

Jeffrey Charles Fries

Obituary



FRIES Jeffrey Charles Fries passed away on May 23, 2014 at the McGraw Hospice Center in Jacksonville at the age of 53, ending a courageous fight of over 23 years against a series of strokes that created difficult challenges physically but never dampened the courage and spirit that inspired his family and friends. Jeff was a sports writer and columnist for the Florida Times-Union at the time of his first stroke in November 1990. Before that, he was a sports writer for the Denver Post and for The State Press, the newspaper for his alma mater, [Arizona State University](#). In October 1993 he was honored with the annual award from the Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital Fighting Back Program for Exemplifying The Term 'Fighting Back'. Jeff covered almost every sport possible and became one of the most talented writers in the Southeast. He wrote one of the first definitive pieces on a largely unknown Mississippi Valley State wide receiver named Jerry Rice and also covered University of Florida Athletics. In 1989 he received a first place award from The Florida Press Club for General Excellence In Sports Writing. He beat long odds to recover from his initial health problems and for most of the next two decades was able to live as normal a life as possible, which included writing college football and TV sports columns for [Jacksonville.com](#), making regular trips to the gym, plus Jacksonville Suns and Jacksonville Jaguars games. He also was a member of St. Paul's Catholic Church. Jeff followed faithfully his beloved Philadelphia Phillies, Eagles, and 76ers and enjoyed trips to area sports bars and Cruisers Grill. Jeff was born on April 14th, 1961 in Cincinnati and his family later moved to Syracuse, N.Y., where he attended St. Ann's Grammar School and Bishop Ludden High School. His family then moved to Lansdale, PA, where he graduated from Lansdale Catholic High School in 1979. While at Arizona State Jeff nurtured his talent for storytelling and his knowledge of sports to join the student newspaper, and then make the jump to the Denver Post after his graduation. After many years of slow but steady progress from his first stroke, Jeff had a setback in December 2011 when he suffered another. A third more than a year ago left him confined to an assisted-living center but never diminished his determination and spirit. Jeff is preceded in death by his parents, Richard and Sonia Fries. He is survived by a sister, Susan Sullivan (Patrick) of Syracuse, a brother Eric of Lansdale, PA; two nieces, Callie Lavinghousez (Chad) of Charleston, S.C. and Amy Tess Sullivan of Tampa. Relatives and friends are invited to attend his Funeral Mass Monday, June 2, 11:00 A.M. at St. Paul's Church, 435 1st Ave. North, Jacksonville Beach, FL. The family requests that donations in lieu of flowers be made to Community Hospice of NE Florida, McGraw Center, 4266 Sunbeam Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32257.

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