



## Mr. Thomas E. Donovan Jr.

October 27, 1946 - December 8, 2020

Unity, NH

Thomas E. Donovan Jr. died peacefully on December 8, 2020 at Sullivan County Healthcare after a long and brave journey with dementia. Born on October 27, 1946 to Thomas and Rita Donovan he grew up in Concord and attended Bishop Bradley High School. After graduating from Fairfield University in 1968 Tom served his country for two years in the US Army. Following his military service he began a social work career in NH and served in that role until retiring in 2013. Sworn in on 12/4/1996 Tom served seven terms in the House of Representatives with six terms as Vice Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee and one term on the Resource Committee. A fierce champion of justice and an unwavering advocate for the poor and disenfranchised he made significant changes in legislation promoting better access to services for hundreds of people. Tom leaves behind a powerful legacy to his beloved community of Claremont where he initiated and supported numerous efforts to better the lives of young and old alike. A life-long Catholic animated by his Tradition's social justice teachings he served both St. Mary's Church and school in various capacities as well. Tom enjoyed flowers, feeding the birds, music and thoroughly enjoyed life. Predeceased by his wife Debra he leaves behind a daughter Betsy (Shane) and step-daughter Jasmine Sprague, three granddaughters, Cassandra, Karlie, Sammantha, 5 great grandchildren, his twin sister, Rev. Terry Donovan Odell (Greg), brothers, Michael (Finola) and Bill (Kathy), numerous nieces, a nephew and many beloved colleagues and friends. The family wishes to express deep gratitude to the staff and administration at SCNH as well as Lake Sunapee Homecare/Hospice for the loving care that Tom received. Their dedication and caring will long be remembered. A walk through visitation will be held from 1:00 pm until 2:00 pm on Saturday December 19 at the Roy Funeral Home with masks and social distancing required. A committal service will be held immediately following the visitation in St. Mary's Cemetery also with masks and social distancing. A Celebration of Gratitude for Tom's Life and Career will take place at a later date when people can gather safely. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Claremont Soup Kitchen, 53 Central Street, Claremont, NH 03743. You are invited to share a memory of Tom with the family or leave a message of condolence in the family guest book at <http://www.royfuneralhome.com>.



# Cemetery

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## Saint Mary's Cemetery

Plains Road

Claremont, NH, 03743

# Events

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**DEC 19** **Visitation** 01:00PM - 02:00PM

**19**

Roy Funeral Home

93 Sullivan St., Claremont, NH, US, 03743

**DEC 19** **Graveside Committal Service** 02:00PM

**19**

Saint Mary's Cemetery

Plains Road, Claremont, NH, US, 03743

# Comments

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“ An external video has been added.



**Roy Funeral Home** - December 18, 2020 at 12:28 PM

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“ I entered the legislature at the same time as Tom, and am still there. Thank you so much for sharing him with us.

**Susan Almy** - September 19, 2021 at 01:24 PM

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“ Nancy Gillingwater is following this tribute.

**Nancy Gillingwater** - February 02, 2021 at 12:12 PM

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“ I met Tom many many years ago when I was a young 19 year old mother who had just lost my dad and was struggling with many issues..he was always so kind and had great advice to give, he helped so many and will always be remembered as a kind soul to all who met him. So very sorry Betsy who was my childhood friend for many years,and family & friends. Nancy

**Nancy Young (Gillingwater)** - December 26, 2020 at 12:54 PM

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“ Nancy Young (Gillingwater) sent a virtual gift in memory of Mr. Thomas E. Donovan Jr.



Nancy Young (Gillingwater) - December 26, 2020 at 12:51 PM

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“ Nancy Young (Gillingwater) lit a candle in memory of Mr. Thomas E. Donovan Jr.



