tarro.



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**Ron Tarro** - February 20, 2025 at 03:08 PM

BA

*Brent will always be remembered by me for his sense of humor. He was a very good at keeping the crowd aware and interested. While acting as master of ceremonies. He put the spark in a speech. Anytime our family got together and he was part of it. It was a good party. He was very proud of his family, his babies and his wife Patty. I left the Midwest for Oregon in 1968 and whenever our family got together when I was vacationing in Minnesota there was at least one party to get together and enjoy a great time. Betty Anderson*

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**Betty Anderson** - February 21, 2025 at 08:58 PM

JS

*Ron, great birthday picture.  
Brett was one of the good ones! The Expo.... remember running around at the arena. The play "All Hands on Deck" The Catholic school days. He was kind with a good sense of humor. I'm glad to hear he lived out his faith. His family sounds very supportive and loving. Once we left Minnesota we lost track. I do have his book  
My sincere condolences to Patti and his family. May they be comforted in their memories and knowing they are not alone. God is with the broken hearted.*

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**Joanie Villalta Skifstad** - February 25, 2025 at 12:42 PM

RH

*Patti & family, Elmer & Leona,  
We are so sorry to hear of Brett's passing and send our sympathy and prayers. Brett was a great man and a good friend. Sending you love and hugs.  
Rick & Raynita Hougum*

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**Raynita Hougum** - February 25, 2025 at 01:26 PM

KD

*Brett and I used to work together In Minneapolis. I recall fondly how our wives Patti and Judy "allowed" us to sneak off early on Saturday mornings for a quick 9 holes of golf, while they stayed home with our toddlers. We were always home by 0900 when the fun really started. As our careers took us to different cities we remained in touch but sadly those occurrences eventually stopped. I was saddened to learn of Brett's passing and my thoughts are with Patti, Rachael, Ryan and his grandchildren. Great memories will keep Brett alive in all your hearts. May he rest in peace*

*Kevin Delli-Colli*

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**Kevin Delli-Colli** - March 01, 2025 at 03:24 PM