



**Timothy R. Jacobsen, Ph.D.**  
A Scholar, Educator, and Community Leader  
June 3rd 1950 - January 17th 2020



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Greetings!

I'd like to share my recollections of Tim Jacobsen with you.

In the mid-80s a new family joined what was then the Parish of St. John Bosco in Millville, NJ. The tall, slim couple was accompanied by a towhead and a "front man." The curly-headed blond toddler was Matt, I would guess at around two years old. The "front man?" He was their carrot-topped precocious son, Jacob. The Jacobsens didn't really need to work very hard at getting to know people. Five-year-old Jacob was their handler, a mixer with a vocabulary that rivaled any adult's.

The first meaningful interaction that I recall between the Galettos and the Jacobsens occurred at the infamous Nardi-orchestrated church barbecue in the Bosco picnic grove. Jacob was in full swing, sitting on a picnic table with his mop of red hair, and armed with a dialogue on any topic. I think my eyebrows reached new heights in astonishment. His mother Sue mostly giggled and was amused as I marveled at their son's brilliance. Tim, on the other hand, was fully engaged in the professorial musings of their son. He was like a fisherman with Jacob. He would let him take the line and

slowly reel him in, keeping conversations factual and always learned. Watching Tim navigate these waters was the first insight I got into his personality. He was patient, intellectual, focused, easily amused, pleasant, and vibrant. They were both marvelous parents.

At church we watched their sons grow, and grow, and grow, until they exceeded Sue's height and finally even Tim's 6'2". Occasionally a family's physicality becomes part of their definition. Since they were always fully engaged in any endeavor, this included sitting closer to the front row than the back. Tim and Sue's sons clearly had a bit of a friendly competition going about who would exceed Tim and which of them would ultimately be the tallest. Sue was no slouch in this department either, standing at what I would guess was 5'9". There was also the Ziller family, who together with the Jacobsens my husband and secretly I dubbed the "The Tower of Power." I'm not sure who ultimately won the competition between Jacob and Matt, but Matt clearly had the upper hand when he sported an Afro. His curly golden locks could give him an extra 6 inches. I would motion each week to Jacob that Matt was going to surpass him, to which he'd shake his head in a sideways "No way!" Then Matt would wiggle his eyebrows: "Oh, definitely!" To which Sue would simply laugh, having long since fallen out of the competition. I asked Sue which one won the contest, to which she replied, "Both stopped counting after 6'7"; neither admitted to being shorter!"

I've begun my musings with Tim's family because beyond all else Tim was a family man. He was an all-for-one, one-for-all kind of a guy, a true team player. His family's interactions exemplified this. They were competitive but totally supportive of each other. This characteristic was very evident in all of the organizations that Tim engaged in. He wasn't a glory seeker; he focused on the task, the logistics, and the teamwork it took to reach a goal. I'll never forget when he first joined the Knights of Columbus and they paraded into Church in full regalia. The Knights of Columbus presentation is a true spectacle. Tim was at the end of the line standing taller and younger than the rest, sporting a huge cat-that-ate-the-canary grin. He had one gold foiled tooth in front that I recall had something to do with being from Minnesota and playing ice hockey. For me, that tooth added just a bit of the quizzical to his smile and accented his professorial style with a glimmer of humor. It also added some ruggedness to his overall appearance. He once told me, "In Minnesota most of the fellas have one from playing ice hockey, **anyhoo**." I don't know if "anyhoo" was a Minnesota thing but it was definitely a "Tim thing." He used it to transition thoughts or conclude conversations with predictable regularity. Think of the word as a substitute for "anyhow," "anyway," or "whatever." He could really sling it about.

Tim had a MacGyver side for sure. He kept his Jeep Cherokee running for what I would guess was 30 years, far past its prime. He was the guy who sometimes had to start the auto with the hood up. He simply took it in stride, smiling as if saying "Isn't this the way everyone starts their car?" I likely assured him it was not. Sue would just smile.

In eulogizing his father Matt described him as an educator, a Viking, and a MacGyver all rolled into one. The Army Airfield Museum gave him and his sidekick Dick Goldstine a chance to go full MacGyver in their volunteer support of its mission. They restored a WWII Deuce and a Half truck. At church they were also a duo along with an assemblage of others that accomplished mountains by assembling mole hills. They transformed the vast chasm of St John's Hall into a church with pews and stained glass. It really elevated the church's spirit, and they did it together as a team.

My husband relayed that as a church trustee Tim often did a financial analysis for

Finance Council. His presentations were so thorough that those assembled hardly ever had questions.

At CU Tim offered his expertise in many ways. He accompanied me on several field trips to help me learn more about water quality and fish. Teacher members of CU said he came to their class to help with ponds and to teach children. When his sons were in high school they would round out our work crew as we erected osprey platforms. We relished their “Jacobsen” attitude and their height. They were not wienies; they were the real deal. Mud, the stuff Vikings are made of, true grit. That just simply made things more fun.

Tim was a man of great spirit in every way. Multiple myeloma reduced his height from 6’2” to 5’9” but his soul still exceeded his original stature. I saw him about six months ago and he always managed that mischievous cat grin.

Tim was fully capable of taking center stage and I suspect his college and high school students would say that he mastered his classroom. But I will most remember him for deferring to others as he orchestrated one success after another for the community he so ably served. But always, serving his family and God were paramount. Godspeed, Tim.

