



"Now a slave has no permanent place in the family,, but a son belongs to it forever."

-John 8:15

"When you're young, you hear stuff like don't be a copycat. It's OK to be different. Stuff like that. As you get older, the same people that told you that (teachers mostly) begin to treat the "different" ones a little differently than how they treat "normal kids"."

-teenage Thomas

"To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment. "

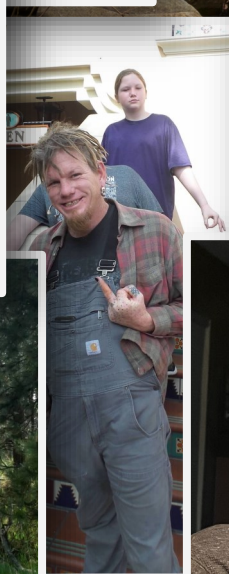
-Ralph Waldon Emerson

In Loving Memory



Thomas Charles DeLeeuw

March 5, 1981 ~ September 21, 2025



Thomas Charles DeLeeuw passed away peacefully on September 21, 2025, at Monument Health in Rapid City, South Dakota following a lengthy illness.

Thomas was born on March 5, 1981, to Charlie and Debbie DeLeeuw in Mankato, Minnesota. The family moved to Rapid City, South Dakota when he was 18-months old. He attended Rapid Valley and Horrace Mann elementary schools, and then North Middle School. He completed high school via the homeschool of Susie Herman.

Thomas was a kind hearted soul with a profound love of nature. His favorite hobbies included exploring the wonders of nature around him with, much to his mother's horror, a special love for all things reptiles. Snakes, turtles, and lizards of all kinds found ways into his home. Whether it was the snake he kept in a pillowcase during a trip across the state with his grandma (which she never knew about) or the turtles he would bring home from Memorial Pond. One never knew what critters would be found in his possession and all of them brought him joy.

Thomas also had an amazing gift tending to plants and trees. He worked many jobs, but his favorite was the years spent at The Plantsmyth, where he cared for trees and helped others plan their gardens. When given the opportunity, he combined these hobbies and created magical gardens filled with turtles and koi ponds.

Thomas was married Tessie Ren Countre for about 10 years, and the couple welcomed two boys, Owen and Shaughn. His love for his boys was unwavering.

Thomas had a tight knit community of friends. Many of these individuals walked side by side with him from childhood through the end of his life. His dedication and true value of friendship could teach us all a little something.

Thomas' life was not easy. He struggled with depression, anxiety and at times a profound sadness. He would tell his mother things like "I am a failure at everything, including suicide." Thomas did not take his own life, however, the attempts to self-medicate to deal with the sadness within him took their toll. The family of Thomas DeLeeuw encourages everyone who has similar feelings to please reach out for support. Do not struggle alone, for there are people who love you!

Thomas is survived by his sons, Owen and Shaughn; mother, Debbie; sister, Heather and many family members and friends.

Thomas was preceded in death by his father, Charlie DeLeeuw; grandparents, Dutch and Lil DeLeeuw, Art and Fern Dahlen; aunt, Joyce Hughes and uncles, Bill DeLeeuw and Bob Dahlen.

Thank you for your presence and condolences.