



Larry "Poppa" Whitler

February 8, 1955 - July 17, 2025

Larry "Poppa" Whitler, 70, of Ocala, FL, passed away on July 17, 2025 in Ocala, FL.

Larry was born in Merrick, NY to Alfred and Helga Whitler on February 8, 1955. He graduated from Dunnellon High School in 1973. He had a number of occupations over the years, but was most known as co-host of the "AM Ocala Live" morning show alongside his partner, Robin MacBlane. His passions were his family, his art, and his community. His art hangs in places all around Ocala and he contributed to the Marion County Literacy Council, Florida Student Media Festival, and countless other organizations.

Larry is survived by his partner, Robin MacBlane. His children; Alex Whitler (Jessica) and Brie Heald (Mark). His grandson, Eli. His brothers, Thomas Whitler and William Whitler. Along with so many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

He is preceded in death by his father, Alfred Whitler, mother, Helga Whitler,

sisters, Doreen Conklin and Beth Whitler (Thomas), brother, Bob Whitler, and niece, Stephanie Whitler.

Larry only ever wanted two things; to help people and to make them laugh. Sometimes those two went hand in hand, which is where he really shined. His ability to brighten every room, to pick someone up no matter how down they were, was an inspiration. He brought out the best in every life he touched and was always there when you needed it the most. He attended St. John Lutheran Church and lived his life rooted by his Christian faith, spreading joy through his beliefs and his actions.

A creative spark drove Larry his entire life. As a young man, he toured the east coast playing music at colleges. Later he and Robin formed the children's music duo "Robin and the Giant," and what began as songs quickly bloomed into books, videos, and art.

Before retiring, Larry and Robin spent nearly two decades as the hosts of the "AM Ocala Live" morning radio show where they welcomed guests from all walks of life and became beloved members of the community. In 2020, they decided they were ready for new adventures and spending time with grandchildren.

After being given the nickname "Poppa" by his grandson, Eli, Larry started a

YouTube channel called "Poppa Paints" where he shared his works and the stories behind them with people from around the world. His studio was filled with daily art journals, paintings for fellow church members, and photos of his family.

When Larry's son, Alex, was growing up, they would take road trips together every year. The Blue Ridge Mountains, the Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls, New York City, and Quebec were among their many destinations. Every trip was designed to bring a smile to Alex's face and would instill Larry's love of adventure in him.

There really aren't enough words to describe just how incredible Larry was. He was simply always there, for everyone, no matter what they needed. A hug, a song, a laugh. He knew when you needed to be picked up and when you needed a shoulder to lean on.

He was the greatest dad anyone could hope for.

Larry will live in our hearts forever. He made the world a better place and he'll keep inspiring us just as he did in life.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Gathering

AUG **16**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Roberts of Ocala Downtown Chapel
606 SW 2nd Ave
Ocala, FL 34471
(352) 537-8111
info@robertsfunerals.com
<https://www.robertsfunerals.com/>

Celebration of Life Memorial Service

AUG **16**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Roberts of Ocala Downtown Chapel
606 SW 2nd Ave
Ocala, FL 34471
(352) 537-8111
info@robertsfunerals.com
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Tribute Wall

DK

“ David and Shannon Knowles purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Larry "Poppa" Whitler.



David and Shannon Knowles - August 15, 2025 at 03:58 PM

DK

“ David and Shannon Knowles planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Larry "Poppa" Whitler.

David and Shannon Knowles - August 15, 2025 at 03:58 PM

MA

“ Mom and Allen purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Larry "Poppa" Whitler.



Mom and Allen - August 15, 2025 at 03:37 PM

MA

“ Mom and Allen planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Larry "Poppa" Whitler.

Mom and Allen - August 15, 2025 at 03:37 PM

JP

“ Jo Laurie Penrose lit a candle in memory of Larry "Poppa" Whitler



Jo Laurie Penrose - August 15, 2025 at 08:23 AM

PR

“ Pjoan R. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Larry "Poppa" Whitler.

Pjoan R. - August 14, 2025 at 08:20 PM

FF

“ From Lucy Bailey, Gerry Bailey and fami purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Larry "Poppa" Whitler.



From Lucy Bailey, Gerry Bailey and fami - August 14, 2025 at 02:04 PM



“ Celestial Love was purchased for the family of Larry "Poppa" Whitler.



August 12, 2025 at 02:20 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Larry "Poppa" Whitler.

August 12, 2025 at 02:20 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Larry "Poppa" Whitler.



August 11, 2025 at 04:41 PM



“ Jo Laurie Penrose purchased the Serene Reflections Bouquet for the family of Larry "Poppa" Whitler.



Jo Laurie Penrose - August 10, 2025 at 05:37 PM



“ Jo Laurie Penrose planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Larry "Poppa" Whitler.

