

THE OBITUARY OF HONORABLE TIMOTHY PATRICK CONNORS

Timothy Patrick Connors, 72, of Ann Arbor, Michigan, passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by love, on October 8, 2026. He resolutely battled pancreatic cancer for 18.5 months, grateful for Michigan Medicine, the love and support of his countless friends and family members, his Irish pluck and his driving desire to live to “do good work”, and his faith - a Warrior of Light.

Timothy was born in Providence, Rhode Island to Irene O'Connor Connors and Edward Joseph Connors on October 7, 1954. He was gifted with many creative talents, among them artistic ability, singing, and writing. He pursued both intellectual curiosity and multi-cultural intrigue throughout his lifetime. He injected humor into all facets of his life: A familiar phrase in his household: Sweetheart, Would you please be quiet; I cannot go to sleep while I am laughing. He inspired us as a teacher, judge, facilitator, husband, father, grandfather, brother, friend and storyteller to relish life, embrace each day, reach out to others, and do good work.

When his family moved to Ann Arbor in the early 1970's. Timothy enthusiastically joined the Huron High “River Rats” football team, receiving first “Most Improved” and then “All Conference” commendations. He enjoyed playing football under Bo Schembechler as a “Walk on”. Timothy received his BA degree from the University of Michigan and Columbia Law School. He received his JD degree from Wayne State University Law School.

Timothy was proud to be a Lecturer at the University of Michigan Law School for many years and was a State Court Judge in Washtenaw County for 34 years. During his tenure, he served as Chief Judge of the District Court, the Circuit Court and the Unified Trial Court. He also served by appointment as a Probate Court and a Tribal Court Judge. He sought to bring healing to his Courtroom. In 2013, with the support of the Michigan Supreme Court and the active participation and mentoring of several Tribal Courts, he established the Washtenaw County Peacemaking Court, the first such state court in the country. In 2017, the National Counsel of Juvenile and Family Court Judges recognized this work and presented him with their “Innovator of the Year” Award. The Native American Rights Fund appointed him to its Indigenous Peacemaking Initiative in 2017. In 2018, Judge Connors received the Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Award for the Advancement of Colored People. He was honored to receive dozens of awards for his work through the years, the last three, in 2026 from the Negligence, Litigation and ADR Sections of the Michigan State Bar. He passed moments before the ADR Section awarded him the “Hero of the Year” Award on October 8. Upon his retirement from the bench on December 31, 2024, he and his wife founded “Connors Facilitation”, wherein he sought, most successfully, to resolve pending legal cases short of trial, primarily by assisting parties to realize sameness, commonality and healing. He saw the sameness in all of us and brought connectivity to all of his work. He intended to leave each personal encounter better than he found it; He made each of us feel seen. He ignored obstacles in his effort to do good work.

Timothy is survived by his adoring wife of 30 years, Margaret Kruse Connors, his children Caitlin Connors of Folkestone, England; Eliza Hodges (Chris) of Ann Arbor; Brittany Connors (Derek) of Plymouth; and Ryan Connors of Ypsilanti, as well as siblings, Colleen Connors of Ventura, CA; Bridget Connors (Dr. Tony Yacona) of Seattle, WA, and Patrick Connors (Hyatt) of Bethesda, MA. Timothy relished his role as “Poppa” to grandchildren Jude and Lucy Rayner, Cooper, Ethan and Ellie Hodges and Kai and Ira Connors, who he carried on his back; with whom he shared silly jokes, antics, fishing skills, tracking skills, bird-feeding, bonfire-building, and the list goes on.

In lieu of flowers, an endowment in the name of Honorable Timothy Patrick Connors has been established at the University of Michigan Law School. Contributions can be made to: <https://donate.umich.edu/9Brvx>

Timothy's words: LIVE THE LIGHT. BE THE LIGHT. SIOCHANA ("Peace" in Irish).