



## Jeffrey Glenn Siemon

June 2, 1950 - March 28, 2026

Jeffrey Glenn Siemon, beloved husband, father, and grandfather, former Minnesota Viking, and devoted follower of Jesus Christ, spent his final days surrounded by his loving family in Bloomington, MN before going home to be with the Lord on March 28, 2026, at the age of 75.

Jeff was born in Rochester, MN on June 2, 1950, and his family returned to Bakersfield, CA two years later. He was a proud Driller, graduating from Bakersfield High School in 1968 as a highly decorated three-sport athlete. He attended Stanford University on a football scholarship, earning a degree in History in 1972. It was there that Jeff met the love of his life, Dawn Donnelly, and they were married shortly after college.

Jeff's Stanford football career included consecutive Rose Bowl victories, a consensus first-team All-American selection, and the silver anniversary Dick Butkus Award as the nation's top linebacker. In 2006, he was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame.

Jeff was selected tenth overall by the Minnesota Vikings in the 1972 NFL draft. A four-time Pro Bowl middle linebacker, he helped lead the team to three Super Bowls during his 11-year career. In 2010, he was named one of the 50 Greatest Vikings.

Despite his athletic accolades, Jeff believed his highest calling was as a follower of Jesus. He fashioned his life around Romans 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," which he regularly included in his autographs. During his years at Stanford and in the NFL, he dedicated himself to ministry, sharing the good news in speaking engagements, leading Bible studies, and serving with organizations including Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Pro Athletes Outreach.

After finishing his football career, Jeff and his family relocated to Southern California, where he attended Simon Greenleaf School of Law, earning a master's in Christian apologetics in 1984. The family then returned to Edina, MN and Jeff began a second career that spanned more than 30 years serving as area director for Search Ministries, focused on adult evangelism and discipleship. Jeff had a deep love and knowledge of Scripture, welcomed honest questions, and spoke with a rare combination of boldness, intelligence, gentleness, and grace.

Jeff and Dawn were deeply involved at Grace Church. For decades, they led Sunday morning "small church" and invested in the lives of countless young couples. Jeff also helped launch evangelistic outreach efforts including Arise with the Guys, the Jeff Siemon Golf Classic, and Straight Talk.

At home, Jeff was known for his love of conversation, competitive spirit, wide-ranging musical interests, and a contagious laugh that those closest to him will never forget. He was a faithful husband and loving father, and his most treasured role was being "Papa" to his ten grandchildren. He had a remarkable ability to turn any conversation away from himself and toward others, showing a genuine interest in people and a desire for each person to feel seen and valued.

As with too many of his fellow NFL alumni, Jeff struggled with progressive

stages of dementia over the last 15 years of his life. It is expected that further medical evaluation will confirm chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) as a contributing factor in his death.

Jeff leaves behind a legacy of faith, humility, intellect, wit, and deep love. He will be remembered not only as an exceptional athlete, but as a man who loved Jesus wholeheartedly, loved people sincerely, and walked faithfully with God.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Dawn; his children Jeff (Kelley) Siemon, Maile Siemon, Kelley (Adam) Deyo, and Malia (Dave) Hendel; his beloved grandchildren Sam, Breckan, James, Judah, Merrick, Luke, Joseph, Josh, Levi, and Noelle; and his sisters Leslie Siemon, Sue Pletcher, and Jane Siemon. He was preceded in death by his parents, Glenn and Isobel Siemon, and his brother, Rob.

A memorial service will be held at 10:00 am on Wednesday, May 20 at Grace Church Eden Prairie. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to Grace Church Eden Prairie (<https://grace.church/give/>) or Search Ministries MN (<https://searchnational.org/donate>).

# Tribute Wall

ZK

“ I remember seeing Jeff & Dawn every week at Grace Church. Jeff was such a humble, strong & faithful brother in Christ and accomplished much for Christ on & off the football field. He loved Jesus and would rather talk about Jesus than his football career & his many accomplishments. He ran & finished his race tirelessly, with vigor and so beautifully. Jeff has left a great legacy in honor of his Savior, Lord, and King and his legacy will continue to plant seeds and win souls for Jesus Christ. I can only imagine hearing God say “Well done my good and faithful son and servant.” What wonderous words to hear flow from our Abba’s voice!! Until we meet again brother.

Zina Kittrell - May 18 at 05:18 PM

JL

Nice!

