

## Dennis L. Southern

Dennis L. Southern died at the age of 50 when he was fatally injured in a multiple vehicle accident on September 26, 2006. The incredible number of people who expressed their sympathy, whether in person or by other means, makes you realize just how special Dennis was and the impression he left, wherever he went.

Dennis genuinely loved people and let them know it. His magnetism and energy combined with his extraordinary ability to master the technical, made him unique. Dennis was an excellent communicator, a talented businessman, and a dedicated family man. Dennis was amazingly human, vulnerable in his larger-than-life status to all the personal pain and doubts that plague ordinary people, and never too self-preoccupied to let you gain entry to his life unnoticed. Saying this was pretty corny, Dennis had tears in his eyes when he told me that his father was his personal hero. He was very proud of his parents and of their lifelong accomplishments. They created the successful pattern for his life.

Dennis was a lucky man. He was a wonderful, loving husband whose marriage was made in heaven. Debbie and Dennis met at the funeral of his grandfather. They always joked and told people whenever they saw a funeral procession they would pull over and hug and kiss. Dennis was an amazing son, Father and Poppa. Alexis, his granddaughter, thought that he hung the moon. She was the light of his life, and he loved her so very much. He had a ring to his laughter and a sparkle to his smile when he celebrated friendships that he never failed, nor they him; John Hutto, Chuck Lewis, Michael Cassisi, Rob Royer, Don Copeland, Cortez Crosby, Kathy Chambers, Ricky Chambers, Frank Bennett, and many, many more.

He had the sharpest of ironic wits with which to deflate the most pompous of fools who were foolhardy enough to think that they could deceive or sustain their inflated sense of self-importance. He had the warmest sense of pride and love when talking about Ashley and Alexis, the children and his first grandchild who always filled his life with joy, and Debbie, his dedicated and loving wife whose love sustained and made Dennis complete. Dennis was a lucky man. He had the courage to seek solutions and alternatives, constantly on the lookout for a younger leadership, a mentor for those with promise. He had the good humor not to take himself too seriously, accepting the burden of leadership with humility, while simultaneously helping others achieve their personal goals.

He had the energy of a man aware of his mortality, squeezing life out of every second, refusing to waste opportunities to share time with his family or friends. Dennis had a professional context, and a personal context. To me, he was a mentor, brother, and close friend. In addition to the unbearable burden of his death, we neither bear the knowledge that we were not ready for it nor prepared to accept it. As we continue with our lives we remember

Dennis, his family, and how he so selfishly gave of himself. The Dennis Southern's of the world are few and far between. They transform jobs into professions, replace problems with solutions, and show us all how to do it with class. When we are lucky enough to have and know people like Dennis, we need to cherish and support them and make their families understand just how much they are appreciated, for it is the Dennis Southern's of the world that make everything and everyone they touch a little better for it. No listing of achievements can convey the impression of the man, the wit, the energy, the passion. Yes, Dennis was lucky, but those of us who knew Dennis were the truly lucky. His absence will be deeply felt, and his memory will remain forever in our minds and hearts. We will miss him.

Dennis is survived by his wife Debbie Southern of Tyrone, daughter and son-in-law Ashley & Evan Greason of Senoia, granddaughter Alexis Greason, parents, Dennis E. and Elizabeth Southern of Kennesaw, and sister Sandra Southern of Kennesaw.

Funeral services will be held Friday, September 29, 2006 at 2:00 PM in the chapel of Mowell Funeral Home, Fayetteville. Rev. Dennis Watson will officiate. Interment Camp Memorial Park. Carl J. Mowell & Son, Fayetteville

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