



Jacob Thomas Willging

AUG 8, 1971 - JAN 17, 2026



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Jacob Thomas Willging

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Jacob Thomas Willging, 54, of Oakland passed away peacefully at his residence on January 17, 2026. He was born in Toledo, Ohio on August 8, 1971.

Jacob graduated from Walter Johnson High School in Bethesda, Maryland where he played on the varsity football team. He also attended Montgomery Community College in Rockville, MD.

He worked in the food service industry at Trader Joe's stores in Washington, DC and Oakland, and then at Whole Foods Oakland for the last seven years. Before moving to Oakland in 2011, Jacob worked to renovate several houses in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Washington, DC.

He had a passion for football, cycling, and other sports. His dog Harper, named after then Washington Nationals player Bryce Harper, was his constant companion and he loved her very much. He was a prodigious reader of fantasy novels and a Dungeons and Dragons enthusiast from a young age.

Jacob is survived by his mother, Judith Willging, his father, Tom Willging, his sister, Chris Willging, brother-in-law Dennis Finnegan, and nephews Miles and Liam Finnegan; his aunts, Martha O'Brien, Lisa O'Brien, Joanne O'Brien, Carol Banford, Rita McLaughlin, and Lucy Willging; his uncles Steve O'Brien, Robert O'Brien, Jim Willging, John Willging; and dozens of cousins.

To send condolences or a personal note to the family, please email his father at twillgin@gmail.com or his mother at willjude2@gmail.com. In that email, please let the family know if you have an interest in attending a memorial celebration in Oakland, CA in the near future.

In lieu of flowers, please send a contribution in Jacob's name to the East Bay Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Oakland, CA (<https://eastbayspca.org/>) or to Friends of Oakland Animal Services (<https://friendsofoas.org/>)—or adopt a pet in Jacob's name.



Tribute Wall

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MR

Matthew Ridgway posted:

My memories of Jake are not so much of a particular moment, but more of a mood. I spent a lot of time with Jake and his family when Jake and I were both children and I remember him as joyful and playful. As he matured he became more introverted but you could uncover his playfulness in conversations about sports and recalling earlier days. I greatly appreciate that Jake was willing to stretch beyond his comfort to attend significant events in my life. I miss him.

February 16 at 12:14 PM

KM

Krin Morelli posted:

I worked with Jacob for the last 7 years. He was always so upbeat, lighthearted and kind. We had sporadic conversations, but mostly it was a walk-by, and a "what up doooooode!" I was always entertained by his Hawaiian shirts, and his carefree attitude about politics and other things that were going awry. He had strong stances, but always kept a "whatever" attitude. It's weird and sad to not see him daily, filling the drink case...just doing his thing. He definitely left a void. I'm sorry for his family's loss, and even more sad about his beloved dog's loss.

February 9 at 10:20 PM



Caitlin Garibaldi posted:

Jake was such a great guy. He was full of warmth, smiles, and so much fun. I was lucky enough to meet him through work at TJs and become friends outside of that. He was such a joyful soul, and his presence is already so missed.

February 2 at 7:17 PM

KO

Katie Oneil posted:

Jake was my cousin and we were the same age. While we didn't communicate often, our limited email exchanges meant so much to me. In December 2017 when my mom unexpectedly passed away, he emailed me on December 22, "Love, Love, Love-give yourself a big hug from me..." and later when the Nats won the World Series in 2019, another simple exchange, "Yay! We won! YAY! XOXOXO". On my limited visits to Oakland he always took the time to hang out with me and in 2012, when he unexpectedly showed up in Chicago for my sister Maria's wedding, my siblings and I were thrilled to see him and shared so many laughs together. He was truly special and I will miss him greatly.

January 28 at 4:10 PM



Tribute Wall

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Liz Derne lit a candle in honor of Jacob.

Jacob was such a sweet, fun, caring, kind hearted, corky character. It was always such a pleasure getting to see him in his colorful shirts. He would always brighten my day and i sure appreciated our goofy exchanges. I think its a definate fact that anyone who loves their pet the way he loved his Harper has a precious heart. He is very missed. Sending love to all of his family and friends.



January 27 at 4:34 PM



Eli Ramer posted:

Jacob and Harper were a part of my life for almost ten years, as my across-the-hall-neighbors. Their shared delight with each other, their walks and fun adventures in the neighborhood, still echo inside me, with joy and sorrow.

January 27 at 10:52 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Jacob by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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