



*In Loving Memory
of*

ANDREW WILLIAM KRAMARCHYK, PhD

Memorials may be made to the University of South Carolina Educational Foundation, 1600 Hampton Street, Suite 736, Columbia, SC 29208. In the memo line please reference: Kramarchyk Family Endowment.

Acknowledgement

Words cannot express our gratitude for all the love, prayers, and support shown to us during this difficult time. May God bless each of you.

-The Family of Andrew “Andy” William Kramarchyk, PhD



FRIDAY, MAY 23, 2025
12:00 NOON

ST. MARTIN DE PORRES CATHOLIC CHURCH
2229 HAMPTON STREET
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

FATHER MICHAEL OKERE
-PASTOR-

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Life’s Reflections

Andrew William Kramarchyk, PhD passed away on May 14, 2025, with his loving wife Joanne by his side. Born on July 16, 1961 to Eleanor M. (Pike) and Metro Kramarchyk, he was preceded in death by his parents and his two beloved older sisters, Donna Leah Smith and Christina Frances Stamboly.

Upon high school graduation, Andy enrolled at Syracuse University but soon realized it wasn’t the right fit, leading him to return home to Watervliet, NY. Unbeknownst to him at the time, this began a decades-long pursuit of a college degree, a journey marked by perseverance and determination.

A dedicated and hardworking man, Andy often balanced full time jobs while attending college. In 1985 he married Mary Beck. They welcomed their first child, Katerina (Queens, NY) in 1988, followed by Demetrius (Latham, NY) in 1991. Andy beamed with pride as each child graduated from college, achieving a dream that had long eluded him.

At age 25, Andy became a Fourth-Degree member of the Knights of Columbus Honor Guard. As his children grew, he encouraged their involvement in sports, often stepping in as a coach. He played a key role in founding the Columbia County (NY) Travel Baseball League and served on the Ichabod Crane School Board (NY), eventually becoming president for four years. Additionally, he dedicated nearly a decade to volunteering as a Sunday school teacher.

In 2013, Andy married his high school sweetheart, Joanne DeFreest. True to his nature, he embraced her family wholeheartedly and became a compassionate caregiver to her aging and ailing parents. At age 50, Andy joined the Colonie Senior Basketball League (CSBL), where he thrived on camaraderie and competition. He later served as the league’s commissioner, a role he cherished for several years.

Professionally, Andy enjoyed a 30-year career in the alcohol beverage industry, culminating in a position in Baltimore, MD. He relished city life, living in Baltimore’s Inner Harbor and especially enjoyed attending professional sports games.

Despite his many accomplishments, one goal remained: earning a college degree. In 2020, Andy returned to Siena College, Loudonville, NY and proudly walked across the stage in May 2021, just shy of his 60th birthday. Encouraged by his professors, he set his sight even higher and set out to pursue a Ph.D. in political science. At age 60, he and Joanne embarked on a new adventure, leaving behind lifelong friends in the Capital District to start anew in Columbia, SC, where Andy enrolled at the University of South Carolina (USC).

True to form, Andy immersed himself in his new community. He introduced Joanne to women’s basketball, and together they became die-hard Gamecocks fans, fortunate enough to have season tickets. He quickly found several men’s basketball leagues, building relationships on and off the court.

In the fall of 2021, Andy took a bartending job at Still Hopes Retirement Community, where he forged friendships with residents and staff. After just one semester at USC, he earned a coveted teaching assistant position. A dream come true! In 2022 he joined the Graduate Student Association (GSA) and by spring 2023, he was elected president, thriving in this leadership role.

In November 2023 Andy was diagnosed with brain cancer. Despite this devastating news, he remained his happy, optimistic self throughout his illness – always with a smile and never a complaint. In 2024 he deepened his faith by joining the Knights of Peter Claver at his church, St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church and became a member of the men’s choir. He remained active, playing basketball as often as he could.

In April 2025, Andy was awarded a Ph.D. in Political Science. Upon conferring the degree, Dr. Ann Vail, Dean of the Graduate School, said, “earning a PhD. is not just about research, teaching and papers, or studying. It is about perseverance, passion and curiosity, all of which make the world better. Andy exemplifies these qualities, not just in academics but in life itself. Through challenges that would have discouraged the strongest among us, Andy pressed forward – not just for the sake of completing a degree, but for the love of discovery and the desire to contribute something meaningful to the world. This intellectual and psychological determination reveals the depth of Andy’s kindness, courage and unwavering spirit. As we celebrate you today, we do so not with sorrow, but with gratitude, gratitude for the knowledge you have shared, the kindness you have shown, and the love you have given. Your journey is one of extraordinary resilience, and your story will forever be part of this institution, your field of study and our hearts.”

Andy lived each day to its fullest, always seeking new challenges and welcoming everyone as a friend. He was the embodiment of optimism – a true “cup half full” person. His life taught us that we are never too old to chase our dreams. Andy will be deeply missed and never forgotten. His spirit, resilience and unwavering positivity will continue to inspire all who knew him.

Order of Service

Processional.....Hank Bilal and The Men’s Choir
“Lead Me Lord”

1st Reading.....Betsy Burton
Wisdom 3:1-6,9

Responsorial Psalm.....Johnathan Kirkwood
Psalm 103

2nd Reading.....Sam Henry
Revelations 14:13

Alleluia

Gospel.....Father Michael Okere
John 14:1-6

Homily

Intercessory Prayer.....Tito Garcia

Offertory Hymn.....“I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say”

Communion Hymn.....“ I Am the Bread of Life”

Reflection.....Mac Tollefsen and Emma Hellerman
“Ave Maria”

Recessional Hymn.....“Soon and Very Soon”

