



Clayton Robert McCollum

August 9, 1986 - December 29, 2019

Clayton McCollum, known to friends and family as "Clay", passed away December 29, 2019 at the age of 33. Clay is survived by his wife Christina Moran McCollum; his precious child Madison Lynn McCollum; his parents Debbie McCollum Thrash & Step-Father Robert L. Thrash; his grandparents Janet L. Guanche & Step-Grandfather Arnold Guanche; his soul mate Johanna Grace Turner; great aunts and uncles Robert & Kathy Lynch and Rickey & Paula Lynch; uncle Clifton McCollum and a host of cousins.

He was predeceased by his great grandmother Mary E. Lynch, great grandfather Elton M. Lynch and Grandfather Thomas Louis McCollum

A native of Ft, Lauderdale, FL, Clay graduated from Wellington High School in 2004. After high school, Clay had tried several different apprenticeship programs and various other jobs after graduating high school and found he was not satisfied with this life. After two years of trying to find his niche he decided he wanted to serve his country. Clay wanted to be a part of something bigger and he felt serving his country would fulfill this. He always had a deep love for his country and showed this by joining the U.S. Navy. He reported to Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, IL, December 11, 2006.

After graduating boot camp, Clay went to the fleet as an undesignated Seaman. A few years later he tested for and was advanced into the rate of Navy Gunners Mate (GM). The GM rate has been part of the United States Navy since the late 1700s, dating back to when this branch of the service was founded. From cannons and muskets to sophisticated weapons systems such as missiles and torpedoes, the Gunner's Mate has played a critical role in the success of the Navy.

During his years of service, Clay was stationed on board several ships including USS Germantown (LSD-42), a Whidbey Island-class dock landing ship and USS Farragut (DDG-99) a Arleigh Burke-class destroyer. While on assignment with the USS Farragut Clay was loaned to the USS Philippine Sea (CG-58) a Flight II Ticonderoga-Class Guided Missile Destroyer as their VLS Technician until a permanent replacement could arrive on board. He also was stationed with Maritime Expeditionary Security Squadron (MSRON) 5

and Naval Special Warfare Group ONE and Navy Recruiting District (NRD) Miami. Clay always lead by example, setting the standards high and expecting his Sailors to match his. While serving on active duty, he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Homeland Security and Emergency Management from Ashford University in 2016.

Clay worked his way up the military ranks reaching the rank of Chief Petty Officer in 2018. To an outsider it's just a rank, however the Navy Chief has existed for more than 120 year and Clay was proud to freely accept the responsibility to bear the traditions and long-standing lineage beyond the call of printed assignment. Clay was selected to join an elite brother and sisterhood, the like of which is not found anywhere else and he was welcomed with open arms. Being called "Chief" was one of his biggest accomplishment of his military career.

Not only was Clay an accomplished Sailor but he was a devoted father as well. Madison Lynn McCollum was the joy and light of his life. He always said the one thing better than being called Chief is being called dad.

Clay will always be remembered for the love and affection he showed his family, friends and shipmates. His comradery, loyalty and service to country will carry on in the Sailors he worked with and lead.

During his years of service, Clay was awarded numerous awards including: Good Conduct Medal Active (4), Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global war on Terrorism Service Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (10), Sea Service Deployment Ribbon (3), Army Achievement Medal, Expert 9mm Pistol Medal, Navy "E" Ribbon, Expert M4 Rifle and the Military Outstanding Volunteer.

The viewing service will take place 6 P.M. – 8 P.M. (EST) on January 9th at Palms West Funeral Home located at 110 Business Park Way, Royal Palm Beach, FL 33411. Public viewing will continue 10 A.M. - 12 P.M. (EST) January 10th at Palms West Funeral Home immediately followed by the funeral service.

He is to be buried at South Florida National Cemetery 6501 State Road 7, Lake Worth, FL 33449, January 10th at 2:00 P.M. (EST).

