



## John Bateman Obituary

John Mark Bateman, 65, of Homewood, Alabama, left his earthly body on November 16, 2023. Mark was a beloved husband, dad, brother, and uncle, as well as a mentor and friend to countless people – not only throughout the United States but also around the world. He was preceded in death by his parents, Robert and Juanell Bateman. His legacy of ferocious love, profound commitment, and passionate dedication is carried on by a host of those who loved him, including his wife of 25 years, Lori Brand Bateman; his daughters Katy Grace, Sara, and Anna-Li; his sister Mary Beth Folterman (Bill) of Satellite Beach, Florida; his brother, Chuck Bateman (Ann) of Cocoa Beach, Florida; and his nephews, nieces, cousins and other extended family members. Mark had a deep and unwavering love for his family and saw his daughters as his greatest legacy, prioritizing time spent with them and continuously encouraging them to follow their passions.

Born on March 4, 1958 in Fort Worth, Texas, Mark grew up in communities throughout Texas, Ohio, and Florida, in which his father served as pastor. After graduating from Upper Arlington High School in Ohio, he earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Carson-Newman University, a master's degree in Student Personnel from Bowling Green State University, and a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Indiana University. He served as Special Assistant for Education to the Lieutenant Governor of Texas before entering his university career, in which he served in both administrative and faculty roles at several universities, including Louisiana State University, Baylor University, and Samford University.

Mark had a passion for higher education: its opportunities and challenges, its perils and promises, its history and future. He also had a gift for seeing the promise and possibility in everyone who crossed his path, and helped countless individuals embrace their callings and pursue their dreams. A beloved professor, he often heard from former students about the impact he made in their lives and vocations. He was generous with both his time and his expertise, freely sharing his encyclopedic knowledge regarding nearly every college in the U.S. with his students and colleagues. His keen sense of humor and wit, paired with an infectious personality and a desire to make a difference, left everyone he met better for having known him.

One of the most significant legacies Mark leaves behind is College Choice Foundation (CCF), a nonprofit he co-founded to provide opportunities for motivated students with economically challenged backgrounds to attend college. He originally conceived the idea for the Foundation in graduate school and shared this vision with his friends Josephine Lowery and Nancy Hale in 2014. Since CCF's formation, they have worked with 192 high school students from the Birmingham area on their journey to attend and graduate from some of the most elite colleges and universities in the nation.

Mark suffered from the progressive brain disorder corticobasal degeneration for more than a decade. This diagnosis made significant demands on his life and well-being, but anyone who knew Mark knew he would never accede to discouragement or defeat. He determined early in his illness not to allow the diagnosis to prevent him from living a full life or from impacting the lives of others. A lifelong runner, Mark's mind and body were geared toward pushing through difficulty and finding refuge in motion. Mark continued to run long past the point the doctors thought possible, and running truly was a metaphor for his life – not only in its characteristics of persistence and courage, but also as a manifestation of a zest for living. This persistence, courage, and exuberance all endure, carried by those of us who were fortunate enough to run alongside him for a while. Mark will be deeply missed, but his influence will live on, multiplied in so many lives that were enriched by his presence.

A service to celebrate Mark's life, with visitation following, will take place on December 18, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. at Baptist Church of the Covenant, 2117 University Blvd., Birmingham, AL, 35233, the congregation that has loved and supported him for many years. In lieu of flowers, please consider donations in Mark's memory to the College Choice Foundation's Bateman Scholars Program. Donations can be made online at <https://batemanmemorial.swell.gives/> or mailed to College Choice Foundation, 1919 Oxmoor Road, Ste. 324, Homewood, Alabama 35209.