



Mr. Steven O'Grady

December 9, 1979 - July 2, 2024

Steven Thomas O'Grady, of Greenville NC, formerly of Dartmouth, MA, passed away unexpectedly on July 2, 2024, in Greenville, NC. A certified “people person” with a huge, kind heart, he was a beacon of laughter and light for all who knew him. He will be deeply missed.

Steve was born on December 9, 1979, in New Bedford, MA, arriving just three minutes before his twin sister. He attended schools in Barrington, RI, and Dartmouth, MA, graduating from Dartmouth High School in 1998. There, he was a proud member of the award-winning marching band and Captain of the WGI National Champion Indoor Percussion team. Steve pursued higher education in Music Theory and Composition at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Music Education at the University of Massachusetts - Dartmouth, and Curriculum and Instruction at Capella University.

Steve's professional journey was as diverse as it was impressive, spanning music, sales, customer service training, and learning and development. He was an accomplished drummer, performing with various bands in the New Bedford, MA, and Greenville, NC areas. In 2006, he toured with the jazz rock/fusion band Gongzilla as their drummer. However, his true passion lay in teaching music. For over 25 years, Steve dedicated himself to private percussion instruction, sharing his love for music with students of all ages. He also served as a percussion instructor and arranger for high school bands in

Massachusetts, Louisiana, and North Carolina and as a percussion advisor for the East Carolina University Band. This past June Steve completed his “dream job” as Interim Band and Orchestra Director at Chicod School in Pitt County, NC.

Steve was a true friend to everyone he met, transcending boundaries and bringing people together with his genuine warmth and kindness. He had an extraordinary ability to make each person feel special, seen, and valued. His circle of friends was remarkably diverse, including people of all ages, genders, races, sexual orientations, political affiliations, and economic backgrounds. Steve's open-hearted nature and inclusive spirit created a sense of belonging for everyone, making him a cherished companion to many. His friendships were a testament to his belief in the beauty of human connection and the power of kindness, leaving a lasting impact on all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Steve is survived by his mother, Denise (Deschenes) O’Grady, and stepfather, Joseph Dutra, of South Dartmouth, MA; his father, Thom O’Grady, and stepmother, Denise McEvily, of Old Saybrook, CT; his brother, Douglas O’Grady, and wife, Ashley, of Brookfield, CT; his twin sister, Colleen Williams, and husband, Thomas, of Brimfield, MA; and his cherished nephews, Jake and Patrick O’Grady and Kayden Williams. He is also survived by his extended family, including step-brothers Ian McEvily and his wife, Elizabeth, and Colin McEvily, along with numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, and a large circle of honorary family members, especially his beloved Greenville family, David and Julie Ann Erwin, and their daughters, Miranda and Meredith.

The self-described “World’s Okayest Drummer,” will be remembered fondly by the many musicians he played with over the years. His life and legacy will be celebrated during the Texas 2 Step Reunion Party on August 17th at the State Theatre in Greenville, NC where all of the drummers will be playing Steve’s

iconic teal-colored custom Trick Drums kit.

A Celebration of Life for Steve will be held in Massachusetts at a later date, with details to be announced online. In honor of Steve's dedication to music education, donations can be made in his name to the Save the Music Foundation at <https://www.savethemusic.org/take-action/ways-to-donate/>

Tribute Wall

JM

“ I’m shocked to hear Steve passed, I went to Dartmouth schools with him and his sister Colleen. He was a kind hearted person with a huge presence in band, and we talked hockey/basketball sports a lot. My condolences go out to the family, I’m so sorry for your lost. Bro you will be missed. Steve rest easy.

J Mota - November 25, 2025 at 09:17 PM

RL

“ This broke my heart to see. Steve was the drummer in my band, Blessed Thistle for a few years and a great friend. All my love and sympathy to his family. If you'd like to have a service in MA, please let me know if I can help.

Rev. Karen LeBlanc - September 12, 2025 at 10:05 PM

JH

“ Mr Steve was my drum instructor before he passed and he was the best instructor I have ever had. He was kind, funny, and made me feel special. I know that they interviewed others for his position at Mcfayden music in Greenville but they couldn’t find anyone fill his shoes.

jacob h - December 13, 2024 at 06:03 PM

TO

Jacob...what a beautiful posted about Steve. As his dad, it makes me very proud to hear the impact he had on you. Keep him in your heart!
-Thom O'Grady

Thom Ogrady - April 08, 2025 at 06:17 PM

RH

“ dear family and friends of steven o'grady,

i knew steven first as a music student at umass dartmouth in the early 2000s. he was bright, eager to learn, and interested in the music of the world's peoples. when his brother, douglas, helped me with the music notations for my book west african eve rhythms for drum set. steve would offer advice when doug was not around on my book and anything technological.

i again saw steven at the dartmouth, massachusetts, best buy, where (my being totally dumb about anything techno) he gave great advice and helped me find things i had no idea about.