Cemetery

South Florida National Cemetery

6501 S. State Road 7
Lake Worth, FL, 33449

Events

JAN **Visitation** 06:00PM - 08:00PM

9

Palms West Funeral Home and Crematory
110 Business Park Way, Royal Palm Beach, FL, US,
33411

JAN **Visitation** 10:00AM - 12:00PM

10

Palms West Funeral Home and Crematory
110 Business Park Way, Royal Palm Beach, FL, US,
33411

JAN **Service** 12:00PM

10

Palms West Funeral Home and Crematory
110 Business Park Way, Royal Palm Beach, FL, US,
33411

JAN **Graveside Services** 02:00PM

10

South Florida National Cemetery
6501 S. State Road 7, Lake Worth, FL, US, 33449

Comments



“ Chelsea Marie Penna lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Chelsea Marie Penna - April 26, 2020 at 09:41 AM



“ Dear Clay,

I just went to your FB page to greet you and I noticed we were no longer "friends". Knowing you (life...joker) i thought,"this punk deleted me?" with a smile on my face I went to Request you as a friend and then....it happened. I noticed the "remembering". The one you and I could see when we would go to Jens page. I am shocked, I am heartbroken, I am confused and I am desperate to know what happened to you. Why? How somebody like you is now gone. You were one of the most charismatic and professional people I have ever met. Wisest in our training class when we met. You nerd! You tested #1 out of at least 50 people. But, I was proud to be your friend. I should have cheated since you sat beside me. Clay, you were and always will be remembered fondly. That big smile, the sense of humor and some may have thought you were intimidating with all your tattoos but you were a sweet guy and an outstanding friend. Oh how to forget your confidence with that sarcasm,"I can dance for a white boy," so much so that others were hating on you at the club and one of our friends got pepper sprayed that night too. The memories. You were also a great listener when it came to talking serious stuff. I was blessed to have had all these interactions with you. We dropped in on each others messenger from time to time and September 2019 was the last time. I am sorry I did not let you know more often how much I appreciated you for exactly who you were as a person and a sailor. Also, I loved how you glowed and smiled when you mentioned your baby girl. Yet again, that smile from ear to ear. A piece of my heart will always be with you Clay. Love you my friend! Say hi to Jen in heaven and y'all behave! Remember that you are Angels!

Love,

Veronica Ochoa
"V" as you'd call me

P.s. I wish I knew why/how you passed away. Not knowing is so tough.

P.s.s. To Clays parents, thank you for raising such a wonderful man for the rest of his world to blessed with. My heart goes out to you and his daughter. May you be surrounded by loved ones. I will never forget such a great friend. He will be alive in so many peoples hearts!

Veronica Ochoa - March 06, 2020 at 04:03 AM



“ My name is Mike, people know me as Z. I worked with Clay a few years back (2013-14) My condolences to all his immediate family and military. A friend of mine caught me at the Ole Gym on base in San Diego and broke the news. My work out had a different meaning this morning in regards to Clay . It's sad to hear when a brother has fallen. But I will walk my life even stronger knowing he's watching all of us from above. Our show will go on, so let's make sure we give him a good one to watch :) To his daughter, your father was a great and wonderful man. I'm very fortunate to have known him at the amount of time that I did. Just know he holds a great place in all our hearts. God bless!

Michael Zicopula - January 22, 2020 at 10:36 AM



“ Thank you, its wonderful to hear from his friends and shipmates.

Janet - January 24, 2020 at 05:00 PM



“ Man, I just got the news and I am really bummed to hear this. He was one of my favorite people from my Navy service and I will miss him greatly. It was hard to



Jason Tedder - January 15, 2020 at 04:19 PM



“ Ellen Moran Reilly lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



ellen moran reilly - January 11, 2020 at 11:08 PM



“ Dearly Loved and in Our Hearts Forever !

ellen moran reilly - January 11, 2020 at 11:09 PM



“ Robert and Debbie, I am so sorry to hear about the loss of Clayton. Prayers for you and your family!!

Jennifer Lackey (McCollum) - January 11, 2020 at 04:11 PM



“ I had the honor of sounding live Taps at Chief Mc Collum's military funeral with honors today. Thank you for your service. Greg Murphy, Bugles Across America

Greg Murphy - January 10, 2020 at 03:39 PM



“ Fair winds and following seas Brother!!!
We have the watch.

Loren Manns - January 10, 2020 at 01:50 PM



“ Miriam Perez lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Miriam Perez - January 09, 2020 at 07:30 PM



“ My dear cousins Arnold , Janet and Debbie, my deepest condolences, May he rest in peace .