Nancy Young (Gillingwater) - December 26, 2020 at 12:51 PM

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“ Although we only knew Tom for a few short years, it was very evident that he was kind and caring. He was very instrumental in showing compassion, kindness and strength to our family at a very stressful time in our lives for which we are most grateful. We also learned very quickly that we shared a great love for the Boston Red Sox! May you rest in peace kind friend.  
Cedrick and Priscilla Harrington

Priscilla Harrington - December 19, 2020 at 01:40 PM

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“ All of the St Peter's community is sorrowful to lose Tom Donovan. What an example of service to the most vulnerable. He lived his life simply to serve others in need and his expertise and compassion has surely touched so many lives, more than Tom could perhaps imagine. As Emerson noted, "a life well-lived". Condolences to the wonderful Donovan clan; be proud of all that Tom did in his lifetime. An example to all of us. Sincerely, the Cassidy boys.

James M Cassidy - December 19, 2020 at 09:59 AM

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“ My condolences to my cousins Terry, Michael, Billy and your families. My memories are of Tom visiting Aunt Marge and Uncle Fred’s while he was attending Fairfield University. He loved to play golf when he visited and I would occasionally caddie for him. He would let me hit a few balls when we were out of sight of the club house and ranger. In his honor and memory I will be serving dinner at a homeless shelter in Hartford, CT tomorrow night. Tom, May you Rest In Peace. Carl Bach

**Carl Bach** - December 18, 2020 at 08:40 PM

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“ We wish to convey my condolences to the whole Donovan family Terry and Billy especially, to Tom's children. We didn't know him well but knew he was a good person.  
The world needs more like him.

Ed and Donna Nadeau

**Ed Nadeau** - December 14, 2020 at 02:59 PM

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“ Tom was a great man. We are so sorry for your loss. Your friends from Sugar River Mills

**wendy moquin** - December 14, 2020 at 12:36 PM

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“ Love always, Joanne purchased the A Full Life for the family of Mr. Thomas E. Donovan Jr..



**Love always, Joanne** - December 13, 2020 at 06:35 PM

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“ Dear Betsy and family  
Im so sorry to hear of your dads passing! I worked with him when we were on Broad Street then moved down to Water St. He was very passionate working for children in New Hampshire!  
Please know that youre all in my thoughts and prayers! God bless you all!

Juanita Osgood  
Retired from NH Health and Human Services  
And in Arkansas

**Juanita Osgood** - December 13, 2020 at 12:00 PM

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“ Tommy was a huge part of my young life in Concord, and thoughts of him have remained with me since. We were good friends and I saw him almost daily when picking up Terry for our walk to school. From these tributes, I know that he was an extraordinarily good man, but I will always remember the quick smile, resulting dimples and twinkly eyes!  
Through tears, Angela Luti Klein

**Angela Klein** - December 13, 2020 at 11:23 AM



“ Thank you Angela for your kind remembrance.....such warm memories.....

**Terry Donovan Odell** - December 17, 2020 at 06:26 PM

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“ I am so sorry to hear about the death of this kind and caring man. I served with him on the board for the Claremont Soup Kitchen years ago. He always cared deeply about the less fortunate people in our community. My condolences to his family.

**Nancy Berry** - December 13, 2020 at 10:55 AM

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“ Where do I start.. I worked with Tom for many years. We successfully assisted each other on many cases helping the indigent and elderly. He was one of the most compassionate men I've ever known.  
We became neighbors and even traveled to Hong Kong and Florida together. As Tom's health started to deteriorate he stayed with my husband and I for a few months until he needed more medical assistance.  
My condolences go out to his daughter Betsy whom he loved so much along with his grandchildren.  
I had the pleasure of meeting his twin sister Terry  
And send my warmest thoughts and prayers.  
I'm sure God has special jobs for him, he will be missed by many including myself.  
Rest In Peace until we meet again.

**Nancy Pond Gifford** - December 13, 2020 at 12:47 AM

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“ Tom was my supervisor years ago when Pathways was called Development Services of Sullivan County. He was a compassionate man who listened well to anyone who wanted to share concerns or their views on different topics. I am sorry for the loss of this kind man.  
Blanch A.Nutting

**Blanch A. Nutting** - December 12, 2020 at 06:45 PM

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“ Tom was a mensch, which in Yiddish means a person of integrity and honor. I am not sure that I have ever known anyone who not only cared and worked for the the disadvantaged as evidenced by his political, social work and community work but lived that concern and caring in his personal life. Tom lived his life based on the premise that life was not fair and he suffered that fate in his final years. My condolences to Betsy and her family and his siblings and their families.