James Lutzweiler - May 19 at 11:23 PM

JC

“ Dear Dawn and family, Thought you should know that Jeff helped me determine whether or not I should go on my own and start an accounting firm. He was instrumental in the decision making process and simplified it greatly for me. Thanks to him I have had a 35 year career on my own terms. I am grateful, to Jeff and Search Ministries for the part they have played in my life. Joel Carlson joel@carlsonca.com

Joel Carlson - May 10 at 09:58 AM

MW

“ Dear Dawn,

*My name is Mark Wollan. You may not remember me - but in High School my friend Trent Treimer and I, were disciplined by Jeff. On Tuesday evenings during my junior and senior year, Trent and I would meet with Jeff in the basement of your home in Edina.*

*I recently heard of Jeff's passing and wanted to express my sympathy along with my deep appreciation for Jeff and his impact on my life.*

*My life journey took me from High School to Bethel College, then on to Fuller Seminary and a 36 year Pastoral calling and career. I retired in January of 2024 and live in Danville, California.*

*At this season of my life, I've been reflecting on God's grace and goodness through people who shaped my faith. Jeff was one of those key influencers. Ironically, I couldn't tell you much about the content we covered - though I'm sure it was good! What I remember most, was Jeff's commitment to me as a younger brother in Christ.*

*Jeff shared his life honestly. He wanted my friend Trent and I to know that authentic faith had to be worked out in both the joys and challenges of life. Jeff's loving dedication to you and to the kids came up often - and that encouraged me to be mindful of how faith in Christ is the strongest foundation to build a marriage and family on.*

*When it came to his career, I was admittedly star-struck. As a 17 year old kid who was passionate about the Vikings, meeting weekly with Jeff felt a little overwhelming at first. I didn't know how to be with a "hero". But Jeff's humility made him so approachable. It didn't take long for me to see him simply as a fellow follower of Jesus.*

*As a professional athlete, I saw his commitment to living out his faith, on the field. By his example, Jeff showed me that a relationship with Jesus is truly authentic, when it's integrated*

*through every aspect of life.*

*Dawn, I don't know the battles you faced in Jeff's final years. But I do know something about the companionship of Jesus in difficult seasons. I pray that in time, as you look back at the journey - you'll be able to see evidence of Jesus' closeness to you in the struggle. And I pray as you look ahead, you'll experience His deep comfort and love for you and your family.*

*Prayerfully,  
Mark Wollan  
mbwollan@gmail.com*

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**Mark Wollan** - May 09 at 04:21 PM

JS

“ To The Siemon Family: We just learned of the passing of Jeff and I am personally heartbroken. As a young boy growing up in Palo Alto & so close to Stanford Stadium, I would often ride my bike to the Stanford football practice field where I had the privilege of watching teams from the mid-60's and into the early 70's before leaving for college in 1975. I vividly recall Jeff driving his Pontiac GTO - or a car similar to that classic - away from the locker room following practice on many occasions. When I worked in the stock room at Town & Country Pharmacy, I was in awe when he and many of his teammates would enter the store to make various purchases: all of the "Thunderchickens", Jeff, Mike Simone, Randy Potl. Benny Barnes, Jack Schultz, a kid named Kauffman, Ron Kadziel, James Ferguson, Dave Tipton -- all defensive players. On offense, there was Jody Graves, John Sande, Dan Lightfoot, George Crooks, Bob Reinhard, Bubba Brown, Hillary Shockley, Howie Williams, Bob Moore, Randy Vataha, Jack Lassiter, Eric Cross and yes, even Jim Plunkett visited that store routinely. These were people of my childhood and I will never forget them. They were larger than life to me. My father was able to take all of my 7 siblings and me to both Rose Bowls in '70 & '71. We stayed at the Long Beach Hyatt in '70 and I got Jeff's autograph in the lobby of the hotel the day before they beat OSU, 27-17. I still have it somewhere in one of my foot lockers in a CA storage unit. Living part-time in Philly as we do, I see and learn about Pete Lazetich on occasion as a result of being in this part of the country. I believe Lazetich, Roger Cowan and Greg Sampson were good friends of Jeff's due to their NFL experiences. In case you couldn't tell, I thought the world of these people and the world will be less than whole without people like Jeff amongst us. I am so sorry for all whom are affected by his passing. Thankfully, he set a path for others to follow and raised the bar for showing what a life well-lived looks like.

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John Spitters - April 16 at 12:37 PM

DS

*Thank you, John. This was so special to read. Dawn Siemon*

**Dawn Siemon** - April 19 at 09:04 PM

LM

“*Jeff was special to our family. We were with he and Dawn when Maile was born. I represented Jeff with the Vikings. Our son wore number 50 for his high school football career. We were partners and friends. He was the best representative of a Christian man that I have ever met.*”

**Lowell Morse** - April 16 at 12:25 PM

JS

“*John S. planted a grove of 10 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Jeffrey Glenn Siemon.*”

**John S.** - April 16 at 12:05 PM

TF

“*The Eichmeyer Family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Jeffrey Glenn Siemon.*”



**The Eichmeyer Family** - April 07 at 10:59 PM

TF

“*The Eichmeyer Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Jeffrey Glenn Siemon.*”

**The Eichmeyer Family** - April 07 at 10:59 PM

NW

“ Nate wright purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathi phyllum* for the family of Jeffrey Glenn Siemon.



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**Nate wright** - April 06 at 08:55 AM

NW

“ Nate wright planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Jeffrey Glenn Siemon.

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**Nate wright** - April 06 at 08:55 AM



“ *Enchanted Cottage* was purchased for the family of Jeffrey Glenn Siemon.



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April 05 at 05:31 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Jeffrey Glenn Siemon.

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April 05 at 05:31 AM