i wondered where he was, but just heard from our mutual friend jason at best buy, that steven had passed away in july. i am shocked to hear this, as he was only 44 years old and seemed healthy.

my heart goes out to you all, my deepest condolences.

steven, i will keep you in my thoughts, my music, and my heart.

i offer this ancestors poem for steven and all those who were lucky enough to know him and connect with his deep intelligence and incredible wit.

my love to steven and everyone who is his extended family.

royal hartigan

HOPI PRAYER FROM OUR ANCESTORS, FOR OUR ANCESTORS

*words from the hopi people of southwest native america and royal
hartigan 1999*

*and now, here, for my former student, colleague, and dear friend,
steven o'grady –*

do not stand at my grave and weep, i am not there i do not sleep

*i am a thousand winter winds that blow, i am the diamond glints on
snow*

*i am the summer's sun on the ripened grain, i am the gentle
autumn's rain*

*i am harvest leaves of red and orange and gold, i am the life force of
all beings, great and small, fleeting and eternal, young and old*

*i am new england mountain meadows of brown and tan and green, i
am the inner secret shadow spirits of all things, visible and unseen*

*i am the dawning dew in may's blooming mist, i am the heartbeat of
your dreams kissed*

*i am the sounds of music, dance, and song, from up on high, i am
the clouds in an endless massachusetts sky*

*when you awaken in the morning's quiet hush, i am the swift
uplifting rush of birds in circled flight*

i am the soft stars that shine on a moonlit night

so do not stand at my grave and cry, i am not there, i did not die

*and as before, steven, wherever you go we are with you near or far,
and wherever we walk on the paths of this long cold night of life
without you, you are right here with us, inside our hearts*

*a mirror for each other's souls through time and space we are one,
and someday yet again we will be whole as we awaken together in
the evening's midnight sun*

as we awaken together in the evening's midnight sun

and we'll dance with spirits deep, sing the whole way through,

*we'll laugh at life's old ills, and to each other be true, as we awaken
together in the evening's midnight sun*

in the evening's midnight sun

we are one

we are one

we are one

all one all

one all

and beyond

with you in our hearts, steven

forever

royal hartigan - September 11, 2024 at 03:42 PM

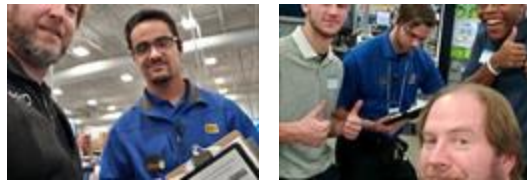
TO

*This is a beautiful tribute Royal. Thank you
-Thom O'Grady*

Thom O'Grady - September 13, 2024 at 05:27 PM

CH

“ *My heart breaks for Steve’s friends and family. I only knew him professionally, but we bonded over drumming and music. His vibe was contagious. He was kind, patient, and fiercely proud of his success with eero (long before it was acquired by Amazon.) A teacher through and through, and someone I desperately wanted to work with again. Rest easy, Steve. Make whatever’s next a better place for the rest of us.*



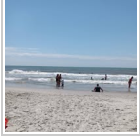
Chris Harmon - July 18, 2024 at 07:01 PM

AS

“ *I have so many memories with Mr Steven O'Grady who worked for me and with me and we had so many great days together and experiences and inside jokes and I am so heartbroken to hear that he is no longer with us but I would cherish my memories of him and want to thank him for everything he taught me. Love you Steve!*



Amber shah - July 17, 2024 at 08:57 AM



“ *Annette Brouillard lit a candle in memory of Mr. Steven O'Grady*



Annette Brouillard - July 17, 2024 at 07:32 AM



“ *I first met Steve at best buy a few years ago he was a great person I'm in shock right now. He will be missed.*

Annette Brouillard - July 17, 2024 at 07:32 AM



“ *Prayers for the family and all who knew Steve. He was one of a kind. I will cherish these moments.* ❤️ 🕊️



Monique Lacy - July 11, 2024 at 03:40 PM

“ We at Dartmouth Community Media are deeply saddened by the sudden passing of Steve O’Grady. While Steve was widely recognized as a talented drummer and music teacher, here at DCTV, we fondly remember him as one of the pioneering students in our Television Technology Classes at Dartmouth High School. From 1995 to 2001, DCTV offered classes at DHS, where Steve’s passion for music shone through in the videos he created. Steve, along with his fellow student and drummer, Peter Antunes, and teacher Tom Aungst, played a pivotal role in launching the annual Night of Percussion Concert in 1998. This groundbreaking event featured innovative performances, including the unforgettable spectacle of drumming on a car onstage, which delighted a sold-out auditorium. The success of this concert not only funded but also elevated the DHS Indoor Percussion group, enabling them to triumph in the WGI World Class Percussion Championships in April 1998, securing first place in their division while competing for the first time.

