



Christopher Eric Straub

December 14, 1970 - December 8, 2024

Christopher Eric Straub, 53, of Maytown, PA, passed away on December 8, 2024 following a long struggle with mental illness.

Chris was born on December 14, 1970 to Chuck and Gail Straub in Haddonfield, NJ. The family moved to Central PA in 1976 where he had fond memories growing up with his younger sister, enjoying the outdoors with neighborhood friends in New Cumberland. Chris became a stand-out cross country and track athlete at Red Land HS and graduated in 1989. He continued his running career at James Madison University and earned a bachelor's degree in psychology in 1993. He subsequently completed a master's program in Sport Studies at Miami University of Ohio in 1995. Chris met his wife, Traci MacGowan Straub, at JMU. They lived in Ohio and North Carolina before relocating to Central PA. Chris' career passion was coaching. He spent more than 15 years coaching and directing successful men's and women's collegiate cross country and track & field programs. After leaving this field, Chris was employed by Philhaven, Recovery InSight, Inc, and Giant Foods.

Chris and Traci celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary this year, and Chris' greatest sense of pride came from raising his two daughters, Seneca and Milligan, within the Donegal School District Community.

In addition to his wife and daughters, Chris is survived by loving family including his parents, Chuck and Gail Straub of Duck, NC, his sister, Tracy Straub Joslin (Brian) of Middlebury, Vermont, and his aunt Carole Scherrer

Palma (Richard) of Norfolk, VA. Chris was also grateful for the love and support of his mother-in-law, Lana MacGowan, and brother-in-law Scott MacGowan (Kathy). Chris was predeceased by his paternal grandparents Charles and Nancy Straub and maternal grandparents Carl and Hope Scherrer.

Chris will be remembered by many for the deep ways in which he touched their lives. For anyone wishing to honor Chris' memory and help support other individuals with mental health struggles, please consider donating online to: NAMI Central PA (namicentralpa.org/get-involved/donate), Mental Health America of Lancaster County (mhalancaster.org), or other organization of your choosing.

A memorial service honoring Chris's life will be held at Trinity Lutheran Church, 47 West Main Street, Mount Joy, PA 17552 on Monday, December 16, 2024 at 10:30 AM. Family and friends will be received at the Sheetz Funeral Home, 16 East Main Street on Sunday, December 15, 2024 from 3 PM to 4:30 PM and again after the service at the church.

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC **15**. 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM (ET)

Sheetz Funeral Home
16 East Main Street
Mount Joy, PA

Memorial Service

DEC **16**. 10:30 AM (ET)

Trinity Lutheran Church
47 W Main St
Mount Joy, PA 17552
<https://trinitymountjoy.org/>

Tribute Wall



“ *My condolences to all of you on your unimaginable loss. My husband Kevin worked with Chris at Giant and always had great things to say. The memorial service was moving and proved how loved he is.*

I'd like to add that as you move forward in this hard time, Hospice & Community Care Mt Joy offers bereavement service for free to all of the public. (Not just hospice patients/families) They have groups that may help all of your family; Coping with loss of a spouse, loss of a child (any age), loss of a parent, newly beareved and Coping with Suicide Loss. I found the groups helpful when I lost my mom.

My prayers are your and all that knew and loved Chris. He has found peace with our Lord and Savior.

Missie Sikorski - December 16, 2024 at 02:07 PM

TS

Thank you so much for your kind words, Missie, and for your presence at the service. I loved getting to meet the managers and night crew. And thank you for the valuable support service you shared -- I have added that to my notes!

traci straub - December 17, 2024 at 09:55 PM

LK

“ Larry (Coach) Kell. I have, had many great athletes and great people that I had the privilege of coaching over the last 45 plus years at Red Land HS. Chris and I had a great connection. Although there were some athletes who had more athletic awards, I have always thought of him as the #1 athlete I have ever coached. He was the best team leader I ever had. He wanted to be the best athlete he could possibly be and worked hard to accomplish his goals. I was so proud of him as an adult. I knew about his accomplishments at E town and heard many great things from his athletes. Not only about coaching but about helping college kids move into adult life. Like many others I did not keep on contact with him as I would have liked. We saw each other periodically and I really enjoyed those times. To Family and anyone else who knew Chris, be inspired by his enthusiasm and his desire to help others and in this way honor his memory!

