

Fred McMahan
1950-2023

Fred McMahan of Nebo, NC, known as “Fast Freddy” to his friends for his motorcycle racing skills, was a top salesperson at Parts Unlimited, a beloved father, grandfather, great-grandfather and a friend remembered for always smiling, being upbeat and keeping a loving heart for all.

McMahan was born September 5, 1950 in Buncombe County, NC, to parents Milton and Althea McMahan and died August 25, 2023 after a short battle with cancer. To the very end, confined to a wheelchair following surgery removing one leg and later the other, he talked to numerous people daily, offering encouragement, support and advice while gracing his conversation with his good humor, funny stories, instilling confidence in his children and others with his overall belief that everything is going to work out.

“He taught me to be very independent, to make my own way in the world, to shake people’s hands and look them in the eye and let them know you are alive,” remembered daughter Amy McMahan Surrett. “He inspired me to be a strong person, to keep surviving and to have fun. He prioritized fun in his life.”

“Fast Freddy was always on the go,” remembered daughter Lori McMahan Frommer. “When he wasn’t working, becoming the top salesman nationally for his motorcycle company, he liked to be at Lake James. Every summer weekend, we drove to the lake, camping, fishing, riding on the boat. He spent his time entertaining, meeting people, cooking, getting to know people – and telling the best jokes. He won several fishing tournaments. At the Moose Lodge, he played pool so good, no one wanted to play him.”

Mike Webb knew his cousin Freddy his entire life. “He was a wonderful guy to have dinner with and to ride motorcycles with all over the Smoky Mountains. He had classic clean family humor and kept his chin up during all his physical challenges.”

“We worked together 40 years, starting at SureFire on Cox Ave. in Asheville and with Parts Unlimited,” Lee Hemphill said. “We were telemarketing reps and then we hit the road for 27 years. Fred drove all over his territory, the state of North Carolina. He was always smiling and kept a loving heart. Fred always used to say, ‘Suit up and show up!’”

McMahan introduced Frank Price to sponsors who helped fund Price’s motorcycle racing career. “Fred was the most knowledgeable person on almost any subject. He either had the right answer or said he’d get right back to you with it. I’ve never seen a man so positive.”

McMahan is survived by his widow, Natalie, who enjoyed “26 great years with him,” his first wife, Jean Robinson King, daughter Lori (Luis) of Nebo NC, Amy (Dennis) of Leicester, NC, grandchildren Sarah Olivia Frommer, Sophia Frommer, Sasha Frommer, Stella Frommer, Simon Frommer, Isaiah McMahan, Amanda Surrett, Jonathan Surrett, great-granddaughter Cheyenne Surrett, and sisters Jean Morris of Marion, NC and Loretta Holden of Asheville.

“A few years back after I had an emergency C-Section and my son was helicoptered to a neonatal unit, I opened my eyes and one of the first things I saw was my dad,” Lori recalled. “He had just lost his leg and he was holding my hand saying everything’s going to be alright. And I knew it would be because he always handled everything.”

“One of the most thrilling moments with dad was when he took me to lake Lure for lunch on his Ducati motorcycle,” said Amy. “We took all the crooked backroads from Old Fort to Lake Lure. I’ve been riding with my dad since I was literally an infant in diapers, I knew how to ride efficiently with him and lean into him as he maneuvered the curves. Dad, knowing that I was an adrenaline junkie just as he was, opened up the throttle of that Ducati and we went from 45mph to 125mph in seconds. It was all I could do to keep myself tucked behind him as close as I could get! It was the most amazing day we ever had riding together. I was 17 at that time. I believe that was the last ride he took me on.”

Family and friends will host “Fast Freddy Fest – A Celebration of Life” on Saturday, October 21, 2023 from 4:30 to 9:30pm at 121 Lytle Cove Rd, Black Mountain, NC 28711. Barbecue will be served. [Please RSVP](#), bring your own chairs and beverages – maybe even your musical instrument or a side dish – and share memories of Fast Freddy.