

## Dennis King McCarthy

October 15, 1940 - April 21, 2018

Dennis King “Papa” McCarthy of Chestertown, MD, died on Saturday, April 21, 2018, at his home. He was 77.

Born on October 15, 1940, in Dumont, NJ, he was the son of the late Dennis and Dorothy King McCarthy.

He graduated from Collingswood High School, Class of 1958, and later attended University of Pittsburgh, graduating in 1962 with an Aeronautical Engineering degree. Following graduation, he accepted a job with NASA, and worked on several significant projects to include the Hubble repair mission and COBE Satellite. Dennis also worked at Johns Hopkins as Program Director of Fuse Satellite. Dennis was head of the team that supported the scientist John Mather and George Smoot that won the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2006. At the time of his death he was working as a consultant for Hawk Institute for Space Sciences.

Dennis was a very talented artist and a Pittsburgh Steelers fan. He enjoyed playing the cello, sailing and going to Long Beach Island, where he had fond memories of summers at the beach and working at the pizza shop. He loved his family and grandchildren and was always in contact with them about what was going on in their lives. Dennis was very devoted to his wife, Joan, throughout the years.

In addition to his wife, Joan McCarthy of Swanton, VT; he is survived by five daughters, Karen Ann McCarthy and Karyn Koons of PA, Karen L. Sullivan and Lenny of Crofton, MD, Kelly L. White and Ed of Arnold, MD, Kimberly A. Lyford and Tim of Swanton, VT, and Loriann Newton and Rob of Glen Burnie, MD; a twin brother, Kevin McCarthy and Karelisa of FL; six grandchildren, Eric Bryant, Ashley Bryant, Riley White, Katie White, Reece Sullivan and Jeremy Sullivan; two great-grandchildren, Felix Bryant and Alastair Bryant; and two cats, Lilly and Mocha.

A memorial service will be held on April 26, 2018, at 11:00 am, at Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home, Chestertown, MD, where relatives and friends may call one hour prior (10-11am). Interment will be private.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in his memory to The Humane Society of Kent County, MD, Inc. - <http://kenthumane.org>

# Cemetery Details

**Private**

## Previous Events

### Visitation

APR 26. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Chestertown Location  
130 Speer Road  
Chestertown, MD 21620  
(410) 778-0055  
info@fhnfuneralhome.com

### Memorial Service

APR 26. 11:00 AM (ET)

Chestertown Location  
130 Speer Road  
Chestertown, MD 21620  
(410) 778-0055  
info@fhnfuneralhome.com

# Tribute Wall



“ *Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Dennis King McCarthy*



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**Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home** - April 25, 2018 at 12:00 PM



“ *Dennis King McCarthy*

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October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *Dennis King McCarthy*

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January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *Dennis King McCarthy*

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January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM

JM

“ I was so sad to hear today about Dennis. He was truly a good and decent man. Dennis and my late husband, Roger Mattson, worked very closely on the COBE Project. Dennis even delivered the eulogy at Roger’s funeral in 1991. Dennis was also instrumental in the posthumous award of a medal to Roger several years ago. Dennis drive my daughter and me to the ceremony at NASA Headquarters and at lunch beforehand he told my daughter stories of her dad at work and the times they had on the project. He told her how he carried her dad’s name on a slip of paper in his wallet when he went to Oslo with John Mather and the team to pick up the award so that Roger would be a part of the incredible honor that came as a result of the COBE Project. For sharing this with her I will always be grateful. He will truly be missed. Please accept my condolences on your loss.

Jackie Mattson

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jackie mattson - May 02, 2018 at 09:29 PM

LK

“ Dennis was a man of extraordinary talent. He was very much loved and greatly admired. Dennis made a mighty impact on my life with his advice and knowledge. I will always hold him in the highest regard. My most heartfelt thoughts and prayers to his family. All of whom he loved dearly without exception. The world will never be the same without you! Dennis, may you be at peace forever and always.