Miriam - January 09, 2020 at 07:34 PM



“ Lynn L Davenport lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Lynn L Davenport - January 09, 2020 at 03:47 PM



“ David and I will miss you Clay - there is a hole in our Lost Rider family now that you are gone - I will miss your wonderful hugs most of all - may God grant you eternal peace.

Lynn L Davenport - January 09, 2020 at 03:50 PM



“ My love,

There are no words in this world to even begin to describe how much I miss you. We've spent every single day together and when I wasn't with you, you were always on my mind and I would be counting down the minutes until I could see your smiling, handsome face when I walked through the door. Our every day inside jokes, laughing together, running around the house trying to catch one another, scratching your back every night until you fell asleep, your dance moves and singing to Usher, you crushing me in Wii bowling every time we would play (besides the three times I won hehe), you yelling at me for not putting sunscreen on my nose and shoulders, attending my first military ball, planning our Peter Pan and Tinker bell tattoos we wanted to get, sitting outside talking about everything under the sun while watching the dogs play in the backyard, taking Madison bowling and watching her get her first strike, finishing each other's sentences, staying up late playing Yahtzee at your grandparents house... I could go on and on but it would take me a whole lifetime because we had so many fun times and we were so goofy with each other.

I want to thank you for always being the true you. But most importantly, thank you for showing me what true love felt like, for being so caring and for always loving me unconditionally everyday. Please keep watching over every single one of us.

I love you more than you'll ever know, my bug.

I love you,
Your Buggy



JoHanna Turner - January 09, 2020 at 09:54 AM



“ Today, I learned that you are gone. My heart is broken. You brightened my day every time I saw you. You inspired my boys to join the military. Santiago is now a member of the United States Naval Sea Cadets Corps because of you. I miss you so much and I love you to the moon and back. Sleep Well



Monalisa Pecina - January 08, 2020 at 10:44 PM



“ We lost a good one folks.. Condolences goes out to Clay’s family and friends. RIP my brother we have the watch



David Ribeiro - January 08, 2020 at 06:06 PM



“ Clayton was a very outgoing and fun guy! We had many fun times in the ship working together as Seaman and night life. It’s so sad to see him gone so early. We lost a good one, and a brother. We have the watch. RIP.



Kaci Myers - January 08, 2020 at 11:25 AM



“ William Nass sends his condolences to his family.



William Nass - January 08, 2020 at 09:48 AM



“ Anita And Hans Kottke lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Anita and Hans Kottke - January 08, 2020 at 01:10 AM



“ A loving heart has stopped beating, a good soul has ascended to heaven. We will never forget you you and the wonderful times we spent together. Words cannot express how much we will miss you. May God give you eternal rest.
Anita and Hans, your friends in Germany

Anita and Hans Kottke - January 08, 2020 at 01:07 AM



“ Lyndonna Strain lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Lyndonna Strain - January 07, 2020 at 09:15 PM



“ Katie Allen lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Katie Allen - January 07, 2020 at 08:48 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Bill Peterson "BEAR" - January 07, 2020 at 05:53 PM



“ Bill Peterson lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Bill Peterson - January 07, 2020 at 05:43 PM



“ Benny "Smallz" Rivera lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Benny "Smallz" Rivera - January 07, 2020 at 05:03 PM



“ **Kassandra Colon** lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Kassandra Colon - January 04, 2020 at 06:26 PM



“ Sending my condolences to Clayton's family . May God give you the strength through this time.

Kassandra Colon - January 04, 2020 at 06:31 PM



“ My heart goes out to Clayton's family. May God give you all strength to get through this time.

Clayton spent a lot of time hanging out with my girls (Crystal and Candi). The pic that comes to mind is when he played handbells. What a fine young man who will be missed.

Violet Miller - January 04, 2020 at 05:40 PM



“ Clayton was like my adopted son, He will be greatly missed



Phyllis Cooney - January 04, 2020 at 04:30 PM



“ We've know you since you were a kid hanging out in Pembroke Pines with Chris. My heart hurts for your child, your grandparents, family, friends and my son. You were always a good friend to Chris, many years, many great memories. You continued to visit during family milestones or just to hang out. I know the peace you needed was found on the doorstep of Heaven. We'll miss you Clayton



Kelly Laliberte - January 04, 2020 at 11:28 AM



“ It has been years since we have seen each other or even communicated. I wish that I kept in touch. Maybe if I had you would have reached out. I will never forget your friendship and support. You were always there when I needed someone, I just wish I could have been there for you.