Larry Kell - December 16, 2024 at 10:23 AM

TS

Thank you for sharing, Coach Kell! I hope you know how much of an impact you had on Chris. He never would have become the coach and leader he was without your example and guidance.

traci straub - December 17, 2024 at 10:00 PM

TD

“ Hello Traci, I am so very saddened to hear of this enormous loss for your family. It sounds like Christopher touched many lives. I enjoyed meeting and talking with you when I visited my mom in Pittston. Your mom Lana is very special too. sending you hugs and healing and comfort at this time. Sincerely, Tracie McNulty Dawson (geri's daughter)

Tracie dawson - December 16, 2024 at 08:21 AM

TS

Thank you, Tracie!

traci straub - December 17, 2024 at 10:01 PM

TC

“*Chris was one of my first friends, at Fairview Elementary School. We were in Cub Scouts together, and his dad served as our scout leader. We later ran cross country and track together at Red Land under Coach Kell. I believe that Chris saved my life once, in the late '70s, when our moms took us to an amusement park and he pulled me back inside a high-flying (and possibly unsafe) ride. Later, in high school, he “coached” me away from some unsportsmanlike behavior. He even introduced me to Bruce Springsteen. I remember playing with Chris in Timber Ridge and have fond memories of his family growing up. The last time I saw him was at our 10-year reunion. He was so happy to see me, and I met Traci then, too. I'll never forget Chris and have been very impacted by his loss even though I haven't seen in decades. I googled him several times over the years but never reached out. I regret that. I intended to be there Sunday before the poor weather. I am very sorry for your family's loss. Tom Charles, Red Land '89*

Tom Charles - December 16, 2024 at 07:28 AM

TS

Thank you so much for sharing those memories, Tom! Chris shared sooo many of his childhood memories with me, and I remember your name well! He was so fortunate to have had such great childhood friends.

traci straub - December 17, 2024 at 10:03 PM

LM

“ Coach, I’m so sad to hear of such a sad loss of a truly special light in our world - a light that touched so many. You left such an incredible impact on my life as my college xc coach - my years at Etown are years I look back on with so much pride and gratitude of how much you helped me improve not just as a runner, but also as a person with strong discipline and character. I went on to coach XC a few years after graduating from Etown, and you were my inspiration for trying to pass on and share all you had taught me through coaching to truly make me a better person. Your family is in my prayers as they work through such a difficult loss - praying for peace and comfort for all, especially through the holiday season.
John 14:27
Lori (Van Order) McNew

Lori McNew - December 14, 2024 at 05:41 PM

TS

Awww, Lori! this made me cry. I remember you well, and you were such a special athlete in Chris' eyes and heart. I am so happy to hear you have been a coach (and hopefully still are). Thank you for sharing!

traci straub - December 17, 2024 at 10:06 PM

CO

“ You're still and always will be Coach to many of us here and more. You left an indelible mark on my life when you always believed in me. I wish I told you how much I believed in you. Nothing can measure the impact you had on so many young men and women who extended your lessons on others in our lives and beyond. I pray you can now see the circles in the water that started with your impact on each of us.

Craig Oakum - December 13, 2024 at 09:12 PM

TS

Thank you, Craig! You had a special place in Chris' heart as a member of his first Etown team. I love your ripple metaphor.

traci straub - December 14, 2024 at 09:10 AM

GN

“ Coach,

You always made sure to include me on the team even through constant injuries (4 XC Races in 4 Years...) and me being a thorn in your side at times. We ran so many miles over the summers/after graduation, and I always enjoyed the company and conversation. I will never forget our adventure runs with no planned route on trails all over PA and MD (even though we often got lost and even got chased by dogs at times). While I was out of work for a bit You welcomed me into Your home for several meals/just to hang out, kept me occupied (we even built a patio together), and motivated me to get back into running. I will always cherish my time on Your team and the friendship we built over miles and trials together.

Traci, Seneca, Milligan,

I am so sorry for Your loss. I also want to thank You All for letting me hang out and go on so many runs with Coach over the years especially since many times I would just stop by unannounced. You were so welcoming, and I always appreciated that. I know this must be incredibly hard on all of You, but I hope the upcoming time with friends and family will help you remember the good times and bring some comfort.

I will keep You All in my Prayers,

George

George Nicholas - December 13, 2024 at 02:25 PM

TS

So special to hear your words, George! Thank you for having been a part of our family during your time at Etown and beyond.

traci straub - December 14, 2024 at 09:07 AM

KG

“ *There's a picture on my office wall from the last cross country meet I was apart of at Etown. There were 14 guys on that team. All are Etown grads. All are guys I still consider myself fortunate to have had as teammate 20 years later.*

Those are the kind of people that Coach (also can't call him Chris) molded. They, and many other men and women, will be his lasting legacy.