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LK - May 01, 2018 at 10:11 AM

FC

“ To Joan and the family of Dennis,

*My heartfelt sadness for your loss. It was a shock to me to hear, via the NASA rumor mill, of Dennis' passing. When I worked at NASA Goddard both as a colleague and manager with Dennis, I always admired and respected his work. I recall especially his work on COBE while in the Engineering Directorate. On earlier missions, I could always depend on Dennis for advice and delivering his outfit's work product. I always felt a special working-friendship with Dennis and respected him greatly. I too am sorry for his passing. May you have fond and well deserved memories of a fine gentleman.*

*Frank Carr  
NASA Retired*

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**Frank A. Carr** - April 29, 2018 at 03:25 PM

RT

“Men are like the stars; some generate their own light while others reflect the brilliance they receive.” Jose Marti

*I worked with Dennis on FUSE as the secretary (aka Project Princess). He provided so many opportunities with which to grow and learn. I appreciate still his infinite patience with me.*

*Dennis both generated his own light and reflected his brilliance.*

*My deepest sympathy to you Joan and your entire family. My thoughts and prayers are with you.*

*Sincerely,  
Romani Thaler*

*"For my part I know nothing with any certainty, but the sight of the stars makes me dream." Vincent Van Gough*

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**Romani Thaler** - April 26, 2018 at 06:54 PM

BH

“ To the family of Dennis McCarthy, I am so grieved to read of Dennis' death in the Kent News just now. I have counted it a great privilege to have known Dennis for the past several years and to have tutored him in painting and drawing. He enjoyed sharing his stories with me each week at the beginning of each class, so I felt that I got to know what mattered most to him. He was a very patient man and determined in what he wanted to do. Some may say, exacting in his will to master new things.

I have a pleasant story of my own to share about Dennis. He came in to his second week of painting class and I began with a review of the primary colors and how they can be mixed to obtain the secondary colors. It's quite simple as there are only three primary colors and three secondary colors. He seemed completely at a loss to name them and how to mix them. So, as it was only our second meeting, and I did not know anything about his back ground, I say, "Oh come on Dennis, this is not rocket science." His face blushes just a little as he coolly says, "But I am rocket scientist!" I reply, trying hard to recover from the shock, by saying "Then there is no excuse!!!" We soon be-came good friends. I know he shared many of his paintings with his family, so you can enjoy his hard work..he did learn his colors and was very pleased with what he painted as he should have been.

I will miss him and his dry humor, his humble regard for his life work which puts me in awe. I am so sad that the timing of his memorial service was before the obituries came out in this weeks paper. I would have liked to have met and talked with his beloved family. Most sincerely, Bonnie Howell

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Bonnie Howell - April 26, 2018 at 04:24 PM

CH

“ Dear Joan,

*My sincere condolences to you and your entire family. It was my privilege to have worked with Dennis at NASA on the COBE mission. His leadership was essential to the success of this most important space mission. Dennis was also invaluable to me and the WMAP space mission team. He provided us with his expert advice that was of important benefit to WMAP, substantially improving the mission in ways that led to its ultimate success. Of course his contributions to the Hubble Space Telescope and the Johns Hopkins University FUSE mission are legendary. Dennis understood well the challenges of successful space flight missions and displayed the perfect balance of managerial toughness and graceful collegiality. I will never forget Dennis. His passing is a great loss, but the wonderful memories will always be with us. Again my sincerest condolences on your loss.*

*Chuck Bennett*

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**Chuck** - April 26, 2018 at 04:14 PM

MH

“ Dear Joan,

*Deanna and I were surprised and saddened to learn of the death of Dennis. I have great admiration and gratitude for the steadfast way Dennis brought the COBE mission to its spectacular conclusion in spite of numerous unexpected obstacles. He was truly one of the heroes of COBE. We were very glad that you and Dennis shared the excitement at Nobel week in Stockholm in 2006, and have warm memories of meeting you there. Our condolences to you and your family on your loss.*

