



## Dr. Joseph Thomas Ratchford

September 30, 1935 - June 16, 2016

Dr. Joseph Thomas Ratchford The son of a Presbyterian Pastor in rural North Carolina, Dr. Ratchford held a lifelong love for family, education and scientific inquiry. In his early years, Dr. Ratchford worked on his family's farm, became an Eagle Scout and was a voracious reader. He graduated from Davidson College (B.S. cum laude, 1957) and received advanced degrees in Physics from the University of Virginia (M.A. 1959; Ph.D. 1961). His accomplishments in science would elevate him to prominent roles in the national and international science communities. His career achievements spanned many senior academic, policy and government positions, culminating in his appointment as Associate Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy by President George H.W. Bush, where he developed U.S. science policy initiatives. Both in and out of government service, Dr. Ratchford was active in global science and international technology cooperation. He led the creation of an academic center addressing science, trade, legal and technology issues at George Mason University's School of Law. He also served as Associate Executive Officer of the American Association for the Advancement of Science – the world's largest scientific society. Dr. Ratchford's distinguished career in science and technology policy spanned Capitol Hill and academia. He served as Science Consultant for the Committee on Science and Technology in the U.S. House of Representatives. He conducted research at the International Institute for the Applied Systems Analysis in Laxenburg, Austria, the Office of Scientific Research of the U.S.

Air Force and taught Physics at Washington and Lee University. Throughout his life, Dr. Ratchford was guided by a deep, abiding faith. He was a member of Davidson College Presbyterian Church and a longtime member of the Brindisi Bible Study Class. He was also a member of many professional organizations including Phi Beta Kappa, the American Physical Society, Council on Foreign Relations and Sigma Xi. Dr. Ratchford was born on September 30, 1935, in Kingstree, SC. He died of complications associated with a stroke on 16 June in Huntersville, NC. He was 80. He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Dr. Joanne Causey Ratchford; sons, Tom, James and David; daughter, Laura; and grandchildren, Tommy, James, Emma, JJ, Nathaniel, David and Julia; and beloved dogs Argos and Sally. He was a resident of the Pines at Davidson. A Memorial service will be held at 2pm on Sunday, June 19, 2016 at Davidson College Presbyterian Church Main Sanctuary with Pastor Lib McGregor Simmons officiating. A reception will be immediately following the service in the church Congregation Hall. Memorial donation suggestions, Davidson College Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 337, Davidson, NC 28036. A special thanks from the family of Dr. Ratchford goes to the Levine & Dickson Hospice House in Huntersville, NC. Cavin-Cook Funeral Home, Mooresville, is serving the Ratchford family. Condolences may be made to the family at [www.cavin-cook.com](http://www.cavin-cook.com).

# Tribute Wall



“ *Dr. Joseph Thomas Ratchford*

February 14, 2021 at 11:24 AM



“ *Dr. Joseph Thomas Ratchford*

February 14, 2021 at 11:04 AM



“ *Dr. Joseph Thomas Ratchford*

February 14, 2021 at 11:03 AM



“ *I went to church with Tommy at Goshen Presbyterian Church in North Belmont, N.C....he was older than me but I always thought he was good looking, I remember his father and his mother they were both wonderful....they were both wonderful examples for him in his faith. I am sure he will be missed by all.*

**Linda Lawing** - August 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM



“ *Tom was my first "boss" at AAAS when I arrived in 1986, although he was always more of a colleague than boss. He was a very important player at AAAS and showed over and over again his support for the importance that ethics and human rights play in the conduct and application of science.As I end my tenure at AAAS at the conclusion of this year,I will remember him fondly as one of those special people who left a mark on my career. My condolences to his family.Mark Frankel, AAAS*

**Mark Frankel** - June 27, 2016 at 12:00 AM

VR

“ I had the honor and privilege of serving as Tom's assistant at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, and George Mason University. Tom was the best in every way. He was devoted to his work, but more importantly to his faith and family. Tom taught me more than you can ever imagine -- he was just brilliant. I always smile when thinking of him. To his beautiful family, I extend my sincere condolences, especially to his wonderful, beautiful wife, Joanne.

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**Virginia Rosell** - June 21, 2016 at 12:00 AM

BR

“ Tom was one of my favorites in the Brindisi Class. He always asked the most interesting questions and gave his insight to our discussions. He accomplished a great deal in his life of service. I admired him greatly. Joanne, I hope that you have kept up your love of swimming.

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**Bill Roberts** - June 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

GH

“ I was an elementary school classmate in North Belmont, NC with Dr. Ratchford. I was very close to his Father Rev. Ratchford as he served as our Boy Scout Master. Besides being the Minister of our Church, Tom's Father was our mentor and role model. Son, Tommy and I had countless play and school time together from 1st thru 8. I vividly remember those happy days, including being at their home for cook-outs. etc. My wife and I share your grief. Dr. Gordie Howell (now retired Rollins College Professor and former USMC Officer.)

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**Gordie Howell** - June 18, 2016 at 12:00 AM

WJ

“ *Tom Ratchford was one of my dearest friends from undergraduate days. Once, during a cold winter in Manhattan, he visited me in my little apartment near Columbia U. He literally gave me the winter coat off his back. He was a Christian, first.*

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**William E. Jackson Jr.** - June 18, 2016 at 12:00 AM