

## In Memory of Lee Alexander “Alex” Wheeler III

Lee Alexander “Alex” Wheeler III passed away Tuesday, October 27, 2020 after unexpected complications following surgery.

A third generation Lake Wales-ian, Alex was born in Lake Wales on February 4, 1953, and was a graduate of Lake Wales High School and the University of Florida. Alex was a CPA practicing at Bunting Tripp & Ingley, where he specialized in not-for-profit tax law.

Alex was an avid scuba diver who loved hiking, camping, and the outdoors in general. His underwater excursions had led him to dive upon dozens of shipwrecks, and a score of Florida’s beautiful springs.

Alex volunteered for numerous causes, including serving on the Boards of Directors of the Lake Wales Family Literacy Academy, Lake Wales Heritage, Lake Wales Charter Schools, Lake Wales Democratic Club, Lake Wales Rotary, and Green Horizon Land Trust. He served on the board of the Historic Society where he assisted with the preservation of the original Lake Wales High School complex, soon to become Edward Bok Academy North and the Old City Hall, now Polk State College. He was past president of the Lake Wales democratic Club.

He considered his greatest contribution to be his service to Greater Lake Wales Healthcare Foundation, where he became a staunch advocate of health care for the needy and led the effort to establish the Lake Wales Free Clinic. Today the clinic serves hundreds.

He was appointed to the Polk County School Board by Florida Governor Lawton Chiles in 1997 and was elected to the Lake Wales City Commission in 2002, serving four years as mayor of the city. During his time in office he promoted solar energy and instituted curbside recycling. He also championed the Utility Lifeline Program to assist hardship utility customers, as well as the causes of better housing and sustainable economic development. He successfully advocated for the establishment of an Adult Day Care center in Lake Wales. He always imbued a keen sense of public spirit, justice, fairness and optimism. He was guided by devotion to public service—to what was in the long-term best interests of area residents.

Alex was named Citizen of the Year by the Lake Wales Area Chamber of Commerce and the Lake Wales Free Masons in 2010.

Alex was a family man. He loved his wife, Mandy of 22 years. They shared numerous adventures and interests together. He was an amazing father who gave his all to his children. He delighted in his 3 granddaughters who adored their Papa.

There are no words to fill his void on our earth.

Alex is survived by his wife, Mandy Cilliers, children, Lee Alexander Wheeler IV, Ryan Andrew Wheeler (Alice Fontaine) and Gavin Cilliers Wheeler; Grand children Kaitlyn Wheeler, Olivia Wheeler; Emmalea Bell, Sister, Mary Bassham (James) and half brother, Steven Wheeler (Rochelle). He was predeceased by his parents Joyce Benton Wheeler and Lee Alexander Wheeler jr. and brother, William Benton Wheeler.

A celebration of life memorial was held on 30 October 2020 at 1:30 pm at Pinewood Estate, Bok Tower, Lake Wales.