**Ben Mortell** - December 12, 2020 at 05:43 PM

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“ I first met Tom n the late 1970's when he was working for the state and I was the new director of the Rehab Ctr. Later we worked together for The Community Alliance for about 15 years. We shared many after work drinks at the Jade and Tom always had a story or two about his political work in the Legislature or of some family in need. Tom was so generous to others with his time and his heart. Over the years Tom got to know my wife Linda and our family...and in some ways we were like brothers more than just fiends and always looking out for each other, I worked in human services for over 35 years ....and no one cared more about and for others than Tom Donovan. If there is a place beyond, I sure hope Tom is at the front of the line.  
Linda and I are saddened by his passing and wish happy memories for his family.  
Kevin & Linda Cooney

**Kevin Cooney** - December 12, 2020 at 04:06 PM



“ Thank you Kevin for these warm memories and kind words.....

Please note this unfortunate omission from Tommy's obituary and share as able ...thank you Terry his twin sister.

A Celebration of Gratitude for Tom's Life and Career will take place at a later date when people can gather safely

**Rev. Terry Donovan Odell** - December 12, 2020 at 05:53 PM

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“ Please note this unfortunate omission from my brother Tommy's obituary and share as able ...thank you ...Terry Donovan Odell

A Celebration of Gratitude for Tom's Life and Career will take place at a later date when people can gather safely.

**Terry odell** - December 12, 2020 at 03:52 PM

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“ I didn't know Tom well until we shared good times while both were assigned to Ft. Sill, OK in 1969. His time as a super drill sergeant was chronicled in a Concord Monitor feature story. He made a huge contribution in every circle, brought comfort to countless and warmed our hearts. May he rest in peace and may God bless his family. We are with you, Terry and family, in this time of sorrow even though circumstances prevent us from being physically present. Love, Idell and John Donovan

**John F Donovan, Brady '64** - December 12, 2020 at 12:52 PM



“ Thank you John for such beautiful words of support at this sad time. Please note this unfortunate omission from Tommy's obituary and share as able ...thank you Terry

A Celebration of Gratitude for Tom's Life and Career will take place at a later date when people can gather safely.

**Terry odell** - December 12, 2020 at 02:39 PM

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“ Terry and Family - I was very sorry to hear of Tom's passing. Please know that he and all of you are in my thoughts and prayers.

Ed Coffey

**Ed Coffey** - December 12, 2020 at 09:34 AM



“ Thank you Ed...Please note this unfortunate omission from Tommy's obituary.....thank you Terry

A Celebration of Gratitude for Tom's Life and Career will take place at a later date when people can gather safely.

**Terry odell** - December 12, 2020 at 03:53 PM

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“ Thinking of the Donovan family during this difficult time. So sorry for your loss. Janet Bertolami

**Janet Bertolami** - December 11, 2020 at 04:30 PM



“ Thank you Janet..Please be aware there was an unfortunate omission in my brother's obituary ..I've posted it here...

A Celebration of Gratitude for Tom's Life and Career will take place at a later date when people can gather safely.

**Terry odell** - December 12, 2020 at 03:57 PM

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“ To the Donovan family;

In high school, I grew up with Tom and his many friends through the St. Peter's Church community and CYO-Betty Ann Murphy, Angela Luti, Billy Burnett and Terry Donovan. It's only been (56-57) years since I have seen Tom. But I have absolutely rich and very positive memories of Tom, your wonderful Mom & Dad,and Terry. May you rest in peace Tom.

Wishing you and your family our thoughts and [prayers. Life is an absolute gift. Savor every moment.

Steve Spain and the Spain family-Doug, Sue, Kathy & Joe.

**Steven Joseph Spain** - December 11, 2020 at 04:16 PM



“ Thank you Steve for your kind remembrances.....

**Terry Donovan Odell** - December 17, 2020 at 06:28 PM