



Benjamin Tolkan

February 7, 1983 - October 17, 2020

Ben Tolkan, 37, of Washington, DC, passed away October 17th after a 5-1/2 year, epic fight with Ewing's Sarcoma.

Ben graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2005, and made his way to Washington, DC, where he lived the last 15 years.

Ben remained a deeply proud Wisconsinite his entire life, cheering on the Bucks, Brewers, Packers, and Badgers every chance he got.

In December of 2018, Ben married his wife, the utterly amazing Abby Tolkan (née James). She was, in his words, "the very best thing that ever happened to him."

Ben lit up every room he ever walked into. During his time in Washington, Ben became a fixture of the local beer scene —from bartending at Pizzeria Paradiso to repping Brooklyn Brewery and DC Brau, he was beloved by so many in the city.

Ben had a community of dear friends that stayed close to him from every period of his life. From friends he first made in Kindergarten at Good Hope School to his friends from Nicolet High School, Camp Interlaken JCC, UW-Madison, and throughout his many years in DC - Ben was so deeply loved by

so many.

Through many grueling years of cancer treatment, Ben inspired countless fellow patients, always bringing seemingly boundless energy and positivity to every treatment facility he entered.

We are particularly grateful to the incomparable Dr. Katie Thornton for championing Ben's care and supporting him to live so much life during his cancer fight.

Ben was preceded in death by his beloved Aunt Carol LaMalfa and by his Grandparents Rosie and Lou Lehman and Bob and Lillian Tolkan.

Ben is survived by his adoring wife Abby Tolkan (née James), his sister Jessy Tolkan, and his loving parents Jim & Sherry Tolkan, as well as his Uncle Tom LaMalfa, Uncle Nolan Lehman, Aunt Marice and Uncle Al Berman, Cousins Laura, Steve and Gabriel Feffer, Cousins Lauren, Jon, Charlotte and Olivia Uretz, Cousin Geoffrey LaMalfa, Parents-in-Law Ann and Gary James, Sister-in-law Kristin and Eric Shea, Niece Norah Shea, and many dear friends he considered family.

A graveside funeral will be held at:

Second Home Cemetery

Thursday, October 22, 2020 - 1:00 PM

The service will be streamed via zoom video, in the spirit of keeping our loved ones safe and healthy, we invite you to join the service via video.

Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/2553236334>

Please honor Ben's fight by donating to the fundraising campaign in his name at the Sarcoma Foundation of America:

<https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/honoring-the-fight-of-ben-tolkan>

Cemetery Details

Second Home Cemetery

3705 S. 43 St.
Milwaukee, WI 53220

Previous Events

Service

OCT **22**. 1:00 PM (CT)

Second Home Cemetery
3705 S. 43 St.
Milwaukee, WI 53220

Tribute Wall

GE

“ I grew up with Ben. He was my little cousin. I was six or seven years older. We used to plan our house I can't later. I moved to Cleveland and we saw each other a lot. It wasn't like when we were little and this time went a little further there was distance between the whole family, but all families reconcile and everything is great or seems to be what looks can be deceiving like words or statements as to what happened or didn't happen but I am 99 for sure I do know what happened talk soon

geo - May 28, 2025 at 04:12 AM



“ Benjamin Tolkan

October 06, 2023 at 01:40 PM

CZ

“ May Ben's beloved memory be an everlasting source of blessing and inspiration to all who were privileged to know him. With Heartfelt Condolences, Chaplain Michael Zoosman, NIH



Chaplain Michael Zoosman - June 08, 2021 at 11:32 AM

FB

“ *Jim and Sherry Tolkan,*

Rosemarie and I offer our sincere sympathy on the passing of your son Ben.

We will remember you all in our prayers.

*Fred and Rosemarie Bartkowski
Greendale, WI*

Fred Bartkowski - October 28, 2020 at 03:03 PM

GL

I miss Ben he was my boy. Geoffrey Tolkan lamalfa

Geoff Lamalfa - May 28, 2025 at 04:08 AM

WE

“ *Dear Jim, Sherry, Jessy and Abby,*

Dean and I want to extend our heartfelt condolences to you at this difficult time of mourning for Ben. Our love, thoughts and prayers are with you all.

Wendy and Dean Ellis

Wendy Ellis - October 23, 2020 at 01:27 PM

EF

“ *My deepest sympathy is with all of Ben's family and friends. I will keep you all in my thoughts and prayers! I had the great pleasure of going to high school with Ben and working together at the North Shore Bistro. I always loved hanging out with Ben, because I knew he would be able to make me laugh and put a smile on my face! So sad he left us far too young!*

Erin Felber - October 23, 2020 at 12:52 AM

LC

“ Jim, Sherry, Jessy and Abby: it is with great sadness that I learned about Ben's passing. It's terrible and no words can express the emotions you all are going through. Nancy and I met Ben on 2 occasions ---- at a Badger game in Madison and at a dinner in Washington DC ---- both wonderful times. We have those memories, and you have so much more.

As we watch this on Zoom, and in some short way try to offer our support and sympathies, I can only hope and wish that you allow time to heal the most deepest wound in your hearts. May Ben's life always be a blessing.

*Nancy & Larry Carl
10/22/2020*

Larry Carl - October 22, 2020 at 02:34 PM

MP

“ *I remember Ben and my son Michael playing soccer together with the HODAGS. He always provided the comic relief. Such a fine young man! Life is not fair, our deepest condolences and prayers are with you all.*

Mitch and Martha Pincus

Mitch Pincus - October 22, 2020 at 12:54 PM

TB

“ *We all remember how Ben ever embraced life with joy and sweetness and how blessed we all were by his presence. May the Eternal One grant you consolation among all those who mourn in Zion and Jerusalem. The Carter Berksons*

The Carter Berksons - October 22, 2020 at 12:47 PM

SA

“ *I remember Ben as a very cute little kid -- who grew into a wonderful young man. Our thoughts, prayers and sincere condolences are with all the family.*

Gail & Steve Adams

Steven & Gail Adams - October 21, 2020 at 03:31 PM