

ORDER OF SERVICES

THE VERY REVEREND CANON GARY S. LINSKY, V.F.

Invitation

Scripture Verse

Prayer over the Place of Committal

Invitation to Prayer

Silence

Songs of Farewell

Prayer of Commendation

Act of Committal

Eulogistic Remarks: Dr. James Robert Shirley

Special Music: Violin - Dr. Marquita Daniels

Prayer Over the People

Blessing

Military Tribute: United States Marine Corps Honor Guard



CHARLA McMILLIAN



CELEBRATION OF LIFE

JUNE 1, 1964 – NOVEMBER 25, 2020

ST. PETER'S CATHOLIC CEMETERY
501 ELMWOOD AVENUE, COLUMBIA, SC 29201

A LIFE

Charla Tolbert McMillian was born June 1, 1964 in Columbia, South Carolina and was the first of two children born to the late Rev. Charles L. McMillian and Fredrina Tolbert. In her formative years, Charla excelled at the violin and piano, and she later played guitar and composed original music.

She attended Heathwood Hall Episcopal School from the kindergarten through 12th grade. At Heathwood, she performed in school theatre and speech and debate and outside of school. She also won four consecutive first prize awards in statewide Spanish language declamation contests. She was the first female student at Heathwood to run on the Boys' Cross-Country Team. During her junior year at Heathwood, Charla was selected for and attended the South Carolina Governor's School for academic achievement.

After graduating from Heathwood 1981, Charla attended Dartmouth College where she earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English. She earned the Gurdin prize for best directing in theatre and was inducted into the Green Key Society and Fire & Skoal. She was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority and graduated from Dartmouth in 1985.

Following a summer in Paris, France, Charla decided she wanted a challenge that would be both highly cerebral and physical. To meet the challenge, she joined the U.S. Marine Corps' Officer Candidate School in Quantico, VA in 1986. She regarded the U.S. Marines Corps as possessing "a legacy of the highest standards ... and an established reputation as the best in the world." While stationed at the Intelligence Analysis Unit for the First Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, CA, Charla served as a specialist in Russian Intelligence and advanced to the rank of Captain in 1989. In 1989, Charla received an Honorable Discharge from the US Marine Corps.

She then enrolled in law school at Boston University where she earned a Juris Doctor Degree in 1993 and was selected to give the student address at graduation. After law school, she worked for the law firm of Edwards & Angell in Boston and later served as staff associate and development officer for the New England Legal Foundation. She then became Contracts Manager for the Division of Medical Assistance at the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

In 1997, Charla created and became owner and principal of FitBoot, a first-of-its-kind military-style fitness business designed to enable clients to get in superior physical shape and completely transform their lives. She trained hundreds of clients in Boston and in the Bay Area of California for more than a decade. The pioneering FitBoot program was featured in national media including The Chronicle, Fox News, Boston Herald, and emphasized teamwork, mental focus, nutrition, and physical performance.

Charla was a certified National Strength and Conditioning Specialist and her personal motto was *mens sana in corpore sano* – a sound mind in a sound body. She was also a Kenpo Karate competitor in the under black belt category in northeast regional tournaments. Her work as a trainer inspired her to become an author of two books. Her first book "Boot Camp Abs: Get Rock-Hard Abs with Former Marine Captain Charla McMillian" was published by Fair Winds Press in 2005. Her second book "Power Up for Fitness: Exercise for Playing Stronger and Running Longer (Let's Move)," written with Jonathan Weinress, was published by Red Chair Press in 2018.

In 2010 Charla was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. The disease affected her eyesight and limited her mobility. As a result, she decided to retire from FitBoot in 2012.

Throughout her life, Charla loved to sing, play, and compose music. Her guitar was always within reach. In 2013, she composed an original collection of contemplative songs. She then went on to record a solo album of these songs in which she performed on guitar, keyboard, and vocals. The album was entitled "Life Stories," which Ten12 Entertainment in Los Angeles produced and released in 2014. She left a collection of over 300 original compositions and musical recordings.

Charla is survived by her brother Charles Tolbert of New Jersey; Aunts Carolyn Tolbert Smith of Charleston, SC; Dr. Betty Jean Tolbert Jones (Dr. Donald W. Jones) of Washington, DC; Sara Jo Latten of Los Angeles, CA; and Beverly Ann Davis of Columbia, SC; Cousins: Lyndon Smith of Miami, FL; Warry Smith, Torrance Smith, and Ave Marie Cessini Maura Raquel Macondi Tolbert Smith of Charleston, SC; Tracey Tolbert Jones of Washington, DC; Frantz Latten of Los Angeles, CA; Keith Tolbert of Atlanta, GA; Karen Brooks and Sandy Brooks of Augusta, GA; and many close and loving friends.