Our condolences to Sue, Matt and Monika, Rebecca and Melody. We were all lucky to have known Tim.

Read his family’s beautiful obituary below. It really captures his spirit and his story:

Sincerely,



Jane Morton Galetto  
CU Maurice River Board President

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## Timothy Roswell Jacobsen Ph.D.

Timothy Roswell Jacobsen, PhD

Millville - Timothy Roswell Jacobsen, PhD, age 69 of Millville, NJ passed away after a heroic battle with multiple myeloma on Friday, January 17th, 2020 at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

Born in Virginia, MN, he grew up near Mt. Iron, MN on his family's dairy farm. He graduated from Mt. Iron High School and then graduated from Mesabi Range Community and Technical College. Fortunately, he then attended North Dakota State University in Fargo, ND where he met his wife of 44 years, Susan Walerius Jacobsen. After receiving his Master's degree in Limnology, he completed his PhD in Zoology at the [University of Georgia](#) in Athens where he also played rugby in the Southeastern Conference. During this time, he and Sue were married and had their first son, Jacob. The family drove across the country in their Pinto to San Diego, CA for his postdoctoral research position at Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, CA.

Here, their second son, Matthew, was born.

When presented with the opportunity to conduct research at the Max Planck Institute for Limnology in Plön, West Germany for six months in 1984, Tim chose to continue his educational quest with the help of his family, particularly his brothers. Before this international departure, they helped him move his family to Millville, NJ, whereupon his return, he would work as an analytical chemist at Rutgers University's Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory on the Delaware Bay in Bivalve, NJ. Later, at Cumberland County College, Tim taught environmental science and established the Cumberland County College Aquaculture Production Demonstration Facility. With great enthusiasm, Dr. J, as the students called him, taught chemistry, physics, and environmental science and managed the bowling club at Millville Senior High School before retiring.

Tim was a member and trustee at St. John Bosco Church and the Parish of All Saints in Millville, NJ. He was also a 4th Degree Knight of Columbus, where he served as Financial Secretary and Color Corps Commander. For over a decade, he volunteered at the Millville Army Airfield Museum and even drove the Deuce and a Half military truck he helped restore in the annual Millville Christmas Parade. As a former [Rotary Club](#) member, he helped collect and ship bikes for the needy. He also contributed as chairman of the Cumberland County Solid Waste Advisory Council. As a great father for his sons and inspiration for many children, he coached in the Millville Soccer League and volunteered for the Boy Scouts of America, which included chaperoning many adventures and improving the facilities at Camp Roosevelt. He and Sue were longtime members of the Delaware Bay Schooner project and Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and its Tributaries. Through these activities and many more, Tim was awarded accolades and illustrated his service, kindness, and resourcefulness.

Tim enjoyed his family, friends, and the communities in which he lived. He loved talking with others and sharing stories and information as well as learning new skills, such as survival training in Alaska, sword repair, bowling, and [WWII](#) history. In his spare time, he could often be found in his garage or basement problem-solving with his collection of tools; he conceived solutions and fabricated custom parts for innumerable projects that ranged from home and car improvements to restorations for friends and organizations. When his son, Matt, asked him in his garage what he did for fun, he looked happily around and gave a simple response: "Work."

Timothy is survived by his wife, Susan Walerius Jacobsen; son, Matthew Everett Jacobsen, and his wife, Monika Deshmukh, of Lake Hiawatha, NJ; daughter-in-law, Rebecca Jacobsen, and granddaughter, Melody Jacobsen, of Pennington, NJ; brothers, Conrad, and his wife, Mary, Ross, and his wife, Terri, and Ken, and his wife, Lois; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law; and many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. He was predeceased by his son, Jacob Timothy Jacobsen.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11 a.m. on Saturday, January 25, 2020 at the Parish of All Saints, Buck and Depot Streets, Millville, NJ 08332. Family and friends will be received from 6 to 9 p.m. on Friday, January 24, 2020 in the Christy Funeral Home, 11 W. Broad Street, Millville. Burial will be in Holy Cross Cemetery, Millville.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial contributions to the Parish of All Saints, 621 Dock Street, Millville, NJ 08332 or the Millville Army Airfield Museum, 1 Leddon St., Millville, NJ 08332.

Memories and expressions of sympathy for Timothy R. Jacobsen, PhD may be shared at [www.christyfuneralservice.com](http://www.christyfuneralservice.com).

## CU ON THE RIVER

[www.CUMauriceRiver.org](http://www.CUMauriceRiver.org)

### CONTACT US

#### CU MAURICE RIVER OFFICE

[CitizensUnited@CUMauriceRiver.org](mailto:CitizensUnited@CUMauriceRiver.org)

(856) 300-5331

Jane Morton Galetto  
President

[ForRivers@comcast.net](mailto:ForRivers@comcast.net)

Karla Rossini  
Programs Manager

[Karla.Rossini@CUMauriceRiver.org](mailto:Karla.Rossini@CUMauriceRiver.org)

Doreen Homan

Membership, Events, and Office Manager

[Doreen.Homan@CUMauriceRiver.org](mailto:Doreen.Homan@CUMauriceRiver.org)

Meghan Thompson

Assistant Office Manager

[Meghan.Thompson@CUMauriceRiver.org](mailto:Meghan.Thompson@CUMauriceRiver.org)

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