Even today, Steve’s presence lingers at DCTV, where a mural created by fellow student Andy Gonsalves features original students from the inaugural classes, including Steve. This mural stands as a testament to their enduring impact and hangs prominently in our edit room.

Our heartfelt condolences extend to Steve’s family, bandmates, current and former students, and friends. We feel privileged to have known Steve and collaborated with him to produce exceptional programs. His absence leaves a profound void, and he will be dearly missed.

For a glimpse into the highlights of the inaugural Dartmouth High School Night of Percussion Show in 1994, including Steve’s father Tom, who served as the voice of the DHS Band and emceed this memorable night, [click here](https://youtu.be/1KI4p8zZh2o).

<https://youtu.be/1KI4p8zZh2o>



Peter Chasse - July 10, 2024 at 11:31 PM

DO

This is amazing, thank you! ❤️

Doug O'Grady - July 11, 2024 at 05:17 PM

SH

“ *Steve was an amazing person, musician, and friend! You will always be remembered and loved.💕💕*



Susan E. Howard - July 09, 2024 at 03:39 PM

EM

“ *I was so excited to see you at the VHB show in August- can you believe it had been almost 20 years since we've seen each other? You always kept in touch and I enjoyed hearing about all the wonderful things you were doing in life. You were the kindest person I've ever met and I will miss you!*



Emily - July 09, 2024 at 01:55 PM

BF

“ Forever in my heart, my friend. You will be missed ..until we meet again



Brittany Fleming - July 09, 2024 at 01:48 PM

JH

“ Thom,
So sorry for your loss. My condolences to your family.
Judy Haskell

Judy Haskell - July 09, 2024 at 01:10 PM



“ It was a genuine honor to share a stage with you. 💜

Ed Loveless - July 09, 2024 at 09:28 AM

DM

“ Breaks my heart to hear this my friend. Truly a genuine good soul.

Dean Mizelle - July 08, 2024 at 10:57 PM

JS

“ My son really enjoyed Mr. O'Grady last school year for music and orchestra. He was kind and passionate about music, and my son talked frequently about his class. Mr. O' Grady shared the cello sheet music for Crazy Train with my son, his favorite rock out song, he was an awesome teacher! My heart is broken for his friends and family.

Jennifer S - July 08, 2024 at 09:48 PM

SA

“ *He was always so nice! He would speak to everyone around him, so kindly. Your smiles will be missed by so many in Greenville. Prayers and peace to your family. He was an amazing human* 🤝🙏

Susan Ashley - July 08, 2024 at 09:01 PM

BU

“ *2 files added to the tribute wall*



Buffy - July 08, 2024 at 08:28 PM

JE

“ *Steve and I played in Victor Hudson Band, Dragon Seeks Path, Backseat Romeo, Big Boy Moore and the Sugar Shack Revival, Blues Nights, Karaoke Nights, and too many more to recall them all. He was a fun friend, and a reminder to cherish every moment with those we have!*

Jonathan Easterlin

Jonathan Easterlin - July 08, 2024 at 02:59 PM

AW

“ *My brother, you will always be with me and live on! The memories, laughs and amazing adventures will fill my heart with love! I would not be doing this without you! I am not sad but happy! You're at peace with God and that gives me joy!* ”



Adrian Watts - July 08, 2024 at 12:32 PM

JD

“ *Steve was the sweetest boyfriend and then the most amazing friend. To know him was to love him and to feel a keen sense of loss without him here. We were all so fortunate he touched our lives.* ”

Sending love to his family. He loved them so much.



Jennifer Delamar-Goss - July 08, 2024 at 11:51 AM

DA

“ Pictures from Sat June 22.
Godspeed, my friend.



Daniel Albright - July 08, 2024 at 11:28 AM

ML

“ He was the sweetest person ❤️ I'll miss you Steve !!



megan long - July 08, 2024 at 03:24 AM

PF

“ Pastor Milton & Delorse Staton Family lit a
candle in memory of Mr. Steven O'Grady



Pastor Milton & Delorse Staton Family - July 08, 2024 at 12:20 AM

EH

“ My Thoughts And Prayers Are With The Family



Evangelist Gwen Hudson - July 06, 2024 at 08:58 AM

PH

“ So sorry to here about the passing of Steve. He was a great drum teacher to my son Micah who learned a lot from him. Our prayers are with his family and friends at this time. May be rest in peace.



Pauletta Horton - July 05, 2024 at 08:58 PM

CS

“ Congleton Funeral Home and Staff wishes to express our sincere condolences on the passing of your love one. We light this candle in their memory.



Congleton Funeral Home and Staff - July 05, 2024 at 05:56 PM

SS

One of my good friends RIP corvette moody will be missed

stevie smith - July 05, 2024 at 09:35 PM

JP

My deepest condolences to the O'Grady family.

Jim Phillips - July 10, 2024 at 10:49 PM