Faith Medina - January 03, 2020 at 04:52 PM



“ My condolences
God Bless you

Barbara Nichols - January 10, 2020 at 01:39 PM



“ Pilar Serrano lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Pilar Serrano - January 03, 2020 at 04:24 PM



“ A perfect memory of Clay and his fun goofy nature



jennifer - January 03, 2020 at 03:23 PM



“ Jamie Sanford lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Jamie Sanford - January 03, 2020 at 02:27 PM



“ This candle is in memory of McCollum



Ralph Arnold - January 03, 2020 at 10:27 AM



“ This candle is for Clayton and his family. Clayton was a special son, grandson of my coworkers and friends. Love to you all.



Donna Fiebig Shababy - January 03, 2020 at 09:07 AM



“ Anthony Wheeler lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Anthony Wheeler - January 03, 2020 at 09:03 AM



“ Sharon Maraj lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



sharon maraj - January 03, 2020 at 08:57 AM



“ A very love grandson by two awesome grandparents

sharon maraj - January 03, 2020 at 08:58 AM



“ Emil Jowell Orenca lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Emil Jowell Orenca - January 03, 2020 at 07:41 AM



“ We were saddened to learn of your family loss. May you draw comfort from God during this difficult time, as he help you to cope with the heavy weight of your loss. Thinking of you all.

Evans family - January 03, 2020 at 05:21 AM



“ Heidi lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



heidi - January 03, 2020 at 12:54 AM



“ Heidi lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



heidi - January 03, 2020 at 12:52 AM



“ Christina Caggiano lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Christina Caggiano - January 02, 2020 at 11:53 PM



“ Marvin Mascardo lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Marvin Mascardo - January 02, 2020 at 09:14 PM



“ I remember how friendly and welcoming you were from the moment I showed up on the G-town — thanks for making that experience better not just for me but for everyone! You were a leader from the get-go, and it was wonderful to watch you grow and pay it forward. We were all so lucky to know you. Rest In Peace, Clay. You'll be missed.



M A Parra-Orlandoni - January 02, 2020 at 08:32 PM



“ I miss u more and more each day...i love u bro
#beanbagboys4life



Benny "Smallz" Rivera - January 02, 2020 at 06:10 PM



“ I remember thinking how intimidating you looked when I first met you, but once I got to know you I found that you were such a goofy guy with a huge heart. Every memory I have with you is a fond one, and every time I look at my arm I will remember you, because of our matching waves. Rest In Peace, brother.

Sarah Magwire - January 02, 2020 at 04:32 PM



“ You made me laugh so much in the little that I knew time that I knew you. You were so hardworking and always smiling through it all.



Sarah Blakney - January 02, 2020 at 03:20 PM



“ Pablo & Paula Colon lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Pablo & Paula Colon - January 02, 2020 at 02:55 PM



“ We will never forget you. We will pray for him. May God give him eternal Rest.
With Deepest Sympathy; Arnold, Janet and family, May you find strength in the love of
family and in the warm embrace of friends.

Pablo - January 02, 2020 at 03:05 PM



“ Carla Wrisley lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Carla Wrisley - January 02, 2020 at 01:15 PM



“ Katrina Anderson lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Katrina Anderson - January 02, 2020 at 11:24 AM



“ Clay...my heart is still breaking knowing the fact that you are gone. I can't help but keep replaying one particular moment on the ship where I was prepping the admin p-way on the G-Town to be painted and here you come walking all in gear as internal rover yelling out “Charrrrlie” in a British accent (internal joke) and you pushed your head through all the tape I had posted up from preventing people going into the space and making jokes. I loved your sense of humor, there was never a dull moment when you were around, you brought so much laughter and light into every person's life you touched. What I would give to hear you laugh again and give you one last bear hug. I love you brother, we will all take the watch from here. Fair winds and following seas... Rest easy my dear friend.



Junie Nucup - January 02, 2020 at 11:14 AM



“ Megan Cooney Arnold lit a candle in memory of Clayton Robert McCollum



Megan Cooney Arnold - January 02, 2020 at 10:40 AM