Coach: Hope you are at peace.

Keith Greenawalt - December 13, 2024 at 09:30 AM

TS

Keith, you were always legendary in Chris' eyes and an instrumental part of building the program (as well as our backyard playset!). Thank you for sharing!

traci straub - December 14, 2024 at 09:05 AM

CF

“ I agree. It sounds strange to call him Chris instead of Coach Straub. Etown was the last school I looked at and applied to. My high school coach told me, "There's a young guy who's coaching a fairly new program at Elizabethtown. You should take a look." One visit to Elizabethtown, and I was hooked. Elizabethtown and the track and field program shaped me into the person I am today. I coached high school track and field for 14 years and I still work track meets because I still love the sport. At almost every meet, I had to find Chris and steal his "Big Green Book" because I could never figure out how far I was jumping in metric numbers. By my senior year, he was just handing it to me before the meet started. Chris - thank you and may God Bless you and your family.

Casey (Moser) Ferentz - December 13, 2024 at 09:03 AM

TS

Thank you so much for sharing your words and for carrying Chris' spirit with you!

traci straub - December 14, 2024 at 09:03 AM

JM

“ Chris (He will always be Coach to me, thank you Dustin) was the most significant male father-figure in my life. I met him at Red Land where I was running in a dual-meet my senior year of high school track. I ended up winning the 800, mile, and got 2nd in the two-mile. He came up after the meet and told me that he came to watch me race and that if I decided to come to Elizabethtown, I would never regret it, and that he would be in touch with my coach, Coach Dager. That sealed the deal right there and I was a Blue Jay. I loved the way he talked in absolutes. You always knew where you were with him.

He taught me what it meant to be a serious athlete. He also taught me more importantly what it meant to be a good friend, brother, teammate, father, uncle, and husband. He taught me the power of positive self-belief and belief in my teammates, and that it could allow us to achieve great things, which we did.

He taught me to have pride in the place you came from. I loved that we were both from Central PA. For all the quirks that he liked to point out about me during my time at Etown, it never came with judgment. He was a forgiving man.

I just loved how enthusiastic he was about things! Above all, he was most enthused about his family, for which I use his example to guide me to this very day.

Traci, Seneca, Milligan - I just want you to know that I loved Chris like a father and the man I try to be is a direct result of what he taught.

Chris - Thank you, God Bless You, and may you now have eternal peace.

Jose Miranda - December 13, 2024 at 08:04 AM

TS

You were a very special part of Chris' coaching career and dear friend. Your words are incredibly heartfelt. Thank you sooo much for sharing!

traci straub - December 14, 2024 at 09:00 AM

DS

“ More than twenty years after graduating, it’s still odd to call him Chris instead of Coach. Growing up I didn’t have a lot of parental guidance, and in bringing me to Etown Chris not only coached me as an athlete but stepped in as a father-figure, mentor, and a friend. Chris helped to change the course of my life, and I genuinely would not be the person I am today if he hadn’t been in my life. I am forever grateful for everything that he did for me and I will never forget that or forget him. Thank you Chris for all that you did for me and for everyone else that you gave all of your time, energy, and love to. Your impact will last for a very long time.

Dustin Scott - December 12, 2024 at 08:24 PM

TS

Love you, Dustin❤️. Thank you so much for your words!

tracy straub - December 12, 2024 at 09:01 PM

PD

“ Coach Straub challenged me in a way that no other coach has. He challenged me to be a better athlete, a better student, and most importantly a better person. He cared as much about an athlete's character development as he did their athletic prowess. He was an incredible mentor to me as an athlete, and just as much so when I became a coach of my own team. I am forever changed and forever grateful for the lasting impact he had on my life. May the peace of Christ be with him now and forever.

Patrick Donovan - December 12, 2024 at 06:12 PM

TS

Thank you so much for sharing, Pat!❤️

tracy straub - December 12, 2024 at 09:03 PM



“ Coach always had a way to motivate the unmotivatable. He was one of the first people it told about getting engaged. Here the last talk we had in August. Always coaching, always promoting the positive self talk.

“I like the Nike Olympics commercial where they say, “Winning Isn’t For Everyone.” We were winners on Our Stage. We worked for it. And it was your coaches’ hope that that structure and environment would set the stage for ideas later in life!

