



Joseph Patrick "Joe" McGee Jr.

October 3, 1972 - October 31, 2025

Joseph "Joe" Patrick McGee Jr. beloved husband, father, brother, son, veteran and storyteller passed away peacefully on October 31, 2025 at his West Virginia mountain home.

Joe was born October 3, 1972 in Stratford, New Jersey, the son of Joseph McGee Sr. and Jessie Hannigan McGee. From a young age, his vivid imagination and love of storytelling were evident. He spent his youth crafting tales in spiral-bound notebooks and reading them aloud to friends at recess, crafting the passion that became the foundation of his life's work.

Joe earned his BA in Psychology and MA in Writing from Rowan University and an MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts. His academic journey was marked by numerous honors and a deep commitment to learning and teaching.

Before becoming an author, Joe proudly served in the U.S Army for four years as an Officer in the 82nd Airborne Division. He also held a career in electrical construction. Joe later transitioned into education, teaching writing at Sierra Nevada University, Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College, and Blue Ridge Community and Technical College.

Joe's proudest achievement was his writing. He authored over 30 books for children including beloved series Junior Monster Scouts, Night Frights, Creature Campers, the Peanut Butter & Brains picture books and forthcoming Sherlock Roach graphic novels. His stories, filled with monsters, magic, and humor, brought joy and laughter to readers of all ages. His work was

recognized by School Library Journal, Kirkus Reviews, and the Sunshine State Young Readers Award program, but most importantly, it reached and inspired countless young readers.

Joe was a cartoonist, game creator, educator and lifelong storyteller. He loved playing and designing RPGs, chopping wood, moving boulders, and blazing trails. He found joy in the quiet beauty of rural West Virginia, a place he came to love unexpectedly, alongside his wife and beloved dogs, Pepper and Odin. His legacy lives on in the laughter of children, the pages of his books, and the hearts of those who knew and loved him.

In addition to his parents, he is survived by his loving wife, fellow children's author Jessica Rinker, his children, Shane McGee, Logan McGee, Sawyer McGee; and Zachary Cooper, Ainsley Cooper, and Braeden Cooper, all of whom he loved deeply. He also leaves behind his former wife, Kristen Grohowski McGee, and two brothers, John and James McGee.

He was preceded in death by his brother, Jack McGee, whose memory remained close to him.

A celebration of Joe's life will be held 2:00 pm Saturday, November 15, 2025 in Phelps Funeral Chapel 311 Hope Drive Winchester, VA officiated by Pastor Peter Mantell. Interment will be private. Friends will be received an hour prior to the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to: Little Free Library (<https://littlefreelibrary.org/support/ways-to-give/>) : the American Library Association's Unite Against Book Bans (<https://ec.ala.org/donation/PPA-0809-UABBFD>) or WordPlay Connects: <https://wordplaywv.com/wordplayconnects/>.

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV **15**. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Phelps Funeral & Cremation Service
311 Hope Dr
Winchester, VA 22601
(540) 722-2424
travislnesselrodt@gmail.com
<https://phelpsfunerals.com>

Funeral

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Tribute Wall

DP

“ I met Joe the summer of 1992 when we were camp counselors together. We remained friends for many years. I have so many great memories of times spent together at camp, at Rowan and beyond. My heart goes out to his family.

Danielle Powers - November 06, 2025 at 06:45 PM

JE

“ 1 file added to the album family



Jess - November 05, 2025 at 09:08 AM

LJ

“ I met Joe in 2010, my first semester teaching at Rowan and his first as an MA student. He walked into my Fiction class, sat up front with a huge smile and instantly revealed himself as one of the most passionate and driven students I've had in my 30 years of teaching. When he playfully experimented writing a children's picture book, I could tell not only by the writing, but by the immense joy it gave him, that he was meant for the field. Rarely in a professor's career does a student come along who has this uniqueness, drive, and creative talent. Later seeing him thrive at VCFA and get so many 'perfectly Joe' books published, made all the sense in the world. He became a colleague and a friend. Joe evoked love, humor and wit in everything he did and with everyone he met. He will be missed and remembered. My deepest condolences to Jess and family.

Lisa Jahn-Clough - November 04, 2025 at 08:16 PM

CC

“ *Very saddened to hear of Joe’s passing. He came for an author’s visit to my school and everyone loved him and his books! We also had mutual friends in common. Such a bright light. Deepest condolences to all who loved him.*

Christine Celeste - November 04, 2025 at 11:27 AM

ES

“ *I am so saddened to hear of Joes passing. I worked with Joe and his former wife in 1996. He was truly one of a kind, smart, creative and a true friend. The world will miss his talents. I would like to send a heartfelt condolence to his wife, sons, parents and siblings.*

Ed Scartocci - November 04, 2025 at 01:55 AM

LM

“ *The greatest father a son could have. I’ll never let the creativity you taught me burn out. I love you dad.*



Logan McGee - November 02, 2025 at 08:19 PM



“ Joe, I'm forever glad I knew you and we had our Cool Critique Crew for our kidlit stories! I remember our meetups and those holiday parties with a smile. I always enjoyed your ability to turn to kid fun whether it was wearing the sombrero during our page critiques or playing games. You pushed us to expand our imagination. Your superpowers were endless! You were kind and creative and I'm so glad the world has your legacy of stories in it for kids of all ages to enjoy. Your spirit will be missed.



Donna Galanti - November 02, 2025 at 06:05 PM