



William Thomas "Tommy" Haywood, III

November 27, 1955 - August 29, 2025

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William Thomas “Tommy” Haywood III, 69, passed away on August 29, 2025. Born on November 27, 1955, in Newton, Mississippi, Tommy was a lifelong learner who led a rich and varied life.

First and foremost, Tommy was a musician. He began piano lessons as a young child, picked up the guitar at age 12, and went on to learn several other instruments throughout his life. He graduated from Stratford Academy in Macon, Georgia, with the Class of 1973, and later attended Vanderbilt University and the University of Georgia in Athens, where he studied psychology, philosophy, and religion. After graduating from UGA in 1977, he attended Mercer University School of Law.

Following his graduation from law school in 1981, Tommy and his mother, Sylvia Graham Haywood, formed the law firm of Haywood & Haywood—one of the first mother-son law practices in the country. After several years of practicing law in Macon, he left the legal profession and moved to Newnan, Georgia, where he became part of a vibrant musical community. He played bluegrass rhythm guitar, mandolin, and stand-up bass.

Tommy was also a dedicated yoga practitioner, beginning in his teens, and

later became a respected yoga instructor. He held various roles throughout his life, including working in a support capacity for an ambulance company and serving as a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) manager for FEMA. In his later years, he became a master luthier, building mandolins, mandolas, and violins by hand with great care and craftsmanship.

Tommy is survived by his three children: John Thomas Haywood (Jessica) of Washington State, William Henry "Hank" Haywood of Oregon, and Ethan Hortman (Heather) of Georgia; five grandchildren: Rain Haywood of Oregon, Kyla Haywood of Japan, Bo Haywood of Washington State, Daniel Hortman of Georgia, and Natalie Hortman of Georgia; and three siblings: Annette Haywood-Carter of Santa Monica, California, Robert "Bob" Haywood of Atlanta, Georgia, and Susan Tobelman (David) of Mint Hill, North Carolina.

He was preceded in death by his parents, William Thomas Haywood Jr. of Columbia, Tennessee, and Sylvia Graham Haywood of Macon, Georgia.

Tommy will be deeply missed by his wonderful friends, including Robin and Mark Fornwalt, who cared for him with great devotion, as well as his large and beloved musical community.

A Celebration of Life service will be held on Sunday, September 14, 2025 at 2 o'clock at Johns Violin Company, 2005 Commerce Dr., N, Peachtree City, GA 30269.

In lieu of flowers, donate to the Rheumatoid Arthritis Foundation, Help Fight RA
www.helpfightra.org.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Service

SEP **14.** 2:00 PM (ET)

Johns Violin Company
2005 Commerce Dr. N
Peachtree City, GA 30269

Tribute Wall

SA

“ *This hits much too close to home. Tommy and I graduated high school together, then were together at UGA. We crossed paths in different parts of Georgia after that. My heart goes out to his family, the world has lost a creative and unique soul.* ”

Steve Allen - September 10, 2025 at 11:02 PM