



Russell "Russ" Thomas Widmer

September 24, 1958 - August 29, 2025

Russell "Russ" Thomas Widmer of Myrtle Beach, passed away Friday, August 29, 2025 after a traffic accident. He was 66.

Russ was born September 24, 1958 in Mound, Minn., and is survived by his wife, Pat Widmer, and their five children and their families, along with Sydney, the golden retriever.

Russ was the oldest of the eldest child of Godfrey "Fritz" and Jane Widmer and he enjoyed a classic Minnesota childhood full of sports and recreation with his brothers and sisters. Russ also found his way to more obscure hobbies, including scuba diving, which included dives of wrecks in Lake Superior, among others. It was his love for downhill skiing that would ultimately lead him to the true love of his life.

While studying business at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, Russ worked as a ski instructor/ski patrol at nearby ski resort, Trollhaugen, in western Wisconsin. In between runs, Russ was pursued relentlessly by a chair lift operator that liked how he looked in his boots and how he "swooshed" in 'em.

Pat Widmer, with three sons from a previous marriage and being 11 years his senior, was able to corner the young Russ in the chalet for warm beverages and long talks. The two were married on November 30th, 1979 and moved to Waconia, Minn. Two more children (one more son and finally a daughter) came soon afterward. In a period of just over two years, Russ went from a single college student to the breadwinner for a family of seven. It was time to

get to work.

Russ worked at the family business, Widmer Inc., an excavation and underground utility company, which Fritz and Jane had started in 1958. Russ settled in as an estimator for many years before becoming vice president. This chapter of Russ's life was marked by long days, huge machines, large holes in the ground, and the iconic yellow Widmer trucks buzzing around the Twin Cities. Meanwhile Pat ran a busy household that soon began to include grandchildren. The house was always full, and many memories were made around the dinner table, playing games, or watching movies.

In 2002, with all of their children off to university or starting families, Russ and Pat surprised everyone and announced that they would be moving to Myrtle Beach and starting a kitchen remodeling franchise called Kitchen Tune-Up. Pat's fingerprints were all over this crazy idea, but Russ beamed with pride for moving Pat "to the beach." Russ was also certainly lured by the prospect of tennis courts that were open year-round. The experiment worked, and the Minnesota Widmers have long benefitted from having a landing spot on the beach. Two of Russ and Pat's children, their families, and one grandson now call South Carolina home.

Russ and Pat lived out their entrepreneurial dreams and soon found another family to be a part of. The network of Kitchen Tune-Up franchise owners ("Toonies") around the country collaborate and support each other and Russ and Pat were now a part of a group that included many others, including married couples that had taken the exact same plunge.

Many Toonies become known for one aspect of the business: this product, that procedure, etc... Russ and Pat's business became known for customer service. Their clients became their world and in those early formative years Pat's eye for design and rapport with clients along with Russ's commitment to the final product became their defining characteristic. Kitchen Tune-Up gave Russ and Pat many awards over the years, but their nationwide Customer Service Awards gave Russ and Pat the most pride.

Pat retired from Kitchen Tune-Up before Russ and over the next decade the

business continued to grow. These years were also filled with tennis, much of it competitive, with Russ winning many singles and doubles awards. Russ retired in 2024 and the business is still operating today by one of his grandsons.

In retirement Russ focused on spending quality time with friends and family, along with playing pool, which he simply could not get enough of. A walk with Sidney in the morning, having lunch with Pat, a ride on the motorcycle, and a game of pool with friends was a perfect day for Russ. In his short retirement he had many perfect days.

Russ was preceded in death by his parents, Fritz and Jane Widmer.

Russell is survived by his loving family: Siblings and Significant Others, SC, Marise Widmer and John Masiulis of St. Paul, MN, Chrysa and Dana Olson of Shakopee, MN, Robert and Rachel Widmer of Yukon, OK, Paul and Joni Widmer of Blaine, MN, Michael Widmer and Andrea Ryan of Renton, WA; Children and Spouses; Tony Widmer, Mike and Debbie Widmer, Matthew and Katie Widmer, Joe and Lonnie Widmer, Jennifer and Jesse Swanson, Grandchildren; Brittany, Jay, Madison, Jack, Justine, Tim, Brooke, Guy, Austin, Charlie, Georgia, Alexandra, Great-Grandchildren: Olivia, Jett, Theodore, Simon, Rowan

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, September 6th at Goldfinch Funeral Home in Murrells Inlet, SC. Viewing begins at 11am with service to follow. A Celebration of Life will be held at the Cresswind community clubhouse around 2pm.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be sent to St. Jude's Children Research Hospital or any organization that helps animals.