*Mike Hauser*

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**Mike Hauser** - April 26, 2018 at 12:12 PM

TH

“ Joan:

*Just this morning I learned of Dennis' passing. Please accept my condolences. I fondly recall the humorous conversations that I shared with Dennis at Will's holiday parties - especially one of the the early conversations when I obliquely referred to "rocket scientists" only to discover that he really was one. He will be missed.*

*Tom Hennessy*

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**Tom Hennessy** - April 26, 2018 at 10:28 AM

TG

“ Dear Joanie and Family,

*I was most grieved to hear of the passing of Dennis. He was such a magnificent gentleman. I worked with him on the COBE Project at Goddard; he was a brilliant and gracious manager. And I'm sure was dearly loved by all his family. My prayers will follow.*

*Sincerely, Thomas J. (Jeff) Greenwell*

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**Thomas J. Greenwell** - April 26, 2018 at 08:50 AM

KM

“ *My twin brother, Dennis McCarthy, was one of the kindest, gentlest people I ever knew. I was honored to be his brother, learned a lot from him, and respected his knowledge. The love he had for his daughters (biological and step) was unbounded. I will miss him a lot, but I know that he has joined our parents in Heaven. God speed, my brother.*

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**Kevin McCarthy** - April 26, 2018 at 08:03 AM

KW

“ My heartfelt condolences go out to you and your family, I am truly sorry for your loss. Your dad was such a big part of our childhood and he will be cherished in our memories forever.

*Karen Fitzmaurice Ward*

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**Karen Fitzmaurice Ward** - April 26, 2018 at 07:08 AM

DM

“ Dennis and I had the good fortune of working with the FUSE team to achieve the success that gives us all our driving force to be in this business. Tough times, tough decisions, tough people alloyed by tough character. I always teased him that we were both mentors and tor-mentors to each-other and to the team. To a large degree, FUSE was the crowning achievement of a long career for Dennis. My 4-year old daughter (at the time) always thought I was saying "Den-tist" when I would tell anecdotes of work about "Dennis"...although he gave me a few well-deserved root canals along the way!

*Here is a glass of red Bordeaux raised in your honor, sir! I am a better man having crossed paths with you.*

*Dan Mark*

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**Dan Mark** - April 26, 2018 at 01:41 AM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Dennis King McCarthy.



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April 25, 2018 at 08:15 PM

WM

“ I had the privilege of working closely with Dennis McCarthy. He was the FUSE mission Program Manager during the construction phase through the launch in June 1999. He led with a light, but firm touch, teaching us how to make difficult decisions. His management ideas saved the mission from almost certain cancellation. The FUSE scientific community is deeply indebted to him for the success of the FUSE mission with a lifetime of eight years and data on over three thousand astronomical targets, which are still being used. I am saddened by the loss of Dennis McCarthy, who for a few years was both my colleague and gentle leader. I send my condolences and sympathy to the family at their loss.

Warren Moos

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Warren Moos - April 25, 2018 at 04:19 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Dennis King McCarthy.



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April 25, 2018 at 02:27 PM

DC

“ I was saddened to hear of Dennis' passing. I worked with Dennis on the COBE Project at Goddard. I didn't know 2 things about him. One, there were two of him, he had a twin, and two, I didn't know he was a King. It was a pleasure working with him though. He was one of the good guys even though he cheered for Pittsburgh. May he rest in peace.

