



## John Skellie Morris

October 10, 1953 - August 13, 2023

John Skellie Morris died at his home in Leesburg, FL, on Sunday, August 13, 2023. He was 69. A fourth-generation Floridian, Skellie was a beloved teacher and coach in Lake County schools. A graduate of the Class of 1971 at Leesburg High School, where he served as student body president, Skellie was a member of the LHS Yellow Jackets football team that went to the state finals in 1970 and was named to the all-state team as a linebacker. He played football at Maryville College in Tennessee, where he graduated with a degree in political science.

During a 40-year career in education, Skellie taught at Mt. Dora, Eustis and Tavares high schools and coached a variety of sports, including football, baseball, golf and softball. He was one of the founding directors of Kids' College, sponsored by Lake Sumter Community College, and spent more than 20 years working in its summer enrichment programs.

Upon retiring, Skellie devoted himself to volunteer work throughout Lake County, offering his services to numerous organizations, including the Leesburg Historical Museum and the Leesburg Partnership. He spent many years as a volunteer during Leesburg Bike Week and also gave tours of the historic Mote-Morris House, which was owned by his family for nearly 80 years and where he lived growing up. In 2021, Skellie was named "Volunteer of the Year" by the Lake County Chamber of Commerce.

Skellie was a devoted fan of the Florida Gators and a longtime football season ticket holder. He also enjoyed fishing and hunting. In recent years, he created a popular food blog — “Skellie Eats Everything” — that spotlighted independent restaurants throughout Lake County.

Pre-deceased by his parents, R.J. and Georgiana Morris, of Leesburg, Skellie is survived by two brothers – Bob Morris (Debbie), of Winter Park, FL; and Danny Morris (Nancy), of Yalaha, FL – and a sister, Carol Ann Smith (Pen), of Pittman, FL, along with six nieces and nephews, and seven grandnieces and grandnephews.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. on September 17, 2023, at St. James Episcopal Church in Leesburg, followed by a celebration of Skellie’s life at the Leesburg Boat Club. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that any donations be made to the Education Foundation of Lake County ([www.edfoundationlake.com](http://www.edfoundationlake.com)) or English Springer Spaniel Rescue of America ([www.springerrescue.org](http://www.springerrescue.org)).

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

SEP **17**. 2:00 PM (ET)

St James Episcopal Church  
204 Lee St  
Leesburg, FL 34748-4915  
(352) 787-1981

# Tribute Wall



“ *Beyers Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of John Skellie Morris*



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**Beyers Funeral Home** - August 23, 2023 at 09:59 AM

JB

“ My first memories of Skellie are at St. James where we shared time together in the choir and where he sat at times with his mom and dad and sister and brothers. All of them are dear to me and will remain always in my heart. Skellie was one of the only boys in the choir who didn't hit the girls over the head with his hymnal. He was too gentlemanly for that even as a boy. He was the most gentlemanly man I ever knew. We shared late afternoon music shows at his home on Main Street. Carol Ann and I would walk home from school patrol duty at Lee Elementary which was across the street from St. James. Back in those days kids would get to carry safety flags and escort the other school children across the street if you made good enough grades to make school patrol. Carol Ann and I (and all of the other school patrol members) thought we were pretty big stuff when we walked around with our badges and flags and the cool rain ponchos for wet days. Anyway, we would walk to the Morris house after school and watch Dick Clark or The Monkees or whatever music show was on and Skellie was often there too ... back in the television room behind the formal parlor. I didn't see Skellie for many years after we grew up and went our separate ways. I met up with him again when he taught at Tavares High School where my sister Susie worked. Skellie was part of the library gang that hung around with Gene Kilpatrick, Susie, and others in the THS library on a daily basis. I hung around the library gang at times too and saw at once that the gentlemanly Skellie I knew as a child was now a gentlemanly man who showed true kindness to many and inspired his students with his caring and insightful lessons. The world will miss this wonderful man.

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**Jerri Blair** - September 17, 2023 at 02:22 PM

BF

“ Bobby, Carol Ann and Danny,  
I unexpectedly had to go out of town but wanted you to know that  
my thoughts and prayers are with you. RIP Skellie 🙏 Babs Burt  
Friedman

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**Babs Burt Friedman** - September 17, 2023 at 11:34 AM

ED

“ Skellie is the reason I'm a teacher in Lake  
County Public Schools. He was a neighbor,  
friend and so much more. He added so much  
to our family. He made holidays more special.  
He was a role model and special friend to my  
children. He helped our exchange student navigate Tavares High as  
well as helping other exchange students. He made it possible for  
her to have a good experience here in Leesburg. He helped me feel  
more apart of the community. He had a special place in our lives  
and will always have a special place in our memories and our  
hearts.



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**Ellen Didion** - September 17, 2023 at 10:50 AM

ED

“ Ellen D. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John Skellie  
Morris.

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**Ellen D.** - September 17, 2023 at 10:37 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of John Skellie Morris.



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August 31, 2023 at 08:56 AM



“ Gratitude, respect, integrity, compassion, empathy and just pure kindness.... Shellie Morris gave me more than he will ever know between the years of 87-90'. Will never forget when my first application to FSU was denied and he looked at me and said “try again” (despite telling me I should be a Gator)! He was “almost” always RIGHT! What a beautiful legacy he will leave.

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**Stephanie Coffaro** - August 20, 2023 at 02:07 PM



*History, Law, Psychology, and most importantly... HUMOR..... We as a joke set his classroom outside before he came in and found an empty room. He went to the front lawn of THS and saw us all sitting at our desks waiting for class, so he laughed and we did it there. (then put everything back)*

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**Michael Goff** - April 01, 2024 at 06:01 PM