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 6. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Goldfinch Funeral Home
11528 Highway 17 Bypass
Murrells Inlet, SC 29576
(843) 651-3295
info@goldfinchfuneralhome.com
<https://www.goldfinchfuneralhome.com>

Memorial Service

SEP 6. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (Est)

Goldfinch Funeral Home
11528 Highway 17 Bypass
Murrells Inlet, SC 29576
(843) 651-3295
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<https://www.goldfinchfuneralhome.com>

Tribute Wall

AD

“ Russ and Pat always had smiles on their faces each time I'd see them. They were such pleasant people to work with. Russ will be missed and my heart goes out to Pat and the rest of the family. I know you've lost someone who was loved greatly by his family. - Analisa Duggan

Analisa Duggan - September 11, 2025 at 02:47 AM

JS

“ My twin sister (Barb Knutson) met Pat about 50 years ago . We then met Russ - what a kind, loving, & special guy. We have memories over the years.

So hard to lose someone you love so much.
Sending love , hugs, thoughts, & prayers.

So very sorry that this happened- think of all the good times .
Please give Pat our love - hope to see all of you in September at the Minnesota Cabin.

Thinking of you during such a difficult time.

❤️🙏 hugs. Judy (Knutson) Steffenhagen
(Barb - passed away 6 years ago October 17th). Judy ❤️

Judy (Knutson) Steffenhagen - September 06, 2025 at 12:20 PM

EF

“ Elaine Wandschneider’s Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Russell “Russ” Thomas Widmer.



Elaine Wandschneider’s Family - September 04, 2025 at 03:58 PM

EF

“ Elaine Wandschneider’s Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Russell “Russ” Thomas Widmer.

Elaine Wandschneider’s Family - September 04, 2025 at 03:58 PM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Russell “Russ” Thomas Widmer.



September 04, 2025 at 11:48 AM



“ Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Russell “Russ” Thomas Widmer.



September 04, 2025 at 09:20 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Russell "Russ" Thomas Widmer.

September 04, 2025 at 09:20 AM



“ Infinity purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Russell "Russ" Thomas Widmer.



Infinity - September 03, 2025 at 08:25 PM



“ FlexAbility Concepts/Progressive Stampin purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Russell "Russ" Thomas Widmer.



FlexAbility Concepts/Progressive Stampin - September 03, 2025 at 05:30 PM



“ FlexAbility Concepts/Progressive Stampin planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Russell "Russ" Thomas Widmer.

FlexAbility Concepts/Progressive Stampin - September 03, 2025 at 05:30 PM

RC

“ Our sincere sympathies to Pat and family. This news was absolutely devastating. Over the last few days, we have been in contact with many of Russ’ tennis teammates and reminiscing about our time together in tennis. One memory we wish to share with the Widmer family is when we first arrived in Myrtle Beach. I (Reggie) teamed up to play with Russ in a tournament in Litchfield. We weren’t favoured to win but Russ was the best player on the court and we defeated two of his close friends from the Prestwick Tennis Club in the finals. Karen and I enjoyed our time off of the court with Pat and Russ (movies, dinners, trips to Hilton Head, etc.). Russ was an incredible person. it was evident how much he loved Pat and was extremely proud of his family. Although we live 2400 miles away (in Canada) we always considered Russ and Pat good friends. We will forever cherish our many fond memories of Russ. We will keep Pat and family in our thoughts and prayers in the difficult days, weeks and months ahead. (Karen and Reggie Caulfield)

Reginald Caulfield - September 02, 2025 at 06:52 PM

TT

“ The Breakaway Financial Group Team purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Russell "Russ" Thomas Widmer.



The Breakaway Financial Group Team - September 02, 2025 at 03:25 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Russell "Russ" Thomas Widmer.



September 02, 2025 at 03:24 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Russell "Russ" Thomas Widmer.

September 02, 2025 at 03:24 PM



“ Sherry Day purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Russell "Russ" Thomas Widmer.

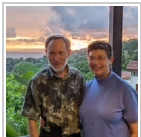


Sherry Day - September 02, 2025 at 12:41 PM



“ Sherry Day planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Russell "Russ" Thomas Widmer.