Good to talk today. Keep the distractions to a minimum and focus on doing whatever it takes to win at work and in life!

*What did you call me? Ambassador of Inspiration or something?
Thanks Rob. Even coaches need a lift every once in awhile.*

The Universe unfolds in mysterious ways using all of us angels in various and precise scenarios for God’s glory. “

Robert Hickox - December 12, 2024 at 01:50 PM

TS

❤️ *Thank you, Rob!*

tracy straub - December 12, 2024 at 09:05 PM

LS

“ *Worked with Chris at Philhaven, really nice guy
Sorry to hear his demons got the best of him*

lynn sine - December 12, 2024 at 12:56 PM

TS

Thank you, Lynn. His “war with demons” is over

tracy straub - December 12, 2024 at 09:09 PM

SH

“ I met Chris last year when we were hired as bailiffs at the courthouse. He was such a kind and warm person. He really showed compassion for the participants that come through daily and was understanding of their needs. I’m so sorry for your loss. He often spoke of his daughters and how proud he was of them. I hope he’s at peace.

Sharon Hershey - December 12, 2024 at 10:44 AM

MB

We knew Chris as one of the kids in the neighborhood in Haddonfield. He was a great kid. We didn’t see him after the family moved to PA though we attended his wedding. We’re so sorry to hear of his passing. May God comfort you all at this difficult time. Prayers are for you all.

Merrie & Phil Bender - December 12, 2024 at 11:40 AM

SO

My heart goes out to all of the Straub family as you grieve and process the loss of Chris. Life has a way of challenging us and I pray for your strength and that Chris is at peace.

Sandra Ortwein - December 12, 2024 at 12:31 PM

OB

“ I met Chris when I was an athlete on another team in the conference and have kept in contact over the years sporadically. One thing I’ll say about him is his passion for the sport of Track and Field was so pure! He loved impacting his student athletes and I know many people have been positively influenced by his caring personality and love of the sport. I pray for him and his family and hope he is at peace.

Ozzie Brown - December 12, 2024 at 09:48 AM

JF

Chuck and Gail and family and Traci so sorry to hear about Chris you have our prayers for all of you God bless you all Curly and Shirl

John curly Freese - December 12, 2024 at 05:38 PM

EB

“*Chris is an integral part in the person I am today as a collegiate coach and person. He gave me a chance to compete. He demonstrated what a team could do when treated like a family. He recruited a student-athlete that would later become my wife. When offered a coaching position at another school, he kept me at Elizabethtown by starting his offer with, "What have I taught you during the last four years about Loyalty?" He encouraged me to pursue coaching full-time. He called, texted, or emailed for every single NCAA qualifier I coached over the years, and even knew which high school coaches had competed for my teams. Beyond track & field we build a fence, cut concrete, and shared many meals. For several years of my life, this man was a father figure... for that I will be eternally grateful. Rest in peace, Chris. You will not be forgotten.*

Eric Bennett - December 11, 2024 at 05:32 PM

TS

Oh, Eric! Thank you for sharing. Your words warm my heart. You were a special and dear friend to Chris. Thank you! And thank you for carrying on his spirit and legacy in your own work❤️

tracy straub - December 11, 2024 at 07:56 PM

DW

“ I will always remember Chris Straub as a tremendous coach who was instrumental in the teams growth and success through many of the years at Elizabethtown College. He was a tremendous coach and mentor for my son, and it gave us great pride and comfort, knowing that we chose the right school for our son, both athletically and academically. We were blessed to have Chris play a role in our family's life. I pray that Chris is with the Lord, resting in peace, and I pray that his family retains the fondest of memories of their time spent with him, moving forward.

Dave Wetzel - December 11, 2024 at 04:56 PM

JH

We all knew Chirs as Straubie, he was into his craft as a coach like very few others. His recruiting methods were very effective and resulted in E-Town XCTF being a top level Div. 3 program. Before I coached at E-Town I was at LVC where I met Chris at the Mid-Atlantic Outdoor Champs., We did a few training runs where he talked me into coaching at E-Tow. I said I'd give it a try and 23 years later I finished my collegiate career at Elizabethtown College. Again effective recruiting on Chris's part. Thanks Man.

The athletes of his era at E-Town have a deep respect for him and as for all of us, you will be deeply missed.

God Bless

Hoffy

Joel Edmund Hoffsmith - December 12, 2024 at 01:04 PM