*Don Crosby,  
Retired NASA*

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**Donald Crosby** - April 25, 2018 at 11:40 AM

DB

*Dennis was one of the good guys--smart and reliable. The epitome of the NASA Engineer and manager. RIP.  
My deepest condolences to his family and friends.*

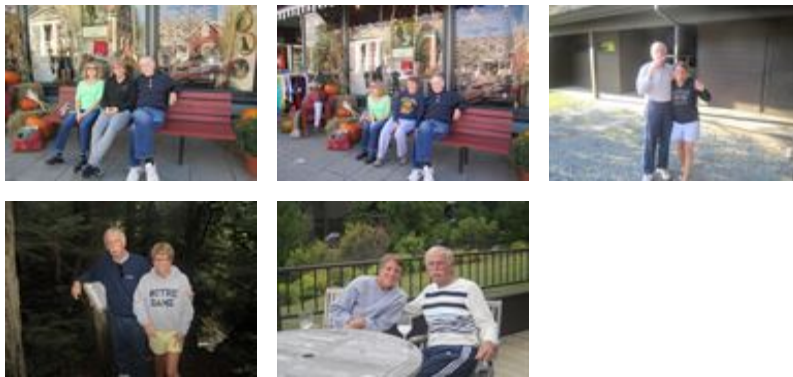
*Don Burrowbridge  
NASA GSFC & HQ*

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**Don Burrowbridge** - April 25, 2018 at 02:42 PM



“ 98 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



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**Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home** - April 25, 2018 at 10:45 AM

JE

“ It was a true honor and joy to work for and with Dennis. We worked together on the FUSE mission and later doing business development at Swales. I fondly remember Dennis' smile and the way he would look across the room with that smile...you just knew he had an idea or plan that he wanted to share. He was a mentor to me and a wonderful servant leader. I've missed him since I left the East Coast and I miss him more today.

*Jordan Evans*

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**Jordan Evans** - April 25, 2018 at 10:31 AM

TS

“ Sorry to hear of Dennis's Passing. Enjoyed working with him in many capacities. He was smart, kind and it was always a privilege to work with him. My condolences to the family.  
*Tom Swales*



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**tom swales** - April 25, 2018 at 08:35 AM

HM

“ It was my honor and privilege to work with Dennis throughout my 49 year career at GSFC. From the 70’s in the Engineering Directorate, we worked on many projects and programs together, including COBE ( which I consider the highlight of my career) , HST, FUSE, RHESSI, THEMIS and most of the successful Explorers missions in various development, management, financial, and review team capacities.

Upon my retirement from Civil Service in 2010, Dennis hired me at Hawk, so I could provide management support to EHPD for another 5 years.

Dennis was one of best engineers and managers that I ever worked with I am grateful for all that he did for me as a colleague, mentor and friend.

He will be missed.

*Herb Mittelman*

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Herb Mittelman - April 24, 2018 at 05:30 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Dennis King McCarthy.



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April 24, 2018 at 12:02 PM

JM

“ Dennis was one of my heroes at NASA. I loved working with him. Nothing was too hard, nothing was impossible, and he would give us a wink to show that he understood what we were worried about, and that he would take care of it. As Deputy Project Manager for the COBE satellite he made good things happen. When the Challenger space shuttle was lost, he found another way to get the COBE into space. Without him, no Nobel Prize for our work and our team. What a sweet, brilliant gentleman! We miss him tremendously. John Mather, COBE Project Scientist, and Nobel Prize in Physics 2006

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**John Mather** - April 24, 2018 at 12:00 PM

GM

“ I am so sorry to hear of Dennis' passing. I worked with Dennis at Goddard for a short time in support of the COBE mission and later for several years in support of the first two Hubble servicing missions. Dennis had an extraordinary technical and programmatic perspective and a calming influence on whatever team he was working with or leading. He was also a wonderful mentor to myself and many other early career employees. I extend my deepest condolences to Dennis' family.

George Morrow

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**George Morrow** - April 24, 2018 at 11:36 AM

EY

“ I worked with Dennis for 8 years on the COBE program at the Goddard Space Flight Center. During that time he was all business, consequently he never talked about his personal life. The only thing that he shared was his back problems resulting from a notable tennis career. I am surprised to hear about his large family. I offer them all my sincere condolences.

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**Earle Young** - April 24, 2018 at 11:07 AM

CS

“ I worked on and off with Dennis for many years and always knew him to be extremely intelligent and innovative but more important he was always kind and helpful. All of us at Goddard and in the space community lost a leader and friend and will greatly miss his wit and wisdom.