Sherry Day - September 02, 2025 at 12:41 PM



“ We knew Russ from Kitchen Tune-Up days. This is such a tragedy - Russ was a genuine mensch. Best wishes to all his family. - Allen Cohen, KTU Boston

Allen Cohen - September 02, 2025 at 11:46 AM

AD

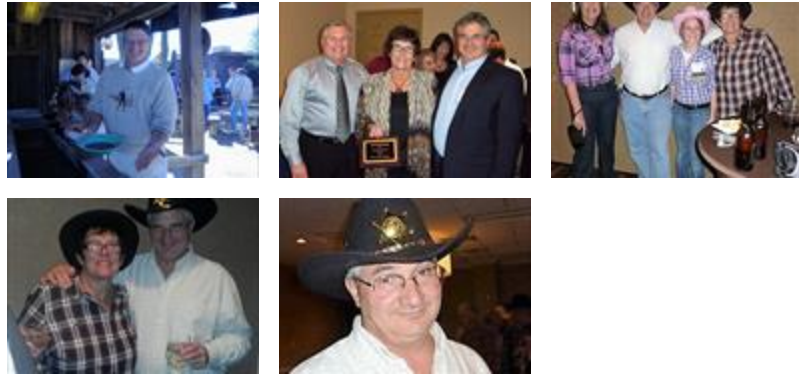
“ My Husband anf I played pool with Russ and he was one of the nicest individuals i know. Always smiling always talked about his family and he beemed with pride. He spoke of his retirement and how proud of his family and excited about the days ahead!!! Prayers to you all and for the days ahead!!! GARY AND ANGELADORSEY



Angela Dorsey - September 02, 2025 at 11:38 AM

HM

“ 14 files added to the album His Kitchen Tune-Up Years



Heidi Morrissey - September 02, 2025 at 11:34 AM

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“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Russell "Russ" Thomas Widmer.



September 02, 2025 at 11:30 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Russell "Russ" Thomas Widmer.

September 02, 2025 at 11:30 AM



“ Though my relationship with Russ was professional, he still left a lasting impact on me. His kindness, smile, and the way he carried himself made every interaction meaningful. I am grateful for the times I was able to work with him, and his influence will not be forgotten. My thoughts and prayers are with Jennifer & Jesse, Jay, and the entire family as they carry on his remarkable legacy.

With deepest sympathy,
Curt Proffit & The Northern Contours team

Curt Proffitq - September 02, 2025 at 11:06 AM



“ Charlie and I cherish the good times that we had sharing stories and ideas with Russ and Pat. Always smiling, always welcoming, and always helpful. Our hearts are broken from this loss. Wish we could be there to give you all hugs. Susan and Charlie Johnson

Susan Johnson - September 02, 2025 at 10:07 AM



“ I didn't know Russ well. I had a few interactions with him as my Mom's (Linda Irwin) neighbor. He helped me troubleshoot a car problem last time I visited in July. My condolences to Russ's family and friends. My heart goes out to you folks. I know all too well the experience of losing a father. Prayers and healing vibes to each and every one of you.

Bill Irwin - September 01, 2025 at 11:48 PM

AE

“ Alexandra and Edward purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Russell "Russ" Thomas Widmer.



Alexandra and Edward - September 01, 2025 at 08:18 PM

SW

“ Adventurous Younger Memories: Building a Tree Fort, Snowmobiling & Snowball Fights.... Snorkeling, Scuba Diving Local Lakes, Paper Route that paid for the Rootbeer Floats Local A&W (Spring Park It's still there) Learning How to's of fixing stuff from Mechanics in The Widmer Shop. Russ's first dirt bike.... Definitely a good man, Father, Grandfather and more Pat and Family Prayers to each of you!
Steve & Megan Widmer

Steve Widmer - September 01, 2025 at 07:01 PM



“ Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of Russell "Russ" Thomas Widmer.



September 01, 2025 at 06:51 PM

DS

“ My family and I didn't know Russ that well. We had just met him a week ago when we went to the club house to play pool. Russ and his friends were using both pool tables, but invited us to play and switch off players. It was wonderful to meet him. He seemed to be such a kind person. Our family is saddened by his passing. By the way he treated us it was obvious that must have been a great husband, dad, granddad.

Debbie Simms - September 01, 2025 at 06:16 PM

RP

“ Rick And Carmen Pawling lit a candle in memory of Russell "Russ" Thomas Widmer



Rick and Carmen Pawling - September 01, 2025 at 04:48 PM

BC

“ Couldn't ask for a better neighbor and friend. Russ will definitely be missed by his Cresswind family. My heartfelt hugs and condolences to Pat and the entire Widmer family.
Becky Cotter

becky cotter - September 01, 2025 at 03:44 PM