



Dr. James Michael Madden

February 8, 2026

Dr. J. Michael Madden

Michael Madden, 78, of Florence, South Carolina died peacefully at home Sunday, February 8th. He fought long and hard against two complex neuromotor diseases that struck with unrelenting ferocity. His courage was remarkable in facing almost total paralysis that took away his ability to speak and write, too.

Michael was born February 1st, 1948 at the US Naval Hospital in Oakland, California to Captain Edwin John Madden and his mother, Martha (Gavin). He is survived by his wife of almost 50 years (June 5th), H. Jane (Wilson) Madden, his brother, Robert (Bob) Madden, and his sister, Patricia Lequire, along with nieces and nephews.

Michael excelled at academics. He had a graduate degree in theology from Catholic University of America, a bachelor's degree in education, and a Ph.D. from the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. His research focused on the development of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) diagnostic system to enhance learning potential in an efficient manner back in the late 1980's, all of which was decades ahead of thinking at the time.

He spent his life serving people. He worked the streets of Watts and East Los

Angeles in California as a social worker. This included negotiating with gangs to get contracts off of kids who were slated to be killed. In later years, through his development of Alternative Schools, students who thought they did not fit in nor had the ability to learn, were transformed when they discovered they could achieve, too. At the University level, he taught Special Education. He worked hard to train future teachers to see potential in challenging students and maximize the ability of all to learn. He taught for several years at the University of South Dakota and then went on to become tenured and a full professor in the Education Department at Francis Marion University in Florence, South Carolina. He was a prolific presenter, giving almost 100 presentations at international and national conferences, as well as at regional and state levels.

Michael was an avid woodworker and firmly believed that he who dies with the most tools wins! He almost made it.

Known for his brilliant mind and phenomenal memory, he was an invaluable Trivial Pursuit team member. The team with Michael was always the winner. A humorous storyteller with a talent for mimicry, he was perhaps best known for being a humble, persistently kind, and caring person who touched countless lives, making them better.

He will be buried in McLean, Saskatchewan, Canada. A Celebration of Life will be held in Florence, South Carolina in mid-March. Details will follow.

Tribute Wall

AM

“ *May God's peace surround you and uphold you through this difficult time. Sending up prayers for the entire family.*



A. McRavin - February 18 at 02:39 PM