

Charles Michael Norton

Nashville, Tennessee

Charles Michael Norton, age 66, passed away at Alive Hospice in Nashville, Tennessee, on February 21, 2015, surrounded by his family.

Michael was preceded in death by his mother, Pauline Priddy Norton. He is survived by his wife of 25 years, Susan Tosh Norton; father Charles G. Norton and sister Patricia Norton Bryan (Wesley) of McMinnville, Tennessee; sons Michael Benjamin Norton (Jeannie) of Cary, North Carolina and William Forrest Norton of Gallatin, Tennessee; daughters Leslie Wallace Congdon (Emil) and Claire Compton Wallace of Nashville, Tennessee; six grandchildren, Maxwell Paul Norton, Elliott Benjamin Norton, Alice Porter Congdon, Virginia Tosh Congdon, Everson Boone Congdon and Wallace Ehrenberg Congdon; his nieces and nephews; along with his law firm family at Bone McAllester Norton PLLC, his church family at St. Augustine's Chapel at Vanderbilt University, and devoted friend and caregiver Faye Garretson.

Michael was born March 23, 1948, in Ripley, Mississippi. At 6 years of age, his family moved to McMinnville, Tennessee, where he grew up. He graduated from the University of Tennessee, summa cum laude, in 1970 and from Vanderbilt University School of Law, cum laude, in 1974. He worked as legal counsel for the State of Tennessee Department of Revenue from 1975-1978. While there he served as staff counsel and helped re-write Tennessee's inheritance and corporate tax laws. He was then a partner with several local law firms before he founded the firm of Bone McAllester Norton in 2002 with his partners of 35 years, Charles W. Bone and Sam J. McAllester III, along with Stacey A. Garrett. In addition to his corporate and tax practice, Michael became a nationally-recognized authority on law governing the sale of art, specifically legal issues arising from the de-accessioning of art by non-profit colleges and universities intending to use sale proceeds to support general operations.

Michael was a self-trained gourmet cook. His specialties included classical French cuisine, home-made potato chips, killer chocolate cake, and wonderful everyday food. He also delighted in peanut brittle and loved to make bananas foster to raise money for charities supported by the law firm. After he married Susan, he took over the kitchen and kept his family fed for 25 years.

He became a confirmed Episcopalian in 1993. He completed the 4-year Education for Ministry (EFM) course and co-mentored an EFM Group for the next four years, only giving that up last year. He became a Biblical scholar during that time. Michael loved his studies and his leadership as a member of the board of directors at St. Augustine's for years.

In addition to spending time with his family, Michael had a deep interest in Nashville history. Two of his essays on that subject – one about Teddy Roosevelt's trip to Nashville in 1907 and the other about Georgia O'Keeffe's gift of the Stieglitz Art Collection to Fisk University in 1949 – have been published in a book of essays from the Nashville Historical Newsletter. Michael's interest in Nashville history also fueled a hobby collecting vintage Nashville postcards. He had the largest existing collection with more than 4,500 unique postcards, all of which were indexed and digitized. He donated a significant number of the vintage postcards to the Nashville Public Library, and these postcards are now located in Special Collections and identified as the Norton Postcard Collection.

Michael enjoyed creating collage artworks, primarily using postage stamps. This unusual type of art won him several awards. In 2009, one of his works was named a Best in Show at the Cultural Arts Competition at the Tennessee State Fair. In 2010, two of his artworks were selected from more than 600 entries to be among 50 artworks exhibited at the Northwest Art Center in Minot, North Dakota, as part of the annual Americas Paperworks Competition. Also in 2010, one of his artworks won another first place in the open art competition at the Tennessee State Fair. Michael also had a solo exhibition of his works at the Appalachian Center for Craft in Smithville, Tennessee in 2013. The majority of these works now hang at the Bone

McAllester Norton law offices. In addition to these creative endeavors, Michael was also an accomplished videographer.

Michael adored his wife, children, grandchildren and many friends. He loved his partners and co-workers, practicing law, and the Episcopal Church. His kindness to others, sense of humor, and artistic creativity were traits loved by all who knew him. Michael was a very modest man and rarely discussed his accomplishments, but many people enjoyed his accomplishments and many people knew that they were loved by him.

Visitation with the family will be held Thursday, February 26, 2015, from 3:00 until 5:00 P.M. at the law offices of Bone McAllester Norton PLLC, 511 Union Street, Nashville City Center, Suite 1600, in downtown Nashville. Visitation will also be held for two hours prior to the funeral service at Benton Chapel at Vanderbilt, 411 21st Avenue South, Nashville, on Friday, February 27, 2015, from 12:00 noon until 2:00 P.M. Funeral services will begin at 2:00 P.M. at Benton Chapel, and a reception will follow immediately at St. Augustine's Chapel at Vanderbilt University, 200 24th Avenue South in Nashville.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations to: St. Augustine's Chapel Columbarium Fund, C/O St. Augustine's Chapel, 200 24th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37212; Alive Hospice, 1718 Patterson Street, Nashville, TN 37203; Nashville Humane Association, 213 Oceola Avenue, Nashville, TN 37209; or The Aicardi Syndrome Foundation, P.O. Box 3202, St. Charles, IL 60174.