*Chris Scolese*

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**Chris Scolese** - April 24, 2018 at 10:04 AM

RW

“ I met/worked with Dennis when he was with Swales Aerospace. We became friends over the years, continued to work on projects together, and continued to exchange emails, stories, and space--related news up to last week. He was smart, funny, interesting, and very competent. His accomplishments, especially with Hubble and the CMB, are profound and historical. I will always treasure our good-spirited jokes about Pitt (I'm a WVU grad) and taking care of the horses. He was/is a good man who I will dearly miss. My deep condolences to the family.

*Richard White*

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**Richard White** - April 24, 2018 at 09:44 AM

BS

“ I worked with Dennis when he was the Deputy Project Manager for the first Hubble Servicing Mission. This was an incredibly important mission for NASA as it would prove that we had the "Right Stuff" to do on-orbit servicing. If we failed, there would have been little hope for the construction of the Space Station. Amid all the chaos and stress, Dennis was a calming force that gave us the confidence that we could successfully pull off this complex mission. In Goddard's Building 29, there is a large window that overlooks the Integration activities in the clean room below. One of the things I remember most was at 5 pm everyday, Dennis would sit on the couches reading his emails. Every person who went by on their way out the door had the opportunity to stop and talk to Dennis and clear up whatever issues they may have been taking home with them that day. When I heard he was working for Hawk on the air-LUSI mission, I was excited that I may have the chance to cross paths with him again. Dennis was a great boss. He will truly be missed.

*Bob Smith*

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**Bob Smith** - April 24, 2018 at 09:21 AM

KT

“ Dennis and I worked together on a NASA project during his last few years. He brought an incredible wealth of experience to our mission. He was also very kind and patient with everyone on the project. Dennis's passing came as a shock to us all and he will be missed terribly. But, I consider myself blessed for them. My deepest sympathies and prayers go to his family for their loss. -Kevin Turpie

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**Kevin Turpie** - April 23, 2018 at 11:12 PM

DI

“ *Mr McCarthy was a very kind and gentle man! He will be missed!! Thoughts and prayers to the family during this very difficult time! I will think of him often.*



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**Debi Ingram** - April 23, 2018 at 08:33 PM

DS

“ *I had the pleasure of meeting Dennis 33 years ago when I married his close friend, Charlie Simmons. I will truly miss this unique and caring man as I know MANY others will. Rest in Peace dear friend..... Most Sincerely, Dolly Simmons*



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**Dolly Simmons** - April 23, 2018 at 06:25 PM

WT

*Dear Joan and family,*

*I am saddened and share in your sorrow at the sudden loss of Dennis, He was special.*

*Rocket Scientist, Painter, Cellist. For the last three years I was in weekly contact with him via email. My D-Mail folder is filled with magnificent Snapshots of the Galaxies. His interests and ideas on them were endless.*

*I couldn't help but notice that in one of the photos I recognized the setting as the sidewalk cafe opposite town hall in Stowe Vt. There were Joan, Dennis, and in the middle on of the 5 K's (if you say Karen, your probably right) wearing a Notre Dame jersey. Two weeks earlier Dennis had exchanged ideas on why Catholic Colleges were so strong in basketball. Notre Dame had just beaten my beloved Connecticut Huskies for the Women's national title.*

*Dennis communicated with many,many people. I think his ultimate objective was to communicate with the Universe and noting COBE and HUBBLE, he did just that!. (I threw in the exclamation point because Dennis had an affinity for them)!!.*

*I stare at my cellphone now not comprehending that I will no longer receive anymore emails from him.*

*I will miss you Dennis. May God keep you in the palm of his hand. My best to you Joan.*

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**wayne Twombly** - April 27, 2018 at 08:20 PM

WT

*Dear Joan and family,*

*I am saddened and share in your sorrow at the sudden loss of Dennis, He was special.*

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**Wayne Twombly** - April 27, 2018 at 08:20 PM