Jo Laurie Penrose - August 10, 2025 at 05:37 PM



“ *Blue Caribbean Bouquet was purchased for the family of Larry "Poppa" Whitler.*



August 08, 2025 at 01:40 PM



“ *Larry left a treasure trove of art, videos and books as a wonderful legacy! I've found comfort in watching some of his and Robin's videos. Yesterday I received a copy of his book "God's Refrigerator Door" (which has a publication date of July 14, 2025 --- the Monday of his last week). It's a great book with many of his paintings, along with thoughts and memories. In his introduction, Larry wrote, "I occurred to me that I was creating pictures in the same way that a child creates drawings that end up on the family refrigerator door. That's when I imagined God's refrigerator door and wondered if, perhaps, my artwork would ever merit such an honor." Larry also wrote, "I imagine God looking at them, not to judge their artistic merit, but to see the heart behind them. And maybe He smiles." Yes, Larry, I expect God is smiling! The book is a wonderful addition to many things Larry accomplished with the talents God gave him and for which Larry was grateful. The book contains Larry's Christmas Tree poem, and ends with a portrait he painted of Robin in 2011. Thank you, Larry, for inspiring so many people, and for making the world a better place! https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0FH HZ626N?ref=ppx_yo2ov_dt_b_fed_asin_title*

David Cory - July 28, 2025 at 01:58 PM



“ I don't know where to start, from the first moment we met the inspirational duo we knew there was something special in them. Paul and I first met Larry when we signed up to broadcast on the morning show. We met with them weekly, Larry made us laugh all the time! We even stayed in touch after they retired from the show. It was so much fun to be around them. We continued to follow their journey through Facebook and YouTube. The world lost an incredible man, heaven gained an angel. You will truly be missed by all Larry!

Justices League - July 28, 2025 at 05:36 AM

CW

“ Larry was a special son who loved his father and his mother and was there to help them through transitions of life . He always made sure his Mother got to church on Sunday at Hope in Citrus Springs after his father passed.
You could tell he loved Alex and all his family .
He was a joy to spend time with him and Robin.
Loved his sense of humor and dedication!
Even though I didn't see him often, he always remembered me.
He truly left a hole in the lives of so many and will be remembered by many as a really special talented man!
Carole Warden

Carole Warden - July 27, 2025 at 05:58 PM

CH

Even though I had spoken with Larry a few times, I admired him. His patient and caring nature shone through. I am deeply grieved at the loss of such a special one. Also for Robin who has been so faithful with Larry's work and community.

Connie Hudson - August 10, 2025 at 06:14 PM



“ Larry you and Robin are a great example of love for everyone and everything meeting you sir Doug Smith decades and decades ago was a blessing

Tony Downes - July 27, 2025 at 05:55 PM



“ Larry, tho I did not get to know your really well, always enjoyed your FB friendship and the years performing with Robin & the giant! You are a giant where you are I believe performing on Streets of gold! RIP my friend! Cajun Dave & family! My condolences to Alex and your family!



Cajun Dave Becnel - July 27, 2025 at 05:28 PM

MD

“ I met Larry and Robin through my twin brother Anthony Downes. I was in charge of promotions 13 years ago for the South Lake Relay for Life a benefit to raise money to fight cancer in Clermont Florida. They drove an hour to perform on stage at East Ridge High School in front of hundreds that night with their musical talent .Our chapter raised thousands that night but what was impressive was Robin and Larry compassion for the cause. RIP Larry and God Bless you Robin in your recovery. Prayers go up to all family and friends. He was an angel sent from God to help others.



Michael Downes - July 27, 2025 at 05:24 PM

LN

“ I will never forget Larry, when I first started out in music nobody knew me, Larry wanted to give me a chance, so he and Robin interviewed me on their show, they made me feel so special and he wanted to get my music out there, because he believed in me and he made me believe in myself, they invited me back 4 more times to release my new songs, they came to my concerts to support me. He sent me messages and email to show how proud they were, but I was the one that was proud of him. He loved everyone, never judged people he and Robin donated their time and talents to help those less fortunate, his love for God shone through him. I owe Larry and Robin everything as to where I am now in my career as a Christian recording artist songwriter. If he didnt give me that chance, I dont know where I would be. Years later, I had them both on my podcast and I am posting the link in his memory for everyone to watch and hear his laughter and see his personality as he was, a wonderful

Loving person that I was blessed to meet and that I will never forget.
Rest in peace gentle giant. Love you.



Lisa Marie Nicole - July 27, 2025 at 04:23 PM

TW

“ Whenever I would mention my brother, Larry, I would call him my bigger, younger brother. He was 6 feet 7 inches tall where I am 6 feet 5 inches. But the biggest thing about him was his heart. He just never harbored ill feelings about anyone and would do everything possible to help anyone he knew that needed help. I will miss him as will everyone who knew him. If the world had more people like Larry it would be a much better place. His loss is a loss, not only to his family, but the world as well.

Thomas Whitler - July 27, 2025 at 04:19 PM

SJ

“ Such a great (giant) man. We met soon after moving to Ocala in 2012. Loved his spirit, his music, his art. Always so friendly to everyone. He painted a wonderful painting of Mrs. Claus and me. We will miss him and cherish our friendship.



Scott Jacob - July 27, 2025 at 03:52 PM

EA

“ 1 file added to the album larry whitler obituary



Eleonore and Lisa Aron - July 26, 2025 at 10:16 AM

DR

“ I was maintenance in the cascades in Ocala and a blue heron bird that was in the pond in front of the windows where Larry would do his show had a hook in its mouth and we had to try to catch the bird to take and get some help the bird happen to walk down The concrete past the radio station and went in a small room where I was able to close the door and grab it and Larry and myself took it to Silver Springs to see if the bird could have the hook removed. That was one of my memories of Larry. and he also did a drawing of myself and my wife, which I have hanging on my wall in my house. he will be greatly missed. I enjoyed all of his videos wherever they went Robin and the giant I commented on most all of them, especially the last one we had car trouble a couple of days before this terrible accident.



david randles - July 19, 2025 at 08:42 AM

SL

“ Although we never met your positivity and love of Marion County had a strong influence on my love of Ocala. The world Spins fine on her own. Prayers for Robin ❤️

Sylvain Lessard - July 18, 2025 at 07:33 PM